

Rae Whit

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"There are few parallels with the war in Vietnam. It has lasted nearly two decades; two Western powers of overwhelming might have fought peasant guerrillas. . . . Everything short of nuclear weapons has been employed. Atrocity has characterized the conduct of the war throughout its history. . . . The war has had no purpose. Its extension will bring direct conflict between the Cold War powers, with the possible destruction of mankind as the culmination of this folly. The tragedy in Vietnam indicates the extent to which it is possible to hide or disguise terrible crimes, and it is time that people in the West raised their voices for an end to the bloodshed."

—from *War Crimes in Vietnam*

by **BERTRAND RUSSELL**

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**BERTRAND RUSSELL**

## **WAR CRIMES IN VIETNAM**

**MR**  
PRESS

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B.R.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The racism of the West, especially that of the United States, has created an atmosphere in which it is extremely difficult to make clear the responsibility of America for problems which are held to be 'internal' to the underdeveloped countries. The war in Vietnam is looked upon as the inevitable and tragic product of backwardness, poverty and savagery—supposedly indigenous to South East Asia. The roots of the current conflict are sought in the dark past: ancient conflicts between north and south are dredged up. The American intervention is, on this view, fortuitous. The Vietnamese people are thought to be pitiable creatures, into whose affairs the Americans have reluctantly and unfortunately been invited.

Racism not only confuses the historical origins of the Vietnam war; it also provokes a barbarous, chauvinist outcry when American pilots who have bombed hospitals, schools, dykes and civilian centres are accused of committing war crimes. It is only the racist underpinning of the American world-view which allows the U.S. press, the Senate and many public figures to remain absolutely silent when 'Vietcong' prisoners are summarily shot; yet at the same time these bodies demand the levelling of North Vietnamese cities if the pilots are brought to trial for their crimes. American violations of the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war have long been a matter of public record. It was reported, for example, in the *New York Times* of December 1, 1965, that 'the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva . . . complained again that the United States was violating an international accord on the treatment of prisoners. . .'. The indifference shown to this clear indictment—not to mention the indifference to daily bombardments of civilian populations with napalm and white phosphorus—is appalling.

The fundamental fact which I wish to establish here is that the

Vietnam war is the responsibility of the United States. This elementary truth is central to any understanding of this cruel war. To understand the war, we must understand America, though this is not to ignore the history of the Vietnamese people. Vietnamese culture is rich and dates from antiquity. Oral legends continue heroic traditions, particularly those which tell of the ancient repulsion of feudal China. But history's movement, ever faster, is such that the Vietnam of today is less connected to her ancient heritage than to her present world. The past hundred years of Vietnam's national life have brought her on to the world stage. To understand Vietnam and the agony of her struggle, we must see Vietnam amidst the constellation of anti-colonial forces which are transforming the Third World and, less dramatically, the West itself. Vietnam will not be understood, no matter how deeply we probe her past, unless we cease to isolate her meaning. It is America that has given Vietnam an international significance.

While the beginnings of the American role in Vietnam precede the notorious involvement with Ngo Dinh Diem, it must be noted that France deserves the credit for nearly obliterating the Vietnamese cultural heritage. Before the Second World War, France managed her own colonial affairs with arrogant self-reliance. A rival to Britain, she probed Vietnam in the nineteenth century while seeking new access to China. On the pretext of protecting French missionaries from the reprisals of the savages they sought to Christianize, French naval vessels sailed into South Vietnam in the 1840s. The colonial conquest was begun in earnest. Within a matter of decades, not only the whole of Vietnam but also Laos and Cambodia had been brought under French colonial rule. Although each region of the vast amalgam, 'Indo-China,' had a different *de jure* status and governmental structure, everywhere the French were ruthless in securing the submission of the native population. Their rule was not to be disputed, and it was their arbitrary right to determine the laws and regulations of every part of the colony. Sporadic, disorganized guerrilla resistance opposed the French and continued into the twentieth century.

It is the totalitarian process of colonization which destroyed Vietnamese society and severed the ties between a people and its past. The skills, habits and beliefs of the colonized people come to be judged by a kind of warped utilitarianism: that is useful and good which benefits the colonizer. Under the Mandarin system which remained in Vietnam long after the expulsion of the Chinese in 937 A.D., there were roughly 20,000 private schools, each with a single teacher, at the village level, in addition to state-supported provincial and district-level classes. In an effort to produce a 'cultural carbon copy' of France, the colonizers utterly abolished these schools, romanized the Vietnamese language to produce a new 'official' language (the 'quoc ngu'), and established only 14 secondary schools and one university in all of Vietnam. With such an inadequate number of institutions, few could pass the new 'literacy' test. Economic changes produced by the requirements of the colonizers were equally profound. Industrial raw materials, not consumption crops, were the prize most coveted. The advent of the motor car created a demand for rubber which turned thousands of Vietnamese peasants into plantation coolies. The establishment of a money economy was swiftly accomplished. As peasants increasingly needed money for buying goods and paying taxes, they were forced to mortgage and to sell their land. No aspect of Vietnamese life was untouched in this process.

White, European supremacy was invariably associated with the unchallengeable rule of the colonizing power. Traditional nobility and Mandarins lost all prestige and respect as French *fonctionnaires* occupied every post of authority throughout the countryside. In the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust which prevailed, the colonizer looked for emblems of subservience. The converted Christian, consciously bowing to the authority of the white man's faith, was feared least and, therefore, rewarded. These conditioned feelings of inferiority were widely established. In such a situation, Japan's victory over Czarist Russia in 1905 was given symbolic importance by many Vietnamese. This was surely proof that an Asian power was capable of inflicting defeat and humiliation upon the West. Knowledge of this event was

possible, ironically, because of the settlers' insistence that the educated Vietnamese learn French. The new language allowed a small number of Vietnamese intellectuals to study events outside their own borders. Around this same time there were strong efforts made by Vietnamese nationalists to obtain reforms within the colonial systems. They campaigned, for example, for free schools, through which their culture could be restored. It was in these schools that the most ardent nationalists were later to be trained.

Another factor which influenced the development of nationalist aspirations was the First World War. Knowledge of this war was by no means limited to those who had studied in the French-administered schools. Heavy casualties at the front seriously affected the amount of manpower available to do the factory work which was equally vital to the French war effort. To meet this labour shortage, the French imported large numbers of coolies from mainland China and southern Asia. The Vietnamese who came to France entered a strange and new world. They came into direct contact with the ideology of home France—with its professions of liberty, equality and fraternity—which was unknown, even proscribed, in the colonies. The tradition of the French Revolution was one aspect of French culture which was not exported and imposed on the Vietnamese by the settlers. The Vietnamese in Paris were intoxicated with the ideas and ideals of the liberal and socialist traditions of Western political thought.

It was also claimed that the great war was being fought to 'make the world safe for democracy'. The war brought forth the most impassioned and idealistic rhetoric to inspire those least anxious to end their lives in futile slaughter. A group of Vietnamese nationalists in Paris conceived the idea of taking the allies at their word. They appeared at Versailles in hired formal dress to request that the allies affirm the principle of self-determination for Indo-China. Among these nationalists was Ho Chi Minh; this tragi-comic meeting was his first attempt to negotiate his country's independence. Needless to say, the pleas of the would-be diplomats fell upon deaf ears. Decolonization was not to come so easily.

By that time the United States had emerged as a world power. Throughout the world the U.S. sought to break up the absolute control of trade and commercial rights by the old empires, most notably in the Open Door policy in the East. There were vast riches to exploit, and the United States wanted a share. At this stage, there was no need to disturb many of the existing power relationships and to destroy competing powers. There was enough for all. In 1923, for example, ex-Naval Secretary Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed the following view in a speech entitled 'Shall We Trust Japan?':

'It is true that we shall continue to overlap and perhaps to clash in the development of the commerce of the Pacific, but when we consider the potential trade of the vast territories and huge populations bordering the North Pacific and South Pacific oceans, there would seem to be enough commercial room and to spare for both Japan and us well into the indefinite future. . . .' (Published in *Far Eastern Review*, XIX, August 1923, pp. 505-8.)

In any case, it is clear that something other than principle guided the formulation of American policy in the East.

During the decades between the two world wars, discontent and alienation were reflected in a variety of developments in Vietnam. Nationalist thought was germinating. In the ranks of the educated middle classes there was mixed reaction to the results of the First World War. Some accepted the hypocrisy of the 'democracies' which professed self-determination and practised the most brutal colonialism. These more contented Vietnamese sought token reforms within the colonial system. Reforms were not forthcoming, but many of these advocates of mild improvements found rewards for themselves within the French apparatus, as civil servants and lesser functionaries. Those who were not so easily satisfied began the long task of adapting Western political concepts to the social problems of colonized Asia. It was some years before genuinely original political doctrine was formulated. In the meantime, imitation and crude adaptation of alien political practice were commonplace. Most of the earliest political

parties were models of foreign parties, included one styled after the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai Shek.

France was in full command of the situation throughout this period. On February 9, 1930, the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD) led an abortive revolt. The French garrisons were so efficient in dealing with this uprising that this nationalist party was thoroughly crushed, not to appear again for 15 years. The Russian Revolution impressed many Vietnamese intellectuals. Three small groupings joined forces in 1930 to form the Indo-Chinese Communist Party, which increased its numbers steadily, though slowly, in the face of great hardships. In these difficult years the Communists organized some strikes and, for a time, established Soviets at Ha Tinh and Nghe An, but there was no organized national movement. Occasional strikes in the Mekong delta region and in the cities could not threaten seriously the French administrative apparatus. All attempts to build a nationwide movement were dealt with swiftly and ruthlessly by French mercenaries. Scores of French prisons and labour camps housed more than 10,000 political prisoners by 1932. The Vietnamese have many martyrs from these years; more numerous are the unknown dead, whose graves are marked only 'coolie'. Many others were driven into exile, which was not without certain advantages. Exile made of Ho Chi Minh and others true internationalists, fully conscious of the dimensions of their struggle.

