

The New York Times, Thursday, December 5, 1968

Students Disrupt 2 Speeches at NYU

By Arnold H. Lubasch

Student demonstrators, shouting obscenities and waving Vietcong flags, prevented an ambassador of South Vietnam and the executive editor of The New York Times from delivering talks last night at New York University.

South Vietnam's permanent observer at the United Nations, Nguyen Huu Chi, who has ambassadorial rank, was manhandled by demonstrators who draped a Nazi flag around his neck and poured a pitcher of water over him.

The Ambassador remained unruffled but he had to be escorted out of the hall past the 60 demonstrators who had disrupted his speech.

Sofa Used as Ram

James Reston, the executive editor of The Times, had begun his talk a few minutes later in another part of the Loeb Student Center at Washington Square South and La Guardia Place when the demonstrators battered down a locked side door to the auditorium with a sofa and disrupted his address on "Problems of the New Administration."

No one was reported injured in the antiwar demonstration, which was carried out by the N.Y.U. and Columbia chapters of Students for a Democratic Society. An S.D.S statement said the demonstration was directed against "genocide in Vietnam."

The university did not call the police into the Loeb center, but the police later arrested a demonstrator identified as Walter Taugue on a criminal mischief charge for having allegedly thrown water at the South Vietnamese diplomat.

A spokesman for the university said that efforts were under way to identify the students who had taken part in the disturbance.

Dr. Allen M. Cartter, the N.Y.U. chancellor and executive vice president, issued the following statement last night: "We are immediately suspending from the university the students responsible for the disruption of the student and alumni meetings in the Loeb Student Center tonight. The university is an arena for free discussion and discourse and cannot condone such behavior. We apologize to the participants for the disgraceful conduct that marred their meetings."

About 60 demonstrators pushed past a lone security guard at 8:30 PM and rushed into the south lobby of the Loeb center, where the South Vietnamese envoy had just begun to address an extracurricular student political forum on "The Resolution of the Vietnam Conflict."

The demonstrators surrounded the audience, which consisted of 20 persons, and waved flags and overturned tables and chairs. They leaped to the lectern, drowned out the speakers with chants of "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh" and pushed the short South Vietnamese Ambassador aside.

It took about five minutes for a dozen student employees of the center to escort the Ambassador out a side door.

Lecture Cut Short

“James Reston is upstairs!” someone shouted, sending the demonstrators running up a stairway to the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, where Mr. Reston had just begun to address an audience of 400. He was giving the Homer Watt Lecture of the Alumni Association of Washington Square College.

Battering down the door, the demonstrators poured into the auditorium and disrupted the lecture by dismantling the loud-speaker system and shouting vulgarities.

Mr. Reston stopped speaking, waited 15 minutes for the disturbance to subside and then left after the demonstrators continued shouting and refused invitations to address the audience, which booed the intruders.