

“A private, word of mouth campaign . . .”

of home owners.” The proponents called the Rumford Act “forced housing,” and made the label stick.

At the same time, a private, word-of-mouth campaign was conducted by “Yes on 14” sympathizers. The most effective argument used was the decline in property values that supposedly occurs when Negroes move in. The “No on 14” people clearly showed that this was nonsense.

But, the charge is easy to grasp, the reply hard to explain. The same senses that show that the world is flat are hard to convince that panic selling is subjective, not objective, that ghettos are created for, not by, their occupants.

To fight against Proposition 14 no single argument or theme was powerful enough to carry the campaign, so all were used—moral, legal, economic and political. Unfortunately, they failed to develop the visceral appeal of the “forced housing” and “protect property rights” slogans.

“No on 14” supporters counted heavily on endorsements to pull them through. They were backed by churches and religious leaders; most of the political leaders, including a respectable showing of Republicans; a solid sampling of business and professional leaders, including the Conference of Delegates of the State Bar; and most of the newspapers. The attitudes of community leaders failed to influence the electorate.

The campaign against Proposition 14 was conducted by one of the broadest coalitions ever developed, yet it is clear that it never had a chance to win. The fight was conducted on the enemy’s ground. The wording of the amendment focused talk on the rights of the seller, not on the rights of the buyer. Always on the defensive, the anti-14 fighters were forced to counter simple, vicious charges with complex, scholarly defenses. They had to meet a personalized appeal with moral abstractions.

We cannot conclude that two-thirds of California citizens are bigots merely because they responded affirmatively to arguments of this kind. We believe they will prove they are not, if they are called upon to face the real issue: the right of any citizen to live wherever he can afford to live. This, the moral issue, was side-stepped in Proposition 14.

I hope the California Legislature gives the people the chance to make a clear choice on this question. A constitutional amendment could be passed by the current session, one that will have the effect of erasing Proposition 14 by avoiding semantic traps, and allow the people to see the issue in the proper light.

“the fight as conducted in the enemy’s ground . . .”

For instance, a line could be inserted after Article 1, Section 1, of the State Constitution so that the section reads: “All men are by nature free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property; and pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness. **It is the obligation of the government to secure these rights and they shall not be denied or abridged on the basis of color, race, religion, ancestry or national origin.**”

It is the effect of Proposition 14 to prohibit government action on some aspects of real property transactions. It would be the effect of the new amendment to direct government to protect the rights of buyers, thus restoring the right of the Legislature to act in the field of housing discrimination.

The courts may declare Proposition 14 unconstitutional, in which case a skittish Legislature would have little volition to act. Even so, a new amendment must be passed.

The Legislature should act. It is right morally, legally and from the standpoint of enlightened self-interest.

LETTERS:

*Tom Dooley,
Catholics
and Vietnam*

Sirs:

Robert Scheer is entitled to his opinion on Vietnam and on the relative dangers of Communism, but he is infected with that same virus which weakens most of your staffers and contributors. He lacks balance, judgment and maturity. It is easy to whack away at one side of an issue, particularly if the approach is sensationally “courageous,” possessing all the daring of a little boy writing obscenities in an abandoned outhouse. This type of irresponsible journalism doesn’t make me—as a liberal—feel too secure. It only increases the conservative ammunition and their determination to do battle against us.

Tom Dooley is no saint. I spent some little time with him and found him arrogant, egotistical and Messianic. He travelled on a single jungle path and was intolerant of those who would not share it with him . . . or even of those who did. Nonetheless, I reflect that it was fortunate that he turned his psychosis to

some useful purpose embodying sacrifice, compassion and dedication. He might have resorted to shooting people from fifth story windows. Or he might have rested safely and comfortably behind his typewriter, twisting truth to fit editorial format. Dooley's "world," as you put it, may be a trifle unreal and obnoxious, but I'll take a dozen of those planets for every errant, uncommitted, destructive meteor like Scheer . . .

Major Vic Turner
Papillion, Nebraska

Sirs:

I have just read the January Ramparts, my first taste of your magazine. Its quality is high and maintained throughout when dealing with politics, world affairs, music and art. Special congratulations to you for publishing Robert Scheer's article on Tom Dooley, Catholics and Vietnam. It took courage to write and courage to print. If you keep this up, you will be the answer to the many prayers of Americans who yearn for truth and justice.

Hillel Liebert
New York City

Sirs:

Robert Scheer's article on Viet Nam was a good, one-sided history. Ho Chi Minh rode on top of a nationalist movement which a majority of the Vietnamese people supported because they hated the French, he said. He neglected to say the Communists systematically killed all other major nationalist leaders and subverted their movements once they enrolled in the united front. They are doing the same thing within the Liberation Front in South Viet Nam today. . . .