The hardships of long-term political struggle convinced certain of the discontented elements of Vietnamese society that salvation was rather to be found spiritually. Religious revival took strange new forms, and spread throughout the countryside. Foremost among the new sects were the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai, the latter being the more bizarre of the two. (Cao Daiism combined elements of Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism, and included Victor Hugo among its saints.) These sects developed wide followings, and were consequently feared and distrusted by the French. Persecution of the sects caused them to build their own armed communities; there was no avoiding the worldly struggle. As the wheel has come full circle, they have played

increasingly important political roles, being integrated into the main organizations of political conflict.

In these same decades, Japan moved steadily towards absolute hegemony in Asia. She had occupied Korea in 1910, and in the early 1930s she moved to assert her sovereignty in Manchuria. In 1937 she invaded north China. For reasons mentioned earlier, these actions did not at first alarm the United States. Trade and co-operation with Japan were of great interest to American businessmen, for Japan provided indirect access to the rest of Asia. The largest portion of American investment in the East was directly or indirectly tied to Japan. It took, therefore, many years for the United States to come to regard Japan as an enemy. Before America finally endorsed Chiang Kai Shek, Japanese domination of China seemed preferable to an independent republic in the eyes of many American policy-makers.

When France fell to the Nazis, Japan saw her opportunity in Indo-China. America felt the increasing threat of Japanese competition, and made clear her determination to allow Japan no more than secondary status in Asia. Roosevelt did not hesitate to warn the Vichy Government that France would lose Indo-China after the war if she yielded it to Japan. The French then callously appealed to Hitler to maintain white (Franco-German) supremacy over the colony; this explicitly racist proposal was rejected by the Axis. The Vichy Government soon capitulated to the demands of the Japanese. The occupation of Indo-China, together with Thailand's decision to join the Axis, gave Japan strong positions for her invasions of the rest of Southern Asia. In Indo-China the French colonial apparatus was left intact; it merely served new masters. Elsewhere, such as in Burma and Java, the Japanese found Asian collaborators by skilfully exploiting the nationalist and anti-Western sentiments with their slogan 'Asia for the Asians'. Both the use of French collaborators in Indo-China and the promotion of 'nationalist' collaborators in other parts of Asia reflected a pragmatic attempt on the part of the Japanese to use the resources of the regions without disturbing the existing social structures.

The interests of Japan and the USA were irreconcilable. Over

many years, us leaders had proposed to the Japanese an unequal partnership. The Washington Naval Conference had explicitly prescribed a militarily inferior position for the Japanese. Japan decided that co-operation with the United States was a difficult matter, and the course on which she finally embarked was an open challenge to Washington. It always carried with it the risk of war. Provocative acts did not begin with Pearl Harbour. The attack on the us gunboat *Panay* was symbolic both of Japan's determination and of America's ever-present naval threat. Protection of American interests in China had long dictated the presence of American warships in the Orient. The final rupture between the United States and Japan was no accident. The bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 6, 1941, was only the *coup de grâce*.

American war aims in the Pacific were somewhat complicated. Most obviously, the United States sought to defeat Japan militarily. Towards this end, America recruited an eclectic combination of allies, including communist-led nationalist movements. But the political objectives of the war were not so simple. Even before entering the war, President Roosevelt contemplated the prospective post-war gains. The breaking-up of the British Empire would be of singular importance to American business interests. On January 12, 1940, the President addressed a group of publishers and editors of business magazines as follows:

'As you know, the British need money in this war. They own lots of things all over the world . . . such as tramways and electric light companies. Well, in carrying on this war, the British may have to part with that control and we, perhaps, can step in or arrange—make the financial arrangements for eventual local ownership. It is a terribly interesting thing and one of the most important things for our future trade is to study it in that light.'

(Press Conference 614-A.)

Thus, throughout the war, Roosevelt was not particularly interested in upholding Churchill's plans for the restoration of the Empire. He specifically endorsed independence for British India.

At an early point in the war, it was vaguely decided that a 'strong' China, under Chiang Kai Shek, would be the basis of the post-war Asia policy. That is to say, co-operation with a China which would be 'strong' in comparison with the rest of Asia and weak by comparison with the United States was the American plan for stabilizing the East. The Americans correctly noted two features of traditional Western imperialism which were inimical to the interests of American capitalism. First, American access to the colonies of the British Empire was strictly limited by the policies of the rival power. There was no equality, no 'open door', so far as trade with imperial colonies was concerned. This was an important ingredient in the spirit of anti-colonialism which was nurtured in the U.S.A. even in the period of industrial expansion. Secondly, brutal rule was seen to be self-defeating, by causing unrest and social revolution. The Americans had seen in the case of Mexico that even non-communist national revolutions could result in the expropriation of American property. Prudent decision-makers, therefore, favoured a policy of staunch lip-service to anti-colonialism and national independence, combined with aid to traditional native ruling élites which would not be likely to implement programmes of far-reaching social change. A partnership with local ruling groups and business interests seemed preferable to the risk of complete colonization. China provided one model for this policy. In the Philippines, fear of communist-led nationalist guerrillas prompted immediate plans for post-war independence along the same lines.

The Vietnam problem was more difficult. Unlike China and the Philippines, Indo-China was a region which had not been penetrated by American capital and in which there was almost no American influence. The French had taken no steps to cultivate local rulers. No understanding had been reached with corrupt 'nationalists' to provide nominal independence. A critical situation had developed quite rapidly. The French were collaborating with the Japanese. Taking advantage of the confusion, which was inevitable, given the mutual distrust of the Japanese and the French, many exiled Vietnamese nationalists began to slip across the border from Southern China and set



about organizing a resistance movement. The chief initiative in this enterprise was taken by the communists. A coalition known as the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (or simply Viet Minh) was formed, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. The breadth of participation in this coalition was most impressive. The Viet Minh built its resistance movement throughout the countryside, waging a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the Japanese and their collaborators. The US and its allies accepted the support of the Viet Minh and dropped some supplies to the guerrillas from the air. The communist leadership of the Viet Minh was, of course, no secret. As the war drew to a close, the United States was faced with the problem of how best to 'stabilize' Vietnam and how best to make it accessible to 'American interests'.

As I have already mentioned, the United States threatened the Vichy Government with the loss of Indo-China following the war. In the course of the war the Free French were likewise excluded from big-power conferences at which the fate of Indo-China was discussed. The United States preferred Chiang Kai Shek's China as the fourth power to consider such questions. As late as 1944 President Roosevelt spoke vaguely of a trusteeship system as the best solution to the Indo-China question. Such proposals were discussed in the light of the United Nations organization, which was soon to be established. But trusteeships involved gradual steps towards independence and local self-government. The Viet Minh was ahead of schedule.

On March 9, 1945 the Japanese staged a *coup*, thereby taking full and direct control of Indo-China. They feared that the French collaborators would be unreliable elements as the Allied forces moved nearer to total victory. Might they not opportunistically switch sides? The Japanese immediately incarcerated large numbers of Frenchmen. Many of these were also forced to suffer public humiliation. The Japanese had a sufficient garrison to handle the French, but their forces were wholly inadequate to deal with the Viet Minh. They attempted to woo some of the nationalists, and managed to coax a certain Bao Dai to accept the position of 'Emperor' under their tutelage. Their attempts to form youth corps and Vietnamese military units to fight on their

side failed for the most part: they merely provided the opportunity for many Vietnamese to learn military skills and to acquire weapons for the Viet Minh forces. In the spring of 1945 the gains of the Viet Minh were enormous: large areas, especially in the north, were consolidated. By the summer, they were in a position to claim *de facto* state power.

These various events created an atmosphere of crisis for American decision-makers in 1945. The power of communist forces emerging in liberated Europe had caused many policy planners to re-evaluate wartime strategy. Moreover, at the 1944 convention of the Democratic Party in the USA, conservative elements asserted themselves forcefully. Vice-President Henry Wallace was replaced by Harry S. Truman. Subsequently, important changes took place in the State Department: Secretary Edward R. Stettinius appointed men like Dean Rusk and Nelson Rockefeller as his assistants in charting a somewhat different foreign policy. Roosevelt's death and the consequent further reorganization of personnel made the shift decisive. Secretary of State Byrnes was unequivocal in his anti-communism. The main concern of this new team was not the military defeat of Japan. In effect, that was already assured: in every important respect the Japanese Navy and Air Force had been rendered inoperative by the spring of 1945. Early in the spring, the Japanese communicated with Soviet leaders about possible surrender terms, and the Russians in turn passed this information on to the United States. But by this time, the Americans were preoccupied with more subtle political matters.

The United States wanted undisputed hegemony in the post-war world. The Russians were no real threat. Devastated by war, they could not match the military and industrial might of the USA. Moreover, Stalin's ideological influence was hardly a direct threat to America. Indeed, Stalin had already shown his willingness to counsel against revolutionary seizures of power in order to keep alive the 'united front'. In the case of France, for example, the communist-led underground movement (FFI) was on the verge of taking power when Maurice Thorez returned from his prolonged stay in Moscow. Thorez convinced his party that the

overall interests of the international communist movement dictated that all power be yielded to the Paris government of de Gaulle. In Asia, however, there was a somewhat different situation. Enormous anti-colonial movements had grown up during the war. Hundreds of millions of Asians—Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Filipino—were part of a struggle which was transforming their lives irrevocably. Here was a profound social force with which the United States would have to deal.

The Americans sought first to minimize Soviet influence in Asia. They wanted to avert any activity by the Russians in Asia, fearing anything which would encourage the emergence of socialist nations in the regions fighting for independence. The terms of the Yalta Agreements had provided for Russia's entrance into the Asian theatre in the summer of 1945. This factor, plus the power of the nationalist movements, was held firmly in mind when the decision was made to incinerate Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The full reasons for this decision are, of course, complicated. The use of two different kinds of atomic bombs on the two cities, however, suggests a calculated experimentation, at the cost of thousands of lives. Throughout the development of the atomic bomb, leading policy-makers doubtless contemplated its usefulness for intimidating the Soviet leadership. But the awesome power of the nuclear devices could have been as easily demonstrated by using them on uninhabited areas. The decision to use them on Asian cities can be seen, therefore, to have had two motives. First, there was the psychological motive. Using the A-bombs on the Japanese established a myth, namely, that the bombing of the cities was decisively effective in obtaining the surrender of the Japanese. For reasons which are obvious, the Soviet leaders could not have been expected to believe this myth. But for ordinary people in the West—as well as Asian nationalist leaders who were not privy to the information that the Japanese had sued for peace six months earlier—the myth was readily accepted. Westerners *wanted* to believe that there was some technological alternative to ground warfare. Secondly, the bombs were dropped in order to make clear that American power could—and would—be used to annihilate masses of Asians in a

single stroke. The incineration of the two Japanese cities could hardly have been expected to gain popularity for America in Asia (particularly in view of the often ambiguous attitude of Asian nationalists towards the Japanese). This horrific act could only have been contemplated to terrorize Asian nationalists.

