

Letters

'War' on a Review

I thought I was reading a book review until I realized Huston Horn's "review" of Walter Capps' "The Unfinished War" was a sermon (Book Review, Aug. 8). Where does Horn and his opinion end and the book review begin:

A lot of veterans, myself included, are getting tired of hearing nonsense statements such as the U.S. having a "nationful of psychically scarred" veterans.

The only place to find these individuals may be at a "veterans out-reach program" in most cities. Most—the percentage is in the high 80s—survived intact; they generally lead quite normal lives.

Remember: The American military was not defeated. Never once did we lose control of the battlefield, in the conventional set battle which typified the war.

ROBERT BURTON
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The Rev. Huston Horn has allowed his animus against Christian fundamentalism to cloud his mind. He claims that U.S. failure in Vietnam will lead to a mature national consciousness that recognizes limitations, but I would recommend that he worry more about his own political naivete and ignorance. Can he supply the names of the policy makers since 1975 (the end of the Vietnam War) who "itch for a nuclear shootout"? When was it State Department policy to look upon Ho Chi Minh as comparable to Patrick Henry? Would the reverend please show us where and when he finds in Hanoi's regime since its inception a love of human liberty?

With the Vietnam War in mind, Horn claims that "something deep in the national psyche resonates to religious calls to patriotism," but where in the policy of containment, in its various formulations by, e.g., Truman, George Kennan, Kennedy, does Horn find a religious rationale? Is Horn bothered more by anti-Communism or by fundamentalism?—the two are philosophically separate and independent. Further, if Horn would prefer that our psyches resonate with a non-religious call to patriotism, he nowhere says so. He tries to discredit anti-Communism by vilifying the religious Right.

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Huston Horn's comments on "The Unfinished War" make clear his agreement that the "motives (of the U.S.) aren't all that different from those of any other country," (especially the Soviet Union). He thus would have us believe that Russia had as much right, morally, to attempt to change Vietnam into a totalitarian state as the U.S. had the warrant to try to restrain or contain this turnover.

The fact that Horn, an Episcopal priest, can discover no distinction between the level of morality in totalitarianism, such as Russia, and in democracy, such as in the U.S., is a lamentable reflection of the failure of the special training Horn has had to make such judgments.

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