

Topics

Generation Gap

The thousands of college students who gathered in Washington Sunday to hear Jane Fonda, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Bella Abzug and others denounce nuclear power looked like the students who a decade ago listened to some of the same speakers denounce the Vietnam War. Closer up, it was the differences that were striking.

The scents of this occasion came not from the tear gas of a decade ago but from May blossoms and from egg rolls hawked by street vendors — Vietnamese refugees. The capital's reception of the students contrasted markedly with the hostility that the antiwar demonstrators always seemed to evoke. Law-enforcement officers spent their time cheerfully giving directions.

The most significant change was the transformation of alienation into optimism. When Tom Hayden told the marchers that they reminded him of the protesters of his youth, their reaction was by no means enthusiastic. These students do not believe the American system has failed, nor have they given up believing that the Presi-

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dent of the United States will some day come around. They came to Washington not to vent frustration at an unresponsive "war machine" but to lobby Congress.

We do not endorse their simple slogans. But it is cheering to observe their faith that the political system can accommodate their views.

Shattered

Spring gentles New York; sidewalk litter is joined by cherry blossom petals. Monday, amid the litter and the petals lay the shards of a green granite sculpture that had been placed by a gallery owner at the corner of Madison Avenue and 77th Street, where it had provided public pleasure for many months. It may have taken no more than stout rope and strong arms to topple and break the graceful, seven-foot sculpture but it took more than casual vandalism to demolish so large a piece of stone.

It is not just a work of art that is shattered by such vandalism. There is a shattering also of people's belief in the public gesture for the community,

beyond profit or necessity. A restoration expert now offers to spend several months on the expensive, painstaking work of putting the pieces together again. A sharing of the cost by the neighborhood would restore, also, the sense of shared pleasure.

Landmark Tax

In Hartford, public pleasure is being put on a paying basis in a different way. An ingenious, voluntary "window tax" will be paid by owners or inhabitants of the skyscrapers surrounding the handsome and historic Old State House — \$5 for each window with a view of the landmark building. The money will be used to restore and maintain the building, designed by Bulfinch in 1792.

That seems like a fair proposition. At \$5 a window, a good view is a bargain, let alone a good precedent. Many needy landmarks could be helped or saved this way. Should any voluntary taxpayers, in Hartford or elsewhere, come to think the tax too high, there is an easy remedy: look out the window more often.