The Viet Minh were not to be intimidated. Throughout August 1945 they moved to consolidate their power. On August 19 a government was set up in Hanoi, and Bao Dai, the former puppet Emperor under the French and Japanese, was persuaded to abdicate. On August 25 a large demonstration was called in Saigon to declare support for the new government. On September 2, 1945 Ho Chi Minh issued a declaration of independence, based, ironically enough, on the American declaration of July 4, 1776. The bold action of the Viet Minh forced the United States to come to a decision on the question of Indo-China. Turning their backs on Ho Chi Minh, the Allies chose to have the Japanese surrender taken by more 'reliable' elements. Rather than allow the Viet Minh to disarm the Japanese and thus to equip themselves for the defence of their independence, the Allies designated to the Kuomintang and to the British responsibility for accepting the Japanese surrender in Indo-China. British colonial troops from Burma and India were to move into the south of Vietnam, and Chiang Kai Shek's troops were to act in the North. In fact, neither set of forces carried out the stated mission properly. In the south, the British-administered troops, under Major-General Douglas Gracey, were more concerned with restoring French control than with disarming and repatriating the Japanese. They immediately secured the release of those Frenchmen who had been belatedly interned by the Japanese, and they rearmed nearly five thousand French troops. The British acted openly to depose the Viet Minh, and on September 23 the French staged a *coup* which was fully supported by the British. The French were anxious to avenge the humiliation they had suffered at the hands of Asians. They correctly sensed that their hegemony was threatened by the Viet Minh, which was in the process of setting up a full governmental apparatus. With the aid of the British, the French undertook mopping-up operations against the Viet

Minh. On more than one occasion, the French and British employed Japanese troops to assist in these. It is worth recalling that the British originally attacked the Viet Minh on the pretence that they were agents of the Japanese.

Meanwhile, in the north, the Kuomintang displayed its characteristic avoidance of danger and fighting. As usual, these corrupt forces were willing to serve the highest or nearest bidder. As a result, they intervened very little, while the Viet Minh effectively took the surrender of the Japanese. Additionally, many of the Kuomintang regulars sold their valuable American weaponry to the Viet Minh. Despite the difficulties in the south, therefore, the Viet Minh was able to take great steps towards consolidating its position in the north during the first months of peace.

The early post-war period appears to have been most confusing to the Viet Minh. They failed to see the United States as an enemy. Of course, the attitude of the United States towards them was ambiguous. The *New York Times*, for example, stated in its editorial of September 21, 1946:

'Ho Chi Minh . . . is Viet Nam. That strange little figure, meek in appearance yet so determined in purpose, emboldened the spirit, the aspirations and probably the future of the new state. He moulded it, he put it through the fire, and he will guide it.'

Likewise, the Viet Minh placed a certain trust in the socialist-communist coalition government in France. Between 1945 and 1947 the Viet Minh attempted to negotiate independence from France, in the most moderate of terms. Viet Minh literature of this period reflects the confident view that the preservation of French colonialism in Indo-China would be supported only by a small clique of French capitalists—and not by the French people, or the American people, or even the American capitalists. But before the end of 1945 the French had moved some fifty thousand troops into southern Vietnam. Negotiations continued; general elections in January of 1946 confirmed the legitimacy of the Viet Minh government. President Ho Chi Minh signed an agreement

with the French in March 1946 which explicitly declared: 'The Government of France recognizes the Republic of Vietnam as a free state having its own government and its parliament, its army and its finances, forming part of the Indo-Chinese federation of the French Union.' The French ignored every promise made to the Viet Minh, and instead rapidly restored their power, moving in tens of thousands of troops. The presence of Foreign Legion troops provoked immediate hostilities in the cities. Massacres were commonplace. French respect for the *modus vivendi* was a farce; as a final show of power, they bombed Haiphong on November 23, 1946. Thousands of innocent civilians were killed. No peaceful settlement was possible.

Had it not been for the Marshall Plan, France would have been in no position to finance the costly, protracted war which ensued. American aid not only made possible the war, but it had a considerable influence on the manner in which the war was conducted. Without commenting on the effect of American aid on the character of the coalition governments in France, we can see that the United States attempted to create a new 'image' for the Indo-Chinese war, increasingly bore the brunt of financing it and soon contemplated direct intervention as it became clear that the French could not win. Initially the United States favoured the restoration of French colonial hegemony in Indo-China, not out of great sympathy for French colonial interests but because France seemed more likely to be co-operative with American investors and more receptive to American aid than a socialist Vietnam. Given France's client relationship to the United States, one would hardly have expected any difficulties for the Americans from the superficially dominant position of France in Indo-China. But the French had to put down an indigenous insurrection, and the United States had to find the least embarrassing means of supporting someone else's brutal colonial war.

The United States made clear to the French that American aid would cease if the war were portrayed blatantly as a colonial conquest. Instead, the Americans argued, it should have the appearance of an anti-communist crusade, a war against sub-

versives, bandits, and rebels, a war to stop the aggressive designs of 'Soviet imperialism'. On the positive side, the war should be fought by a 'more genuine' nationalist force in Vietnam, generously aided by France and her Free World Allies—not by a colonial power. One obvious difficulty, of course, was that the war was already going on, with no pretence of French support of a nationalist government. Indeed, France had acknowledged the legitimacy of the duly elected Ho Chi Minh government in 1946. In the midst of the fighting, the United States proposed to conceal the identity of the side it supported. The policy was difficult enough, but the actual task of finding a 'nationalist' who would subscribe to this absurd scheme was nearly impossible.

This was an American scheme from the very start, largely inspired by the American plans for Chinese and Philippine 'independence'. It was the Americans who eventually selected the appropriate 'nationalist'. President Harry Truman instructed his emissary, William C. Bullitt, to conduct the search. The man Bullitt found was hardly an imaginative choice; it was none other than Bao Dai, earlier distinguished for his collaboration with the Japanese. Bao Dai, moreover, had formally abdicated in favour of the Viet Minh and had received an honorary post as Political Counsellor to Ho Chi Minh. His interest in the Viet Minh government had proved short-lived, and he quickly disappeared into the anonymity of Hong Kong night life. From Hong Kong he moved to the French Riviera, where Bullitt finally encountered him. It took a good deal of convincing to persuade Bao Dai to return to 'politics', but after nearly two years of discussions he agreed to disavow his former abdication and accept the restored title of Emperor. It was not until the summer of 1949 that the French colonial war was officially transformed into a defence of the 'legitimate' government of Bao Dai.

The awkwardness and tardiness of the metamorphosis of the Indo-Chinese War were a source of great irritation to American policy-makers. The notoriety of Bao Dai, moreover, was reminiscent of the stigma attached to the corrupt clique around Chiang Kai Shek; the failure in China was a dangerous omen. All these factors, along with the military failings of the French, soon

convinced American intelligence agents that some other alternative was required. (The clandestine activity of US personnel in this period is the subject of Graham Greene's novel *The Quiet American*.) As the battered French forces continued to wage their futile war, energetic and often naive CIA operatives, sometimes posing as university personnel, began quietly searching out and screening potential replacements for Bao Dai. Their ultimate choice is well known: Ngo Dinh Diem, discovered by Professor Wesley Fishel in Tokyo in 1950.

The war went badly for the French. Since it was conducted by the Ministry of Colonies, rather than by the Ministry of Defence, it was impossible under the regulations of the French Constitution to send conscripts to fight in Indo-China. Thus, French officers directed a motley crew of foreign legionnaires, mercenaries, and the colonial armies against the Viet Minh resistance. Black troops from Africa and the West Indies drew powerful lessons from the experience. They quickly grasped the elementary fact that they were being used as cannon fodder in a racist war of conquest. Moreover, the withdrawal of large numbers of colonial troops from the African garrisons weakened French defences in the northern African colonies. The combination of weakened garrisons, military experience for Africans, and the direct inspiration of the Viet Minh's struggle accounted for the growth of militant resistance movements in Tunisia (1952), Morocco (1953), and Algeria (1954). Such was the international importance of the Vietnamese revolution.

By 1954, France had poured more than 400,000 men into Indo-China. According to Jules Moch, French delegate to the United Nations (quoted in the *New York Times*, July 22, 1954), there were 92,000 fatalities and 114,000 wounded on the French side. The cost of the war was some seven billion dollars. French officers were annihilated in Vietnam as quickly as they could graduate from the French military academy at Saint Cyr. The French became less and less willing to conduct the war. The stage was set for direct American intervention. The *New York Times* of July 4, 1954 reported: 'In the current year the United States is paying 78 per cent of the French Union costs in the

Indo-Chinese war.' As the siege of Dien Bien Phu began early in 1954 the question of American intervention was only one of means. There are indications that John Foster Dulles offered Bidault the use of nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu. Vice-President Nixon released 'trial balloons' in April 1954, attempting to discover public reaction to the possible employment of American ground forces in Vietnam. At the time, a number of factors stood in the way of such immediate military commitments.

In the course of the Senate debate during the battle of Dien Bien Phu such influential politicians as John F. Kennedy opposed US intervention on the side of the French. The memory of Korea remained; the American people were not anxious to send their sons to die in another Asian war. Powerful elements in the US Government had already begun to view this as an opportunity to make a fresh start in Vietnam. The CIA had long desired to get rid of Bao Dai and to discard fully the unattractive image of a colonial war. All parties turned their attention to Geneva.

