

Committee for the Re-election of the President

MEMORANDUM

May 22, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE YOUTH CREW  
FROM: ROBERT ANTHONY PODESTA  
SUBJECT: 4:00 PM, May 21, 1972

I thought I'd give you the benefit of some on the scene analysis of Sunday's demonstration at the Capitol. I mingled with the people for an hour or so and listened to some of the speakers, including Bella and Rennie Davis. The police were out in force as well they should have been. Tear gas was used with restraint and to disperse destruction-minded groups of 100 or more. I was inept enough to get a little gas, which we may chalk up as another first for the youth campaign.

Anyway, don't let the Post tell you this was an outraged gathering of the sons and daughters of the middle class to protect the war. It was not. The crowd was a smattering of middle-aged-fringe-type-radical (the old Norman Thomas group), plus an overwhelming number of middle teen-aged high school kids. They were neither serious revolutionaries, nor confirmed pacifists. Their one trait in common was a love of carnival like atmosphere and the feeling of romantic non-compliance with the powers to be; which at the moment and only by happenstance happens to sort of include us. There was, in sum, very little anger. Nor was there the gentleness of Woodstock.

Summing up all the sympathy I could, still left me with the conclusion that this was a motley bunch. An equal number of McGovern people and Communists - (no Smith, they're not the same). As one young high school kid said when I asked him what was up - "speakers and gas, same old bull shit."

It was eminently clear that this was not the youth of the country. And that, for whatever it is worth, we may be thankful for.