Everything Old is New Again

Description

While scouring the net for historical data, I found this essay by a Chief Petty Officer Fredrick Harman in August 1965:

â€œIs Americanism Dead?â€•
Chief Harmon wonders then as we do nowâ€¦.

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IS AMERICANISM DEAD?
BY CHIEF FREDRICK HARMAN



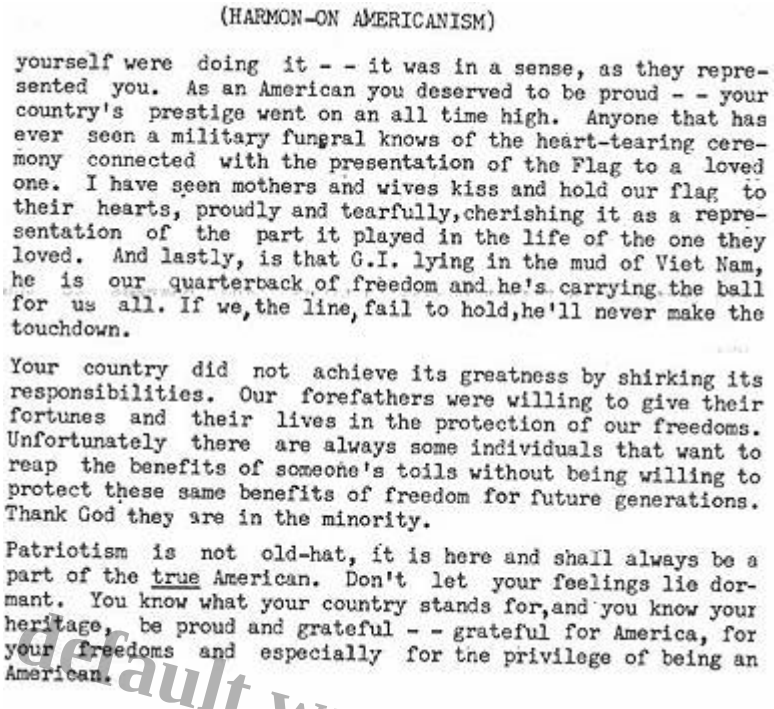
What has happened to Americanism? Is it gone forever from today's modern and hectic world? One might think so by virture of recent newspaper headlines, such as: College students picket White House on U.S. action in Viet Nam; American Nazi Party marches in protest; Klu Klux Klan under investigation; teen-age motorcycle club on rampage and terrorizes small town; conscientious objector wants discharge from Army; etc., etc. Sound commonplace? How could this happen in America - in a land to which each and every one of us should owe eternal gratitude for those before us? They have toiled, sacrificed and given their very lives, in the protection of our freedoms which these individuals manipulate, abuse and misapply.

Is Americanism and patriotism becoming old-hat? In retrospect, for those who can remember as I do, with a great amount of nostalgia - the Freedom Rallies of the old days; the good old Fourth of July with red, white and blue crepe paper on the kid's bicycles and carriages; how wonderful it was to march in a parade as a kid and have mom and dad point you out with pride as you marched by; the lump you got in your throat each time "The Stars and Stripes Forever" was played; the war veterans marching straight and proud in their old and faded uniforms that now were just a little too tight; the way you wanted to get up and march after seeing the movie, "Yankee Doodle Dandie", etc. Don't be dismayed, the loyal American is still here! Let's not be discouraged into thinking that the attitude of these groups is the attitude of the majority of Americans just because their rapacious actions always seem to make headlines. Patriotism, loyalty and devotion to country is still symbolic of the true American. The toil and achievements of millions of courageous and dedicated Americans are still going on, though never making headlines. As Shakespeare said, "The evil men do, lives after them; the good is often interred in their bones."

What is shameful, is the misuse of the sacrifice of thousands of brave fathers. Fathers who gave their lives on Normandy, and other battle fronts of the world, to protect the freedoms that their sons are now misusing. This misuse stems, perhaps, from an ignorance of true facts and a distorted idea that this is the way to get one's kicks out of life. For example: the son who joined the Nazi Party and now idealizes the odious teachings of a madman, whose value of human life was infinitesmal, is wasting the sacrifice of the father who gave his life for freedom and to protect him from the very things he now advertises by display of his swastika armband.

Most present day Americans might not, flagrantly, display their devotion to our country as often as they should but it is there - - believe me, it is there. Ask our athletes, the young men and women who participated in the last Olympic Games in Tokyo. They were so proud and reverent, when standing in the arena to receive their medals, as the National Anthem was played in their honor, that tears flowed openly and freely (including the tears of pride from their fellow Americans in the stands). And how about the time the first astronaut was sent up, and all those that followed - - wasn't it as if you

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(HARMON-ON AMERICANISM)

yourself were doing it - - it was in a sense, as they represented you. As an American you deserved to be proud - - your country's prestige went on an all time high. Anyone that has ever seen a military fungral knows of the heart-tearing ceremony connected with the presentation of the Flag to a loved one. I have seen mothers and wives kiss and hold our flag to their hearts, proudly and tearfully, cherishing it as a representation of the part it played in the life of the one they loved. And lastly, is that G.I. lying in the mud of Viet Nam, he is our quarterback of freedom and he's carrying the ball for us all. If we, the line, fail to hold, he'll never make the touchdown.

Your country did not achieve its greatness by shirking its responsibilities. Our forefathers were willing to give their fortunes and their lives in the protection of our freedoms. Unfortunately there are always some individuals that want to reap the benefits of someone's toils without being willing to protect these same benefits of freedom for future generations. Thank God they are in the minority.

Patriotism is not old-hat, it is here and shall always be a part of the true American. Don't let your feelings lie dormant. You know what your country stands for, and you know your heritage, be proud and grateful - - grateful for America, for your freedoms and especially for the privilege of being an American.

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Category

1. Military

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