The negotiations lasted many months. Dien Bien Phu fell on May 8, and the French made clear their intention to leave Vietnam. The British and the Americans utilized a simple strategy: promise them anything. The letter of the Geneva agreements could hardly be construed as contrary to the interests of the Viet Minh. The agreements provided for withdrawal of all foreign military personnel, national unity under a freely elected government, and prohibitions on the introduction of new foreign troops. Behind the scenes, however, the Americans were working hard. On July 7 Bao Dai was persuaded to appoint as premier the American placeman, Ngo Dinh Diem. In addition, the Americans had already begun to introduce their 'advisers' and other civilian personnel secretly into South Vietnam.

The story since 1954 is well known. The responsibility of the Americans is clear. The need now is cogently expressed by the playwright Peter Weiss:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peter Weiss is intimately involved in the international War Crimes Tribunal (see below), including its work of investigation.

'The tenancy of the rich nations is infected with the stench of carrion. The progress that politicians in these countries speak about with voices drowned in tears looks more and more like progress in the elimination of human life. America, that country that shelters many true democrats, appears to the people that strive for freedom and independence as the inheritor of Guernica, Lidice and Maidanek. The neutrals look on, give expression time after time to their protests, but still look for conciliatory aspects and do not want to become at cross purposes with the big commercial partner. The workers in countries in the West with their gigantic union organizations are silent. While they are occupied with taking over middle class values, they shut their eyes to the fact that the proletariat of Africa and Latin America still lives in the most shameful conditions and that they are being massacred by the hundred thousands in South-east Asia. They remain silent, although they are the only ones that could, through a common proclamation, prevent the blood bath. Appeals by students, scientists, artists, and writers have until now been of limited effect. But if millions of workers at last rose to speak and emphatically with all the means at their command demanded that the American acts of war immediately be discontinued, it would be difficult for Johnson and his government to continue the murdering.'

CHAPTER I

*The Press and Vietnam*  
*March-July, 1963*

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The role of the Western press in the Vietnam controversy has been important and revealing. It is from Western newspapers that I derived my earliest understandings of the involvement of the United States, and it is from these same reports that I first became aware of the barbarous character of the war.

On October 21, 1962, for example, the *New York Times* reported: 'Americans and Vietnamese march together, fight together, and die together, and it is hard to get much more involved than that.' Earlier, Mr Homer Bigart, a leading correspondent of the *New York Times*, had spoken of the 'senseless brutality' of the war. In an article which appeared on July 25, 1962, Mr Bigart stated: 'American advisers have seen Viet Cong prisoners summarily shot. They have encountered charred bodies of women and children in villages destroyed by napalm bombs.' Indeed, the use of chemicals in the Vietnam war had been reported in the *New York Times* as early as January 1, 1962. On January 26, 1962, the *New York Times* went so far as to refer to the use of chemicals as a 'crop-killing programme', in the manioc and rice fields of South Vietnam.

Although many of these highly revealing articles were buried in inside pages of the newspapers, a careful reading of the Western press every day made it possible to assess the character of the war from evidence and documentation which could not be easily dismissed. My method in accepting this material was the familiar procedure of 'evidence against interest'. I assumed that when the *New York Times* stood to gain nothing from the publication of an article, it was likely to have no other motive than a desire to print

a truthful account. Rarely does anyone fabricate reports and evidence which are inimical to his interest.

I was soon to discover, however, that although some newspapers were prepared to publish isolated pieces of horrifying information, they had no intention of forming a coherent picture of the war from these reports and every intention of preventing others from doing so. The informed press knew that there was something seriously wrong about the war, but restricted themselves to pedestrian comments and peripheral criticisms. This course preserved their 'responsible' stance but prepared the ground for a later *volte face* when their earlier attitude was widely discredited. (Anyone who thinks this a far-fetched description of how the fourth estate goes about its business would do well to recall the press' attitude to dissenters in other fields—for example, to early critics of the Warren Commission report.)

Repeatedly the press gets away with such disgraceful behaviour through the helplessness of the public. Most people have no access to facts in matters about which their suspicions are aroused, nor the resources to gather information independently. Even if they can remove these formidable obstacles, they still have no means of communicating their findings to the public. I have tried to overcome these difficulties in three ways: first, through a thorough study of the war as reported in Western, Vietnamese and other publications; secondly, by sending observers regularly through the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation to travel widely in Indo-China and return with first-hand reports;<sup>1</sup> and thirdly, by raising my voice whenever possible.

Meanwhile, I have learned certain rules that must be observed in reading the newspapers.

1. Read between the lines.
2. Never underestimate the evil of which men of power are capable.
3. Know the jargon of 'terrorists' versus 'police actions', and translate wherever necessary.

Experienced newspaper readers may care to compile their own glossaries of terms used for 'our' side and 'their' side.

<sup>1</sup> One such report appears at the end of this book.

As the war in Vietnam escalated, slowly and steadily, the *New York Times* came under increasing pressure not to print articles which exposed the lies and distortions of the American Government. An important suppression of vital information occurred as early as March 1962, for example, when the *New York Times* (as well as every other major American daily newspaper) declined to publish an article sent over the wires of the Associated Press by Mr Malcolm Browne, later a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in journalism for his reporting from Vietnam. Mr Browne described in some detail the first national congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, held from February 16 to March 2, 1962. That such information should be denied to the American public is criminal. The article spoke for itself, and people in the West must have access to such information.

The reaction of the editors of the *New York Times* to my own efforts to make these facts known is shameful, but not unique. I choose it from many examples to illustrate these points because it proudly proclaims that it publishes 'all the news that's fit to print'. The following exchanges on Vietnam and journalistic standards were in the spring of 1963.

On March 28 I addressed the following letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*:

Sir,

The United States Government is conducting a war of annihilation in Vietnam. The sole purpose of this war is to retain a brutal and feudal regime in the South and to exterminate all those who resist the dictatorship of the South. A further purpose is an invasion of the North, which is in Communist hands.

The real concern which brings the United States to pursue the brutal policy abandoned by France in Indo-China is the protection of economic interests and the prevention of far-reaching social reforms in that part of the world.

I raise my voice, however, not only because I am in profound disagreement with American objections to social change in Indo-China, but because the war which is being conducted is an atrocity. Napalm jelly gasoline is being used against whole

villages, without warning. Chemical warfare is employed for the purpose of destroying crops and livestock and to starve the population.

The American Government has suppressed the truth about the conduct of this war, the fact that it violates the Geneva agreements concerning Indo-China, that it involves large numbers of American troops, and that it is being conducted in a manner reminiscent of warfare as practised by the Germans in Eastern Europe and the Japanese in South-East Asia. How long will Americans lend themselves to this sort of barbarism?

Yours faithfully,

Bertrand Russell

This appeared on April 8 (April 10 in the International Edition) along with the following editorial:

Bertrand Russell's letter on this page reflects an unfortunate and—despite his eminence as a philosopher—an unthinking receptivity to the most transparent Communist propaganda. It stems from the delusion that communism is no longer a menace and the real threat to world peace comes from the West's efforts to check Communist aggression.

This newspaper has repeatedly made it clear that it does not mirror the Kennedy Administration's viewpoint about American policies in Vietnam. We have criticized its too rigid support of the autocratic Diem regime, which has insufficient popular backing, and we have urged greater freedom for the individual and more rapid social and economic reforms. We have been deeply concerned, as most thinking Americans have, about the increasing military commitment in South Vietnam, and we have not shared Washington's excessive optimism about American successes.

But Lord Russell's letter represents something far beyond reasoned criticism. It represents distortions or half-truths from the first to the last sentences.

The United States Government is not supporting a 'war of annihilation' in Vietnam. There are some 12,000 uniformed Americans there as advisers and trainers, whose bearing, moderation and judgment have done a great deal of good. Their purpose

is not to 'retain a brutal and feudal regime in the South and to exterminate all those who resist', but to prevent an armed takeover of the country by Communist guerrillas, encouraged, and in part supplied, trained, led and organized from North Vietnam or Communist China or both. In the never-never land in which Mr Russell lives, he twists the Communist infiltration of South Vietnam into an imagined US programme to invade the North.

Napalm has been used by the South Vietnamese air force against real or imagined havens of Vietcong guerrillas. Its use has certainly killed innocent people—as other weapons have done in all wars. American advisers have opposed its employment, on both moral and practical grounds, against all except clearly identified military targets. Defoliation chemicals (common weed killers) have been employed largely in attempts, so far with limited success, to strip leaves from heavy jungle growth near lines of communication and base areas.

Lord Russell's statement that the 'real concern' of the United States is 'prevention of far-reaching social reforms' is arrant nonsense, as even he in his heart must know. There are many questions to be raised about the extent and the wisdom of the American commitment in South Vietnam, and about the need for reform of the government that the United States is supporting there; but to call the United States the aggressor and to say nothing about the Communist push for domination against the will of the inhabitants in Vietnam is to make a travesty of justice and a mockery of history.

My reply of April 12 appeared in the *Times* on May 4, but the section which I have bracketed here was omitted:

Sir,

Your editorial of April 8th calls for a reply from me on various counts.

You accuse me of an 'unthinking receptivity to the most transparent communist propaganda'. In fact, I base my remarks about the war in South Vietnam upon careful scrutiny of reports in Western newspapers and in publications of the British and



American Vietnam Committees. My belief, derived from this study, is that US support of Diem is driving more and more of the inhabitants of South Vietnam into the arms of the Communists—a result to be deplored.

You accuse me of distorting the truth or of speaking only half truths, but this is a charge which may be turned against you. I agree with the point of view that you express in your second paragraph. But, in my letter, I give reasons for my point of view: it is, I suppose, these reasons to which you take exception. They are: (1) that the purpose of the war is to retain 'a brutal and feudal regime in South Vietnam and (2) to exterminate all who resist Diem's dictatorship'; (3) that the US is pursuing a brutal policy (abandoned by France in Indo-China) in order to protect economic interests and to prevent far-reaching social reforms in South Vietnam; and (4) that the war is an atrocity. It is an atrocity because such things as napalm bombs are being used—bombs which do not simply kill, but which burn and torture—and that chemical warfare is employed to destroy crops and livestock and so to starve the people of South Vietnam. I did not mention innumerable appalling atrocities carried out by Diem's Government because for these America has only the indirect responsibility involved in the continued support of Diem.

