

END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

WE MUST CLEAR UP MISCONCEPTIONS

Despite all that has been written about the war in Vietnam, there remains in our opinion a number of commonly held misconceptions. These are dealt with in the following:

The first misconception is that the U.S. has a legal right in Vietnam because it has been invited by the Vietnamese Government.

This government were never the legally constituted government of South Vietnam. Legislatures were "elected" two years after Diem came to power) and in many elected opposition candidates were displaced by defeated government candidates. In the May 28, 1965 House of Commons "From the very beginning it has been a government supported militarily and financially by the United States and to say that the United States invited Diem to dinner by Charlie McCarthy." Beginning Diem's corrupt and dictatorial government as an American creation with 75% of its budget from the U.S. military and economic aid pouring in at the rate of 1.5 million to 2 million dollars a day. The Canadian World Federalists in their pamphlet "Facts about the war in Vietnam" summarized this point best. "The facts of the situation show that the government of South Vietnam has had no legal basis from the beginning — it was created and continues to exist in violation of the Geneva Conference. Far from being invited into South Vietnam by its legal government, the Americans created this government and have used it for their own purpose ever since." It is evident from the recent Buddhist-led rebellions and the September 1964 general strike by 20,000 workers in Saigon, that Premier Ky would not survive a week without the almost half million U.S. armed forces in Vietnam.

The second misconception is that the U.S. is in South Vietnam in order to stop foreign aggression.

Despite the fact that in 1954 the Vietminh (Vietnamese guerrillas) had defeated the French Colonialists and were practically in complete control of the country, they were pressured into negotiations. The Geneva 1954 agreements were signed and the Vietnamese people were promised:

- (a) that the territorial division of the country into north and south and the withdrawal to the north of the Vietminh were only temporary measures to allow the French troops to withdraw gradually and gracefully.
- (b) neither side was to introduce new arms into its zones or establish military bases or ally itself militarily, and all foreign forces were to be withdrawn under supervision of the International Control Commission composed of representatives from Canada, India and Poland.
- (c) self-determination for the Vietnamese by elections which were to be held within two years' time, also to be supervised by the I.C.C.

Although the U.S. did not sign the Geneva Agreements it clearly committed itself not to interfere with these principles. (See statements made by McNamara and Rusk in "Vietnam" by Gittleman) yet within months President Eisenhower personally committed himself to support Diem's regime (see letter to Diem, October 23, 1954 in "Vietnam" by Gittleman) and the U.S. military took over the training of the South Vietnamese Army. Diem backed by his American advisors repudiated the Geneva agreements. (See T. C. Douglas' House of Commons Debate May 28, 1965). The elections to unify Vietnam were never held. The reason can be found in the following statement by Eisenhower in his book "Mandate for Change" — "Possibly 80% of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh".

Diem's regime was an oppressive one. He attempted to stamp out all opposition to himself, both Communist and anti-Communist. He refused the peasants any sort of land reform; he refused to clean up corruption of officials or end discrimination against Buddhism which is a majority religion in Vietnam. There was a repressive police, growing hunger and unemployment and no freedom of the press. Hugo DeVilliers, a Catholic anti-Communist observer wrote in the China Quarterly, March 1962 "... a certain sequence of events became almost classical—denunciations, encirclement of villages, raids, arrests, plundering and interrogations under torture, deportation of the populace."

Guerrilla units were organized by the peasants to defend their villages. They armed themselves primarily by capturing American-made guns from the government forces. The National Liberation Front (known to us as the Viet Cong) composed of some 30 different political groups was formed in 1960 from these scattered guerrilla units. Help from the north at this time continued to be minimal. Tad Szulc, an on-the-spot reporter, said in the New York Times, June 21, 1964, "the guerrilla units that infiltrate from the north are South Vietnamese who stayed north of the armistice line at the end of the war in 1954." This was also recorded by the U.S. White Paper, February 27, 1965. The civil war grew. American military "advisors" grew to considerable strength and took on the main fighting. On February 7, 1965 because the U.S. and South Vietnamese were on the verge of defeat, they attacked North Vietnam without a declaration of war. In March, President Johnson announced his decision to open "a continuous limited war

against North Vietnam". From that time on the saturation bombing of both North and South has continued with a brief pause at the end of 1965. Napalm, lazy dog bombs, sprays to destroy crops are used indiscriminately. (See Staughton Lynd in Liberation Magazine, February 1966 and Reverend A. J. Muste in the same issue). The area of North and South Vietnam is 1/28 the size of the United States. Mr. McNamara informed a Congressional Committee that the U.S. plans to drop, in 1966 alone, 638,000 tons of bombs on Vietnam — 48% of the total tonnage of bombs dropped by the U.S. against the Germans in Europe and Africa in all of World War II (See Fact Magazine September-October 1966).

Are there any foreign aggressors in Vietnam? The only foreign troops are American. North and South Vietnam are artificial entities which according to agreement were to last only two years and the Vietnamese from the north can hardly be termed foreign when fighting in the south to rid their country of U.S. troops. And no one, not even the Johnson Administration, has accused the Chinese or Russians of having troops fighting in Vietnam.



The third misconception is that the United States is in Vietnam to give democracy a chance there.

Buddhist monks agitated for the end of personal rule by President Ky, and the election of a general assembly. The United States gave no support to this movement. The United States has over the past years, given financial and other support to the Fascist regime of Franco in Spain, of Salazar in Portugal, and of Stroessner in Paraguay. It supported Batista in Cuba and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. The United States appears to be willing to support with arms and economic aid any dictatorial regime which will allow them to exploit the raw materials and cheap labor in its country.