Tom Dooley need not hang his head. He saw the plight of the Vietnamese and Laotians he met, he called it as he saw it, and he helped thousands of people who otherwise would have been torn to bits—physically and mentally—by the Communists. The fact the Catholics of Bui Chu and Phat Diem provinces and others lived near the sea, and were close to Hai Phong and French protection, had as much to do with their exodus as their religious convictions. No doubt many people from the T'ai highlands and the river valleys farther north would have fled if the Communists had not blocked communications, the roads and rivers.

On the immediate practical side, by our presence in Viet Nam we are helping build a shelter. You shingle a roof to keep a house dry when the eventual rain comes. Not only South Viet Nam but Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia have active Communist minori-

*"Tom Dooley
did not hang
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*" . . . bizarre
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involvements . . ."*

ties intimidating their people and trying to bring their governments down. If we pull out of that area, they are certain to fall because Big Brother Communist China will supply the needed muscle for Communist takeovers. Eventually they would storm our house here.

We are right to assist these people in overpowering their intended murderers. We are right to try to instill a love of liberty and teach the dignity of men who rule themselves through representative government. For these reasons, for Americans, for all men, we are fighting for the dignity of men.

Gary Owens
Saratoga, California

Sirs:

I have been most concerned about Vietnam and the American involvement in that country, but have had great difficulty in getting at the truth of the situation.

Ramparts has had the courage to go against State Department policy (and for that matter the reports of most other American publications) and has printed some of the truth, and some of the bizarre and immoral involvements of various individuals and institutions in South Vietnam (particularly Cardinal Spellman and the Catholic Relief Agency). I hope to see more of Robert Scheer's articles on another American disaster concerning popular revolution. My respects to Ramparts.

Anne Butterfield Weills
Sacramento, California.

Sirs:

I object strongly to Mr. Scheer's use of the late Dr. Tom Dooley as a catalyst for his article, for the faults of Tom Dooley in his writing were approximately the same as Mr. Scheer's.

Tom reached for the sometimes sensationalistic—just as Mr. Scheer does in using a Dooley head for his story to gain readership. Dooley may have propagated some isolated circumstances or events with such fervor that he made them seem the commonplace rather than the rare occurrence. And Tom was naive about many aspects of the situation.

When Tom wrote "Deliver Us From Evil" he had not the advantage of ten year's retrospection, as has Mr. Scheer. Tom also had difficulty standing back from the situation and viewing the overall effect since he was there on the scene, which I presume Mr. Scheer was not.

It is almost ironic to picture Tom Dooley as a vassal of the Church in his work in Viet-Nam, for there have been

few prominent Catholics who have tried harder to be unbiased in approach to religious problems—down to insuring that his medical teams were not predominantly Catholic. His disclaimers even upset many churchmen.

But Mr. Scheer's 'story' was about Diem and the need to drag Dooley into the story is questionable. Diem was in authority when Tom came. Tom was an officer of the U.S. Navy under orders to work with the local government. He, of course, did not need to write as he did, and if this is his crime then he is guilty. Perhaps at the age of 25 he was too well reared to question what he thought was duly constituted authority. In his dying days, when I was with Tom in Saigon, he felt Diem was something less than the great leader of mankind some purported him to be. But he was a leader who had been elected by the people even if not by our standards. He was the closest thing to someone who could command respect and who was trying more than others to accomplish one thing—keep the communists out.

I would presume Mr. Scheer's 'final solution' would be withdrawal from South Viet-Nam. Withdrawal would mean communism as well as bringing jeopardy to the pro-Western nations nearby—and thus the ultimate, complete pro-Easternization of all Southeast Asia. The peasants couldn't care less, for they have neither the will nor the mental equipment to understand the differences between communism and democracy.

It seems Mr. Scheer is endeavoring to be an honest student of Southeast Asia. I hope he intends to rely more heavily on facts in his forthcoming book. It's funny—the less great you are, the easier it is to condemn the great and the dead.

Robert T. Copenhaver
Omaha, Nebraska

The
author
responds

Sirs:

Are there still people around who believe with Mr. Copenhaver that the "peasants" . . . "have neither the will nor the mental equipment." It sounds like a line from a Chekov play.

My story was about Dooley. It attempted to bridge the gap between what Americans have been told about Vietnam and the nasty reality that breaks through to us in the occasional reports of anti-Catholic riots, Buddhist monks burning themselves or whole villages going off to join the Viet Cong. Now unfortunately Dooley did do much of that telling—and what he told us has proven to be arrant nonsense. I merely made the corrections.

There is no reason to "presume" that

my final solution is U.S. withdrawal—the article preposes this quite explicitly. I based my view on the supposition that peasants who have been bombed steadily for four years do care about their political future. After 20 years of propaganda war they are probably the most highly political peasants the world has ever known and I think it's about time that they had their way.

Nor am I impressed with the argument that if Vietnam falls, all of South East Asia will go under. We have been playing with the politics of Vietnam for 10 years now and it hasn't prevented Cambodia, Burma and Indonesia from moving closer to the Communists.