You say in your fifth paragraph that napalm bombs have been used, but only against 'real or imagined havens of Vietcong guerrillas' and have 'certainly killed innocent people'. You say, however, that 'American advisers' have opposed the use of these bombs. This may be true, but it is less than a half truth. You have said in your fourth paragraph that Americans are in Vietnam only as advisers and trainers. This is not true, and invalidates your explanation concerning the napalm bombs. I suggest that you read the report of Richard Hughes on conditions in Vietnam in the (London) *Sunday Times*, January 13, 1963—a journal by no means pro-Communist, anti-American or even very liberal—in the course of which he speaks of 'the Washington fiction that no United States troops are involved in combat and that United States officers and "trainers" are on the scene merely to "advise, observe, support and assist".' He says, also: 'The Americans are

now operating more than 200 helicopters and scores of reconnaissance and troop transport planes in the combat areas. Probably half of all bombing and strafing missions by the South Vietnam air force are undertaken by Americans serving as pilots and co-pilots.'

[In your fifth paragraph you also endeavour to minimize the effect of 'defoliation chemicals' by calling them 'common weed-killers'. If sprayed, as they must be to achieve the end for which you say they are intended, certain common weedkillers would destroy many crops and animals. But, in fact, chemicals other than common weedkillers have been used (some of these were once used as 'common weedkillers', but were found to be too dangerous). The US Government has been charged by the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross, after a year's study by them of the chemicals sprayed in South Vietnam and their effect upon the health of human beings, animals and crops, with using weed killers which, in the large doses used, are harmful; with using white arsenic, various kinds of arsenite sodium and arsenite calcium, lead manganese arsenates, DNP and DNC (which inflame and eat into human flesh); and calcic cyanamide (which has 'caused leaves, flowers and fruit to fall, killed big cattle like buffaloes and cows, and seriously affected thousands' of the inhabitants of South Vietnam); with having spread these poisonous chemicals on large and densely populated areas of South Vietnam. Admittedly, the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross is, as its name suggests, allied with those opposing the US-supported Diem regime, but its published findings cannot be ignored since it has urged international investigation of the situation. The use of these weapons, napalm bombs and chemicals, constitutes and results in atrocities and points to the fact that this is 'a war of annihilation'.]

I criticize 'atrocities' where I find them. I was considered too anti-Communist by the liberals of the US in Stalin's day for objecting to the atrocities that occurred in Russia at that time. I have recently been carrying on a correspondence concerning the hardships suffered by Jews in Communist countries. I see no reason to suppose that atrocities are to be condoned when committed by Western Governments. It is not I, but you, who, in

attempting to whitewash US action in South Vietnam, are speaking half-truths and are thereby doing the very thing of which you accuse me: ignoring the Communist push for domination. Moreover, the emulation of what the West says it considers most dastardly in Communist behaviour is unlikely to win support for what the West says it stands for anywhere in the world. It makes a mockery of the phrase so beloved by the West—'The Free World'.

Two other accusations you make against me: you say that 'to call the US the aggressor and to say nothing about the Communist push for domination against the will of the inhabitants in Vietnam is to make a travesty of justice and a mockery of history'. The latter is a fine peroration. But I would call to your attention the fact that you yourself had already said (paragraph 2) that you have criticized the US Government's 'support of the autocratic Diem regime which has insufficient popular backing'. I would also call your attention to the following bit of history: the Geneva Conference of 1954 proposed a compromise concerning Vietnam which was admirable and which would have solved the problems of that country if it had been observed. The signatories were Molotov and Selwyn Lloyd who signed as co-Chairmen representing East and West respectively. The agreement reached by this Conference was, with the backing of the US, not observed by South Vietnam. A new regime was established in South Vietnam under a dictator named Diem of whom *Time* says (November 21, 1960): 'Diem has ruled with rigged elections, a muzzled Press, and political re-education camps that now hold thirty thousand.'

I can only deduce that, in your failure to face the facts, and to publicize them, concerning the war in South Vietnam you are, to use your own phraseology, indulging in 'arrant nonsense as even you in your heart must know.'

Yours faithfully,  
Bertrand Russell

Noting that the crucial evidence supporting my defence against the editorial of April 8 had been omitted in the *Times*' version of my letter, I wrote in protest:

Sir,

I am profoundly shocked by the journalistic standards of the *New York Times*. I have been engaged in a public controversy with the *New York Times* concerning a matter of international importance, namely, the atrocities presently being carried out by the Government of the United States in Vietnam. You attacked me in an editorial, accusing me of arrant nonsense and of stating things without evidence to substantiate them. In my reply to that attack, I presented the evidence in the course of a long letter. You published my letter, omitting my evidence and without even an indication by means of dots to suggest that the letter had been cut or shortened. I have had correspondence and controversy in the pages of *Izvestia* and *Pravda* and I wish to point out to you that never have I been so shabbily treated, never have *Izvestia* and *Pravda* behaved in a manner comparably dishonest.

I am writing to request you to publish the evidence which you omitted from my last letter . . . [Here followed the text which appeared in brackets above.]

Yours faithfully,  
Bertrand Russell

None of the remainder of my correspondence with the *New York Times* on this matter was published in the *Times*. It is published here without further comment since it speaks for itself:

May 17, 1963

My dear Lord Russell:

The *New York Times*' journalistic standards, which you denounce, need no defence from me. The fact is that the *Times* has given you more than ample space in which to air your views.

Your second letter (published May 4) was longer than the maximum we allow. We will not permit even you to monopolize our letters columns. In accordance with our long standing procedure, we reserve the right to cut without notice—and in this instance we did find it necessary to cut an overly long letter of yours to bring it down to the required length. The excision was made solely on account of excess length of the original and for no

other reason, nor did it in any way alter the sense of your letter.

We exercised our own judgment in selecting the paragraph to cut. The one selected contained detailed allegations relating to the general charge of chemical warfare. I haven't the slightest doubt that you would have objected equally as vociferously no matter which paragraph, sentence or phrases had been cut. In respect to the dots you mention, we never use them in our letters column.

Permit me to remind you that in our editorial of April 8, replying to your first letter (which was also published that day), we fully acknowledged that chemicals—specifically napalm—had been used in South Vietnam by the Government forces. This is not and never was the point at issue. The phrase 'arrant nonsense' was specifically applied to your (and the Communist) allegation that the United States' 'real concern' is to prevent social reforms in South Vietnam. That charge still stands as the arrant nonsense we said it was.

Sincerely yours,

John B. Oakes

Editor of the Editorial Page

June 5, 1963

Dear Mr Oakes,

Thank you for your letter of May 17th. I note that you now maintain that what you denied emphatically in an editorial in your newspaper was entirely known to you. I suggest therefore, that it is not the journalistic standards of the *New York Times* which need denouncing, but the integrity of its Editor.

You say that you have not the slightest doubt that I should have objected equally no matter which paragraph or sentence or phrases had been cut. That is not so. The reason it is not so is that you took such care to omit precisely those sentences which specify the chemicals used and the absence of which provoked an attack upon me by the *New York Times* previously. The further point that these chemicals were not merely weedkillers, but destroyed livestock, crops, and killed human beings, was never admitted by the *New York Times*.

I further point out that the *New York Times* of January 19,

1962, states that of 2,600 villages in Vietnam, nearly 1,400 have been destroyed because of military action by the United States and the Diem Government, in which both chemicals and napalm were used. You take exception to my designation of this conduct as 'a war of atrocity'. You attack me publicly for making such charges without substantiation. You omit the evidence in my reply to your attack when publishing it, and you write me a letter in which you say that you allow me ample space in which to air my views. You say, further, that you need make no defence of the journalistic standards of the *New York Times*. I am impressed by your confidence and, therefore, request permission to publish this correspondence forthwith.

Yours faithfully,

Bertrand Russell

July 3, 1963

Dear Lord Russell:

Your letter of June 5th is again full of the kind of 'distortions or half-truths' which we correctly ascribed to you in our editorial of April 8th. For example, we did not deny in our editorial that napalm was used; we specifically admitted it. We did not deny that defoliation chemicals were used; we specifically admitted it. We did not challenge you to specify the other chemicals, if any, that were used; yet you insist that this is the question that 'provoked' our editorial attack on you.

What 'provoked' our editorial was your own letter of March 28th, sent to the *Times* for publication, and published on April 8th, in which you accused the United States of 'conducting a war of annihilation' in Vietnam, the 'sole purpose' of which was 'to retain a brutal and futile<sup>1</sup> regime in the south', to protect economic interests and to prevent 'far-reaching social reforms in that part of the world.' As I have already informed you in my letter of May 17th, this is the kind of language that we described in our editorial of April 8th as 'arrant nonsense'; and arrant nonsense, I repeat, it is.

<sup>1</sup> [sic] I wrote *feudal*, not *futile*.

Apropos of your comment about *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, do you honestly believe that they would have published a letter attacking the USSR, written in terms comparable to those you used about the United States in your letter of March 28th?

If you publish this correspondence, I trust you will also publish with it your letter to us of March 28th and our editorial reply of April 8th, as well as this letter.

Sincerely yours,  
John B. Oakes  
Editor of the Editorial Page

July 27, 1963

Dear Mr Oakes,

Let us consider where the 'half-truths' lie. You did not deny that napalm was used but you did deny that Americans were involved in its use. In your editorial of April 10, you state: 'American advisers have opposed its employment, on both moral and practical grounds, against all except clearly identified military targets'. This is not true. Your own reports of January 19, 1962, refer to the destruction of nearly 1,400 villages. Napalm and chemicals were used in the course of this devastation.

You state that chemicals employed were common weedkillers and were intended solely to strip leaves from jungle growth. This is untrue. The evidence in my letter which you suppressed establishes its untruth which is, of course, why you disallow it.

Considering that my charge of atrocity is based upon the ruthless use of chemicals and jelly-gasoline, the wholesale devastation of civilian populations in their villages and the use of concentration camps, it would appear that these are the facts to which you object when you refer to my statement as 'arrant nonsense, distortion and half-truth from the first to the last sentence'. Clearly, 'the first to the last sentences' is at least inclusive of my remarks on chemicals and napalm. You chose to cut my paragraphs on the specific chemicals used because these paragraphs served to show that the chemicals affected human beings and animals and were not merely weedkillers. You are not honest when you contend that this information was already acknow-

ledged by the *New York Times*. It is precisely the distinction between chemicals which are weedkillers and chemicals which rot human flesh and kill those who come in contact with them that I have sought to make in the course of making clear to the American public the nature of the barbarous war conducted by their Government in South Vietnam.