Of Vietnam, the New York Times of February 12, 1950 stated that "Indo China is a prize worth a large gamble. In the north are exportable tin, tungsten, manganese, coal, lumber, rice, rubber, tea, pepper and hides. Even before World War II, Indo China yielded dividends estimated at 3,000,000,000 dollars per year." It was to keep this wealth in the country that Ho Chi Minh, backed by the people of Indo China fought (as our allies) and defeated the Japanese and drove out the French, the former in 1945 and the latter in 1954. It may be safely assumed that they do not want the French to be replaced by the Americans.

More than 115 American bases and strategic high-

ways have been built since American "advisors" arrived in Vietnam. (See Senator Fullbright's comments on China, Globe and Mail, September 26, 1966). These would be useful if the United States decided on war with China and suggests another possible motive.

The fourth misconception is that if the Communists are not stopped in South Vietnam they will go on from there to conquer all of Asia.

Revolutions are caused by poverty, hunger, repression and economic stagnation. "This revolution of the colored people of the world demanding self-determination is going to go on... if we took all the Communist countries out and all the Communists out of this world, the problems of the struggle for the right of self-determination by the colored peoples of the earth in Asia, Africa and South America would continue and we would still have to face that problem." (T. C. Douglas, May 1965 House of Commons Debate). The Vietnamese whose martyrdom is carried out in the name of 'democracy' must surely equate this with imperialism and colonialism of the most brutal type. The uncommitted nations of the world must see this as an extension of colonialism and a massacre of coloured people by white people. Veteran war correspondent Neil Sheehan stationed in Vietnam from 1962 until October 1966 said in the October 9, 1966 New York Times Magazine, "But I simply cannot help worrying, that in the process of waging this war, we are corrupting ourselves. I wonder when I look at the bombed out peasant hamlets, the orphans-begging and stealing in the streets of Saigon and the women and children with napalm burns lying on the hospital cots, whether the United States or any other nation has the right to inflict this suffering and degradation on another people for its own ends. And I hope we will not in the name of some anti-Communist crusade do this again."

Donald Duncan, much decorated ex-master sergeant of the Green Berets, and a Catholic said in the June 4, 1966 Telegram Weekend Magazine: "I eventually decided the whole thing was a lie. We weren't preserving freedom in South Vietnam. There was no freedom to preserve. To voice opposition to the government meant jail or death. Neutralism was forbidden and punished. Newspapers that didn't say the right thing were closed down. It's all there to see once the Red Film is removed from the eyes... anti-Communism is a lousy substitute for democracy."

The fifth misconception is that the Canadian government's role has been one of neutrality and honest effort to bring peace to Vietnam.

Hugh Campbell (S/L Ret.) Canadian delegate to the International Control Commission from July 1961 to March 1963, said in "FACTS ABOUT THE WAR IN VIETNAM": "As a member of the ICC, charged with the grave responsibility of ensuring adherence to the terms of the Geneva Accord of 1954, we have conducted ourselves with a singular degree of spinelessness. Behaving like affable mediators when the task clearly demanded hard-nosed policemen who would act without fear or favor... we remained silent. So silent that not even the Canadian public was aware of our continued presence in Vietnam. Our contribution towards peace in the Far East has been a sorry one indeed..."

Are we helping to kill Vietnamese men, women and children? Thus far Canadian soldiers are not involved in Vietnam, but the amount of military hardware that is used in Vietnam and produced in Canada is growing daily. The Toronto Daily Star, July 23, 1966 said, "Canada's defence production has a big piece in the Vietnam action... sale of Canadian aircraft directly to the U.S. government, for example, increased from 37 million dollars in 1964 to 99 million dollars in 1965 — a suggestive escalation. Many De Havilland aircraft are used in Vietnam". Again the Star, Sept. 12, 1966—Robert Reguly, Star staff writer said under the headline, WE ARE MAKING MILLIONS OUT OF THE VIETNAM WAR — "Streaking over North Vietnam, an American fighter bomber fingers its target with a Canadian made navigator device. After dropping its bombs partly made in Canada — the plane swoops to loose a salvo of 2.75 inch rockets. Their Canadian-made warheads ride a fiery train of made-in-Canada propellents to zap the truck convoy, port or village... Canada is officially neutral in the undeclared Vietnam war... Canada is a member of the International Control Commission charged with reporting violations of the Geneva truce agreement — such as importing munitions."

Farley Mowat in "Canada's Role in Vietnam" says, "I say this to Canadians; if we are a nation; if we are a people who place any value on ethics or morality, then we must take an unequivocal stand against the actions of the United States. We must declare publicly and privately... that the United States is guilty of a great crime against mankind."

Among the supporters of this statement is Benjamin Spock, M.D.

BENJAMIN SPOCK, M. D.
2010 ARLINGTON ROAD
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44108

March 10, 1967

Mrs. E. Bryant
York Committee to End the
War in Vietnam
Box 272
Richmond Hill
Ontario, Canada

Dear Mrs. Bryant:

You can certainly name me as a sponsor.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Spock

NDP Federal Leader,

T. C. Douglas said:

"I endorse the sentiments contained in it, and I would like to congratulate the people responsible for drawing up this very fine document."

NDP Leader, T. C. DOUGLAS

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The aim of the York Committee is to bring an end to the agony of the Vietnamese, an end to the suffering of the GI's who are dying in Vietnam and an end to the war, which if unchecked will surely escalate into a nuclear world war.

York Committee To End The War In Vietnam

Box 272, Richmond Hill, Ontario

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- Please send me—
- "Canada's role in Vietnam" by Farley Mowat (25c)
 - "Appeal to the American Conscience" by Bertrand Russell (25c)
 - A subscription to the Canada/Vietnam Newsletter (\$1.00 a year for 12 issues).

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