Anyway, I doubt that the free world will tumble if we permit free elections in Vietnam. They've been occurring in Mr. Copenhaver's Nebraska for some time now and without any apparent disasters.

Robert Scheer
Saigon, South Vietnam

*fan and
non-fan
mail*

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David & Barbara Krasner
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sirs:

I have been a Catholic all my life and have never read anything so shocking and nauseating before as Ramparts. What rock did you crawl from under? How can you ever feel clean again?

If you are intellectuals, I am a Grand Opera singer, and I can't sing a note.

Mrs. Emory J. Durand
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sirs:

Jerome D. Frank's "The Psychology of Non-Violence" should become "must" reading in all institutions of learning throughout the land. This is indeed one of your best.

H. Kruse
San Francisco

Sirs:

Thank you very much for your recent note informing me that Mrs. Lee Irvin has given me a gift subscription to Ramparts. I sincerely hope you will relay my thanks to Mrs. Irvin for her generosity.

Mrs. Barry (Peggy) Goldwater
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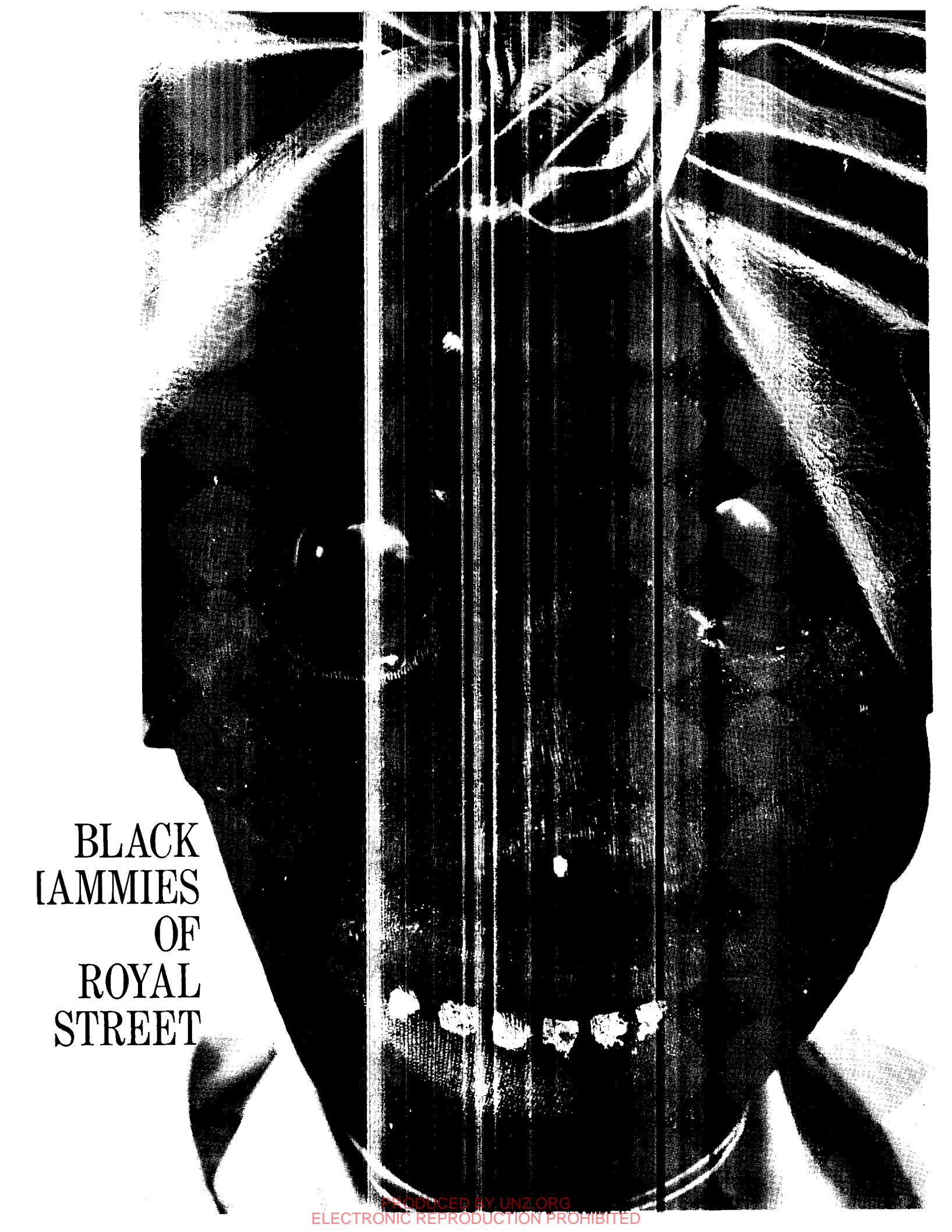
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