That Diem's regime is 'futile' and serves American economic interests, I should be willing to stand by before any impartial mind.

I agree that *Pravda* and *Izvestia* might well suppress a letter attacking the USSR as forthrightly as my letter on Vietnam attacks the United States. This, however, was not the point I was making, as you well know. Never have *Izvestia* or *Pravda* purported to publish a letter of mine while omitting surreptitiously the very evidence in dispute in the course of an exchange. This form of dishonesty is, to my mind, more perfidious than the absence of publication of a letter. It is conscious fraud.

Yours faithfully,  
Bertrand Russell.

## CHAPTER 2

*War and Atrocity in Vietnam*  
*March 13, 1964*

The war in Vietnam is eighteen years old.<sup>1</sup> It began as a broad movement of resistance to the French under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, a Communist. The French fought with ferocity against an unarmed peasantry. Using guerrilla tactics, the Vietnamese drove the French out of the North of Vietnam and finally defeated them in the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The negotiations at Geneva led to the establishment of an international Commission, intended to stabilize peace and watch over any attempt at foreign intervention.

Before developing what I wish to say about this subject, I should like to make clear that the facts in this article are taken from daily papers and similar sources. Many are taken from bulletins of committees concerned with Vietnam. Some are from reports of the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross and others from a very interesting book by Wilfred G. Burchett called *The Furtive War*. Many of the facts have passed unscathed through the crucible of American denial. Many of them have been accepted even by the American authorities. All of them, I have good reason to believe, are incontrovertible.

It is important to realize that, since the French were defeated finally at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the war has been conducted surreptitiously under American direction. A substantial number of American forces began to be committed there after the French withdrawal and the Geneva talks. One of the most important aspects of this war has been that the United States pretended for many years that no such war was taking place and that the war

<sup>1</sup> This essay was written in March 1964.

which was not taking place was not being conducted by Americans. I have experienced some frustration in attempting to bring to light the fact that the war has been taking place and that Americans have been deeply involved in its conduct. At first, Western newspapers and even persons connected with the peace movement in the West held that there was no evidence of American direction of this war. The *New York Times* stated this several times. Finally, in the course of controversy, it was allowed that American participation was solely in an advisory capacity.

When it was alleged that chemicals were being employed by the United States forces in Vietnam, it was first denied and then alleged that the chemicals employed were used against American advice and wishes. It was then admitted that they were used under the direction of the United States, but it was said that chemicals were harmless to human beings and were intended solely for the purpose of clearing vegetation and foliage. I brought to public attention impressive and documented evidence concerning the use of additional chemicals and asked for international investigation of these allegations and the evidence adduced to support them. I was informed by various Western newspapers that no observers had found harmful results through the use of these chemicals and that no condemnatory comment had been made by the International Control Commission.

It is odd that this is advanced on behalf of that Commission. The function of the Commission was to regulate and prevent intervention from the outside. The failure of this International Commission to make known its observation of American participation was in violation of its mandate and does not inspire confidence in its ability to detect chemicals where it failed adequately to detect armed forces, aircraft, military supplies and a full-scale war. I shall wish to return to these more contemporary aspects of the war in Vietnam. It is sufficient here to note that the extraordinary war which has been raging in Vietnam managed to elude the juridical commitments of the Geneva agreements. It encompassed repression and extermination without great hindrance on the part of the Control Commissions set up at Geneva, escaped for some time the notice of the Western press

and enjoyed restrained consideration by those nominally committed to opposition to Cold War, small wars and wars of annihilation.

The history of French and Vietnamese relations, particularly in the North, is much the same as that of the United States and South Vietnam. At the time of the conclusion of the Second World War, a movement of rebellion began, acquired new strength and culminated in the Geneva decisions. Vietnam was to be partitioned for an interim period, with the North under the control of the forces of Ho Chi Minh, and the South under the control of pro-Western groups. It was agreed that there would be a general election throughout Vietnam, out of which unification and neutralization were expected to come. The Geneva Conferences of 1954 were designed to bring neutralization to all of Indo-China. The United States, though not a signatory to these agreements, accepted them in name and professed them to be the basis of American policy in Indo-China.

In fact, the United States quickly decided that it was impossible to permit a general election, in view of what it considered to be 'the disturbed state of the country'. The United States began to intervene actively with arms, money and men, and established in power a ruling oligarchy subservient to American interests. This direct foreign intervention destroyed the purpose of the Geneva agreements and was a test for the International Control Commission. Its failure to resist this violation steadfastly prepared the way for violence, the intrusion of the Cold War and the present threat to the peace of the world in South East Asia.

John Foster Dulles had urged the use of nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu. His desire to encompass the area in the Cold War led to the formation of the South East Asia Treaty Organization. The purpose of this body was to forestall neutrality and to forge a military alliance of anti-communists. The United States favoured Ngo Dinh Diem, a rich refugee from North Vietnam. He and his family, together with the Nhu family, represented a group of landowners and the Catholic hierarchy in Vietnam—a small, closely-knit circle. The Diem family installed officers and relatives in various provinces, who administered them virtually

as private estates. Various religious sects and cults in Vietnam were subdued because they failed to prove sufficiently loyal to the Diem regime. The Diem and Nhu families were dependent upon American backing for their power. American policy aimed at keeping South Vietnam in the anti-Communist camp and at opposing all groups not subservient to that purpose. The 'Vietcong'<sup>1</sup> were to be eradicated, despite the fact that they were neutralist. Diem's regime was one of terror and persecution. Ghastly tortures were inflicted upon the peasants. It is instructive that it has been possible for 350,000 people to be placed in camps as political prisoners and for the greater part of the rural population to be uprooted and put in camps without vigorous protest taking place. Part of the responsibility for this default lies with the suppression of facts which, until the last two years, characterized Western reports about Vietnam. Part of the fault lies with the silence of peace groups, frightened to appear to be seen supporting 'the Communist side' of things.

One case is related in *The Furtive War*. It is that of a young girl:

'One day', she says, 'I came home and there were two security agents waiting for me. I was taken to the town of Faifo and for months on end I was tortured very badly . . . Once I recovered

<sup>1</sup> 'Vietcong'. The United States has sought to slur the guerrilla movement by naming it the 'Vietcong'. 'Vietcong' means 'Vietnamese Commies'. No group in South Vietnam refers to itself by that abbreviated name. Those who chose that name for the guerrillas ignored something very important. They relied on the fact that in the USA the term 'Communist' is enough to alarm the public and to smear any movement, and never realized until too late what favourable connotations 'Communist' has elsewhere. The US has, by its own intended slander, reinforced the good image Communists have had in South-East Asia through associating Communism with movements for national liberation, and movements of the people for independence and social justice. It is ironic that when the US realized its grave blunder, it sought to rectify the situation by renaming the liberators. As reported in the *New York Times* on June 5, 1962, the United States Information Agency sponsored a contest 'for a new name for the Vietcong guerrillas', admitting that it didn't think 'communist is the type of a name to inspire hatred among the country's illiterate masses'. It offered a cash prize for a 'colloquial peasant term implying disgust or ridicule.' In South Vietnam, the only names which meet that test are 'French' and 'American'.

consciousness and found I was stark naked, blood oozing from wounds all over my body. There were others in the cell. I heard a woman moaning, and in the half dark saw a woman in a pool of blood. She had been beaten into having a miscarriage. Then I made out an old man. An eye had been gouged out and he was dying. Alongside him was a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old boy, also dead; a little further away, another dead youth with his head split open. They had thrown me there, hoping the sight of this would break me down.'

Finally, she was covertly conveyed to North Vietnam. This story was subsequently confirmed by neutral enquirers. It is typical of many among the 350,000 political prisoners.

The vast majority of peasants support the guerrillas. It is estimated that 160,000 have died and as many as 700,000 have been maimed. In order to combat the support of the population, Diem and the Americans instituted what were called 'strategic hamlets', into which the inhabitants of rural areas and existing villages were, in cruel circumstances, moved at a moment's notice. 'Strategic hamlets' were, in reality, prisons. Those who had been forcibly brought into them were unable to get out. These 'hamlets' were surrounded by spikes, moats and barbed wire and were patrolled by guards with dogs. They have all the character of concentration camps. The *Observer* estimated that sixty-five per cent of the rural population, or over seven million people, were inside these 'hamlets' by mid-1963. Their establishment was the result of a decision on the part of the United States, publicly set out by W. W. Rostow, an adviser of the State Department. He suggested that Vietnam should be used as an experimental area for the development of anti-guerrilla techniques and weapons by American forces.

The rural population was stuffed into the 'strategic hamlets' so that they would be shut off from the guerrilla forces, who depended for their food and manpower upon them. I wrote letters to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* in 1963 in which I sought to set out the full nature of this war, which I designated as a war of annihilation and atrocity. The *New*

*York Times* vigorously denounced me for making such a charge.<sup>1</sup>

The State Department denied that chemicals were used in Vietnam and the *New York Times* admitted editorially that weed-killers were used, but stated that napalm was not used by Americans but only by Vietnamese governmental forces. Madame Nhu stated: 'If they don't like our chemicals, why don't they get out of our jungles?' The *New York Times* failed to remember its own reports of June 19, 1962, which refer to the destruction of nearly 1,400 villages by governmental forces. Napalm and chemicals were used in the course of this devastation. My charge of atrocity was based upon the ruthless use of chemicals and jelly-gasoline, the devastation of civilian populations, and the use of concentration camps.

In addition to uprooting the population and establishing the hamlets, the United States sent special helicopters which could fire small rockets and ammunition in excess of that used by any aircraft during the Second World War. The Americans, as mentioned earlier, professed that their soldiers and airmen in Vietnam were only there in an advisory capacity and were not responsible for Diem's doings. At the same time, they took great pains to conceal from the world the sort of things that were being done. The *New York Times*, in its editorial comments, illustrates this attempt.

