Pacifist Stresses Moral Degradation

BY GERRY URBACH

Mr. Norman J. Whitney, chairman and director of the Syracuse Peace Council and National Secretary for Peace Education of the American Friends Service Committee, addressed a small audience at a Forum Committee presentation last Thursday night.

WHITNEY'S TOPIS was 'Borrowed Time'—A Pacifist's Views of the 60's.” He explained that he took his title “On Borrowed Time” from a novel and play of the same name in which an old grandfather held death at bay in a tree by absolute faith. The Syracuse professor compared the world in a nuclear age to the grandfather: "Man holds death at bay and none of us are sure how long we can hold it there."

Mr. Whitney spiced his presentation with comments leading world figures about the arms race, not all of whom are pacifists by any means. For instance, President Kennedy has said, "We are living under the threat of imminent destruction. The sword of Damocles is suspended over our head by a very slender cord. If we are to survive, we must disarm. Risks involved in universal disarmament are infinitely less than those involved in the continued arms race."

WHITNEY ASSERTED that a new climate for open discussion of political matters is needed. He denied the influence of the American right wing in stifling intelligent discussions of vital political questions.

We don't realize, Whitney claimed, that contemporary American life can be compared to life in Germany in the 20's and 30's. Encouraged by some exponents for new approaches for peace to be found in higher gov-

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NORMAN J. WHITNEY

'Borrowed Time'
WHITNEY—

(Continued from Page 5) Among the echelons, he found the general attitude of the American people discouraging, remarking that we suffer from an "unawareness or unwillingness . . . to look at the facts and examine them from any other point of view that everything is all black or white; we're goodies and they're baddies."

"MOST PEOPLE don't know enough politically to judge on matters of national importance," he quoted Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas as saying.

Centering his discussion of present American attitudes around the affluence and influence in the U.S. of a "military-industrial" complex, Whitney attacked universal peacetime military conscription and the fact that 80% of all earned income in a city like San Diego comes from defense contracts.

MR. WHITNEY concluded that "we need to find non-violent alternatives for solution of international conflicts that can no longer he dealt with by war." The problem, he said, is as much moral as economic and political; western society will stand or fall or our ability to solve it.

"When any people," he quoted, "base their hope of security on their technological capacity to destroy tens or hundreds of millions of their fellow human beings in the interest of their own self defense, that people has accepted a moral degradation that denies it the right to any freedom itself."