In the course of controversy in the pages of the *Observer*, I sought to bring to the attention of people facts which I had before me in the form of photographs and documents which gave particulars of villages, dates, individuals and specific chemicals, and the use of toxic chemicals in Vietnam by American forces. I have evidence that over 1,000 people were caused severe illness, characterized by vomiting, bleeding, paralysis and loss of sight and consciousness. Other evidence concerned the destruction of fruit trees, vegetables, cattle and domestic animals. Further evidence specified the use of toxic gas on densely populated areas. This evidence was provided in part by the South Vietnam

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1 for full texts of the exchange with the *New York Times*.

Liberation Red Cross and in part by the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam. It has been offered to any international agency for impartial consideration. The replies to my setting out of this evidence were indicative of Western attitudes towards this war. Dennis Bloodworth, the Far Eastern Correspondent of the *Observer*, blandly stated that I was 'apparently referring to the defoliation campaign known as "Operation Ranchhand"' and said that the weedkillers were popularly known in America and had been used widely without causing harm to animals or to humans. He contended that a propaganda campaign was being employed in which it was falsely said that these chemicals had ill effects and suggested that I was assisting in a Communist propaganda campaign.

Let us now consider some of the statements which have appeared in the American and British press over the past two years. These statements will help to indicate the nature of the war and the validity of the editorial protests which have peppered my appeals about the situation in Vietnam. With respect to the contention that Americans served only as advisers, it is worth looking at the *New York Times* of March 17, 1962. It was stated that, after two Vietnamese pilots pulled out of formation and launched a full attack on Diem's palace, Americans were designated to accompany every Vietnamese pilot on a mission. The *Saturday Evening Post* of March 23, 1963, published a long report in which it contradicted the *New York Times'* statement that uniformed Americans were 'solely advisers and trainers'. The *Post's* report said: 'Virtually all the fighting is done by us troops.'

Richard Hughes in the *Sunday Times* of January 13, 1963, speaks of the 'Washington fiction that no United States troops are involved in combat and that United States officers and trainers are on the scene merely to "advise, support and assist"'. The Americans are now operating more than 200 helicopters and scores of reconnaissance and troop transport planes in the combat areas. Probably half of all bombing and strafing missions of the South Vietnam Air Force are undertaken by Americans serving as pilots and co-pilots'. It is illustrative, as well, of the nature of this war to quote the *New York Times* and other American papers for

the period 1962 to 1963. On July 7, 1962, the *New York Times* stated:

'Tactical air support is used extensively. It is difficult to ascertain whether the people who are being killed by napalm and fragmentation bombs are guerrillas or merely farmers.'

On June 16, 1962, the *New York Times* had stated:

'Though the Government makes some attempt to re-educate the captured guerrillas, many are shot.'

The *New York Times* had stated on June 5, 1962:

'Seven leprosy clinics were wiped out by mistake in bombing raids last fall.'

The *Chicago Daily News* is more direct in its statement of January 18, 1963:

'The Government regards Vietcong hospitals as fair targets for ground or air attack. If Vietnamese commanders order an airstrike on a medical centre, the planes bomb and strafe it, even when Americans are along as advisers or instructors. When asked if Americans officially condone these attacks, a US military spokesman said: "There has not been a definite policy ruling for Vietnam". Planes of the Vietnamese Air Force are frequently piloted by Americans.'

The *New York Times* which, editorially, overlooks its news reports (as when it reported the razing of sixty per cent of the villages of the country) might have been advised to listen to the Voice of America on January 6, 1963. It was stated that during the year 1962 the American Air Force carried out 50,000 attacks on villages and upon virtually all of the peasant population outside of the strategic hamlets. This report was confirmed by the United States Defence Department. Senator Michael Mansfield of Montana stated that there were American troops in every fighting action in Vietnam. Senator Mansfield referred to the action as 'America's secret war'. Areas in which heavy guerrilla activity was



reported were denuded of population and then virtually obliterated.

The *New York Times* managed to say on October 21, 1962:

'Americans and Vietnamese march together, fight together and die together, and it is hard to get much more involved than that.'

The *New York Herald Tribune* of November 23, 1962, stated:

'The United States is deeply involved in the biggest secret war in its history. Never have so many US military men been involved in a combat area without any formal programme to inform the public about what is happening. It is a war fought without official public reports or with reports on the number of troops involved or the amount of money and equipment being poured in.'

This war in which seven million people have been placed in internment camps, 160,000 killed, 700,000 tortured, 350,000 imprisoned—requiring 16,000 camps—was described by *The Nation* of 19 January, 1963:

'It is dirty, cruel war. As dirty and as cruel as the war waged by the French forces in Algeria, which so shocked the American conscience.'

*The Nation* continued:

'The truth is that the United States Army, some 10,000 miles from home, is fighting to bolster up an open and brutal dictatorship in an undeclared war that has never received the constitutional sanction of the United States Congress.'

The concealment to which I have referred has included the effects of what were euphemistically called 'weedkillers'. Dennis Bloodworth described how in April, 1963, South Vietnamese officials 'rubbed defoliation on their hands and arms in the presence of foreign correspondents who had selected the canisters from which it should be drawn—and in one case drank some of it' (*Observer*, 9 February, 1964).

It is interesting to examine these weedkillers and their effects. The *Times* of 16 May, 1963, disclosed the death by pesticide of birds of fifty-eight species and described fifty pesticides in widespread use as responsible for 'acute poisoning' of animals and human beings. President Kennedy found it necessary to halt their use and to begin a formal investigation. It was stated in the United States that chemicals used there for purposes of defoliation and the killing of weeds resulted in California in 1,100 cases of serious illness and 150 deaths (*Reuter*, May 16, 1963). Dr Jerome Weisner, the Chief Science Advisor to President Kennedy, designated unregulated use of these weedkillers as potentially 'more dangerous than radioactive fallout'. The actual use of those weedkillers has killed and caused serious illness in Britain, the United States and Scandinavia.

Napalm is a chemical which burns unremittingly and cannot be extinguished. The victims suppurate before terrified observers. The object of this weapon is to create hysteria and panic, as well as to annihilate. This weapon has been used on over 1,400 villages. The United States has spent one million dollars daily on the war. The *Observer* of 8 September, 1963, estimates that there has been an average number of 4,000 casualties monthly. The Central Intelligence Agency has spent an estimated sum monthly of 250,000 dollars on private armies, espionage and intrigue, according to *The Times* of September 10, 1963.

This war was largely conducted under the nominal rule of Diem. Diem grew more and more reckless and was at last murdered in a coup which most agreed was engineered by the United States, after a number of eminent Buddhist priests had burned themselves to death. It is noteworthy that the military oligarchy which succeeded Diem complained that he was secretly attempting to negotiate with the North, but not, noticeably, that his tyranny was unpalatable to the population. The death of Diem brought no amelioration. He had been, in fact, only the tool of the Americans and the sole change brought by his death was that the Americans had open responsibility for whatever they had formerly blamed on Diem and for what was done under his regime.

The National Liberation Front was formed on December 20,

1960, unifying the various elements of revolt against American domination.<sup>1</sup> By 1961, 10,000 Diem troops had deserted and joined the guerrillas with their arms. Let us consider again the treatment accorded to this popular revolt. Homer Bigart described in the *New York Times* of January 30, March 27, March 29, April 1, April 4, April 20, May 10, June 24 and July 25, all in 1962, the following programme:

'The rounding up of the entire rural population in strategic hamlets, the burning of all abandoned villages with the grain and possessions of the inhabitants and the "locking" of strategic villages behind barbed wire.'

It is clear that the majority of the inhabitants wish their country to be neutral. This the American Government cannot tolerate. The euphemisms used for the military operations which have belatedly been acknowledged to be the full responsibility of the United States are instructive. 'Operation Sunrise', 'Pacification of the West' and 'Morning Star' resulted, in the area attacked, in the destruction of all villages, fields and crops. In 1962 alone, according to General Paul D. Harkins, 30,000 peasants were killed. The *Christian Science Monitor* described this process on March 8, 1963:

'Since the army finds sullen villagers and does not know which are pro-Communist and which are merely dissatisfied with Saigon, and since the army must do its job, it shoots anyone seen running or looking dangerous. It often shoots the wrong peasants.'

<sup>1</sup> National Liberation Front. In this common front, all those forces combined who had suffered and decided on armed self-defence. It constitutes an organization of many segments of the population. Communists and non-Communists alike were victims of Diem's regime; they united in self-defence. Much of the leadership comes from the intellectuals, who felt the lack of freedom most severely; doctors, lawyers, and university professors play prominent roles in the committees of the National Liberation Front. Many religious leaders were instrumental in the organizing of the Front. They represent the majority (Buddhists) and the minorities (some Roman Catholics and many ethnic minorities whose unique ways of life were intolerable to the bigot, Ngo Dinh Diem) of South Vietnam's worshippers. Small businessmen and even progressive landlords joined peasant farmers, fishermen, and workers to help form the Front against the common enemy and oppressor.

They are in the records of battle listed as Communists. Anyone killed is automatically a Vietcong.'

On January 25, 1963, *Life* had photos of napalm bombings with the following caption:

'Swooping low across enemy infested land, us pilot instructors watch Vietnamese napalm strike. The object of the fire bombing is to sear all foliage and to flush the enemy into the open.'

'The *New York Times* also reported that us advisers made a tally of guerrilla corpses after each battle to make sure that Diem's troops were using American equipment to maximum advantage, so that they could display a good "bag".' (*Militant*, April 15, 1963.)

In the light of all this evidence, it is strange to find the *New York Times* saying on April 8, 1963:

'Napalm has been used by the South Vietnam Air Force and has certainly killed innocent people, as other weapons have done in all wars. *American* [my emphasis] advisers have opposed its employment on both moral and practical grounds against all except clearly identified military targets.'

This definition appears to include sixty per cent of the villages, hospitals and clinics and all peasants who run or look dangerous. This editorial reply contradicts the *New York Times*' own news reports about American use and insistence upon the use of napalm and other weapons on non-military areas.

Many people in the Pentagon are urging that the war should be extended to an invasion of North Vietnam. President Johnson has announced that those countries which are directing and supplying the (so-called) Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam are playing a deeply dangerous game. A map in the *New York Times* of April 1, 1962, shows the forces of the Liberation Front in the far South around Saigon, and nowhere near the borders of Laos or North Vietnam. Both British and American reporters have stated that primitive guerrilla weapons have been used by the 'Vietcong', in addition to those plentiful supplies captured from the forces of

the nominal government of South Vietnam. The London *Times* of February 24 has stated that it is now considered doubtful whether the Government of South Vietnam has any will to win the war. The *Observer* of March 1, 1964, quoted an American official as stating that the trouble lay in the fact that, while the United States wished to extend the war, the Vietnamese only wanted to end the war.

The situation which faces those who have conducted this war is grave. Should the United States retire and allow victory to the NLF? Should America engage in a naked war of conquest, which will be clearly seen as such, and attempt to establish again a Government dependent entirely upon alien armed force? This 'enemy' controls nearly seventy per cent of South Vietnam. The majority of the NLF was described as non-Communist by former Premier Tran Van Huu in Paris, as reported in the *Observer*. The 'Vietcong' official policy asks for a neutral and disengaged South Vietnam. Despite all the attempts on the part of the Western press to describe this war as one in which a helpless democratic people is under ruthless attack from an aggressive Communist neighbour, it is evident that the NLF is a popular front which has fought an appalling tyranny in South Vietnam and has been opposed by the United States at an incalculable cost to the population. Why is this non-Communist, neutralist, popular front so ruthlessly opposed? Even the Communist North has declared, through Ho Chi Minh, that it wishes to be unified with the South on terms of neutrality in the Cold War and independence of Russia, China and the West (*The Times*, 5 November, 1963).

The policy of the United States which has led to the prospect of an American invasion of North Vietnam will likely bring on Chinese involvement, with war with China as the result. The Soviet Union would then be drawn in. There are few parallels with the war in Vietnam. It has lasted nearly two decades; two Western industrial powers of overwhelming might have fought peasant guerrillas in a manner reminiscent of the Japanese during the Second World War. Everything short of nuclear weapons has been employed. Atrocity has characterized the conduct of the

war throughout its history. The Western press has hesitatingly discovered some of the facts about this war during the last two years. The Western peace movement has been conspicuously silent or restrained in its setting out of the truth about the war. The war has had no purpose. Its extension will bring direct conflict between the Cold War powers, with the possible destruction of mankind as the culmination of this folly. The tragedy in Vietnam indicates the extent to which it is possible to hide or disguise terrible crimes and it is time that people in the West raised their voices for an end to the bloodshed.

## CHAPTER 3

*Free World Barbarism*  
*December, 1964*

A distressing aspect of world politics is the extent to which liberals and even socialists have accepted the basic assumptions of the large and powerful forces behind the Cold War. The role of the United States as a perpetual intruder in the international affairs of other nations is taken as sacred. The right of the United States to interfere in countries, if the social and political policies of those countries are incompatible with private economic power, is happily accepted.

Instead of questioning how private, corporate capitalism and its overseas commitments have become identified with American national interests, liberals and many socialists accept this sinister sleight of hand. It is this sleight of hand which has successfully eliminated the Left in American politics. The investments in the Congo are sacred. If they are threatened, then 'freedom' is proclaimed to be in danger, and the us government and its military arm are brought to bear. If a national uprising takes place in Vietnam, American intervention is called 'response to external aggression'—as if America had the right to treat a country on the borders of China as a part of her national territory.

*Dissent* calls itself a quarterly of socialist opinion. In the summer 1964 issue there are several statements in its editorial, 'Last Chance in Vietnam', which are odd:

'Even us military men no longer say the war in South Vietnam can be won. The question now is how to minimize losses. . . . But if continuing the present policy means a hopeless attrition of the Vietnamese people, it must be stressed that simply for the us to

pull out of the country would mean something quite as inhumane. For it would then be a matter of months, at most, before the country was completely under Communist control, and there would almost certainly follow a slaughter in the South of all those . . . who have fought against the Communists. To abandon these people now, after years of bitter civil war, would be an act of callousness.'

This statement sums up the ignorance and confusion of many well-meaning Americans who choose not to know the true role of the United States in world affairs or the true facts about conflicts such as that in Vietnam.

I am certain that until Americans on the Left challenge the right of the United States to suppress national revolts, to overthrow governments and to equate sordid economic exploitation with national interest or the 'defence of freedom', Goldwater and his fellows will reign, in effect if not in name. If, for example, it is thought legitimate to wage full-scale war against Vietnamese guerrillas, then it is, indeed, half-hearted to stop at the seventeenth parallel—or the Chinese border.

It is not the tactic of a world army for counter-revolution which should be disputed by the American Left; it is the policy itself which should be challenged. If the usurpation of power in America by the military and the large industrialists is credited with national or democratic aims, then both American democracy and world peace are sacrificed by default.

*Dissent* is tragically wrong about Vietnam. I know of few wars fought more cruelly or more destructively, or with a greater display of naked cynicism, than the war waged by the United States against the peasant population of South Vietnam. It is a war which epitomizes the indifference to individual freedom, national sovereignty and popular well-being—which is so characteristic of the world-policy of the military and industrial groups controlling the United States.

My files contain material on the war in Vietnam which tells of horrible inhumanities. It is important to set it before Americans. An examination of the facts exposes several myths: (1) the

National Liberation Front is a Communist organization; (2) the United States is defending the freedom and well-being of the populace; (3) the National Liberation Front is controlled from outside the country; (4) the United States is merely advising and assisting an indigenous government which is responsive to the people of South Vietnam; (5) the United States' calculated attacks on North Vietnam had been provoked by that country.

The Central Intelligence Agency acts as if it were an independent government and on many occasions it has called the tune in South Vietnam. There is not very much to choose between the Central Intelligence Agency and the more polished diplomats who proclaim their love of freedom in Washington and at the United Nations. I have in mind President Johnson and Ambassador Stevenson. These people are responsible for the tragedy in Vietnam.

Much of my data comes from a publication, *Sword of Free Vietnam*, which is the official organ of the Democratic Party of Vietnam, a virulently anti-Communist group composed of former officials and sympathizers of the South Vietnamese governments prior to that of the late Diem. The motto of this party (which I shall refer to hereafter as DPV) is: 'For the defeat of Communism in the interests of Free Men EVERYWHERE!' Much of the data is incomplete as it was compiled up to late 1963. The scope of the tragedies is broader than partial figures can suggest. The accounts of brutality and suffering are conservative.

*Sword of Free Vietnam* quoted General Paul D. Harkins, Chief of US military operations in Vietnam, as stating that in 1962 alone 40,000 Vietnamese were killed. A White Paper of the DPV, for 1963, put the number of dead by late 1962 at 100,000.

By mid-1962 over 5,000,000 people had been put in camps designated by the DPV White Paper as 'concentration camps' and so described in the report quoting the White Paper in the *Los Angeles Times* of October 19, 1962. The Student Peace Union Bulletin for April 1963 stated that by late 1962 as many as 45,000 students alone were kept in South Vietnam's concentration camps. The number of people interned by 1963 on Paulo-Condore Island was 300,000. The DPV White Paper placed the number of

*anti-Communist* nationalists held in internment camps at 100,000. Paulo-Condore Island and other camps for anti-Communist prisoners indicate the vast extent of oppression in South Vietnam.

The leader of Buddhists in the National Liberation Front is the Venerable Thich Thien Hao. His estimates concerning the results of the war are: 160,000 dead by mid-1963; 700,000 tortured and maimed; 400,000 imprisoned; 31,000 raped; 3,000 disembowelled with livers cut out while alive; 4,000 burned alive; 1,000 temples destroyed; 46 villages attacked with poisonous chemicals; 16,000 camps existing or under construction.

By mid-1962 over half of South Vietnam's rural population was held in these 'strategic hamlets' and by mid-1963 their number had risen to over seven million. These camps are distinguished by spikes, moats, machine gun turrets, patrols and forced labour. The appellation 'concentration camp' given by the DPV White Paper seems just. The DPV report for September 1963 has a particularly sobering fact: forty per cent of 'enemy casualties' claimed by the government are those of guerrillas and sixty per cent are those of peasants not involved in the military struggle.

It is revealing that by mid-1963 the secret police numbered 300,000. So huge an army of oppressors suggests the suffering which has been inflicted and if the excesses of each agent on each individual occasion were collated, we should have an adequate idea of the kind of 'freedom' upheld by the United States in Vietnam.

The US Government embarked on the programme of 'strategic villages' under the Staley-Taylor plan. The declared intention was to separate guerrillas from the peasantry, depriving them of food, shelter and recruits. The DPV report for September 1963 also gave an account of life in the 'strategic hamlets':

'Strategic hamlets mean forced labour under 300,000 secret police. The programme is planned for fifteen million people. It is the only conflict on record in which every means is employed to destroy one's own people. [It is] . . . more severe and brutal than all of the French colonial period. [It includes] . . . series of

barbaric attacks on unarmed peasant villages with American arms and assistance. . . . Three hundred thousand secret police committed numerous atrocities. . . . Farm land and food sources [are] destroyed.'

*Time* magazine of May 17, 1963, was quoted in *Sword of Vietnam* for July 1963:

'Already 8,000,000 villagers—fifty-nine per cent of South Vietnam's population—are living in the 6,000 hamlets so far completed. The basic element of the government's battle plan is to resettle almost the entire rural population in 12,000 "strategic hamlets" with bamboo fences, barbed wire and armed militiamen.'

A DPV report was quoted in a letter to the *Dallas Morning News* of January 1, 1963, in an appalling account of 'resettlement':

'Supposedly the purpose of the fortified villages is to keep the Vietcong out. But barbed wire denies entrance and exit. Vietnamese farmers are forced at gunpoint into these virtual concentration camps. Their homes, possessions and crops are burned. . . . In the province of Kien-Tuong, seven villagers were led to the town square. Their stomachs were slashed, their livers extracted and put on display. These victims were women and children. In another village, a dozen mothers were decapitated before the eyes of compatriots. In still another village, expectant mothers were invited to the square by Government forces to be honoured. Their stomachs were ripped and unborn babies removed. . . .'

On October 18, 1962 DPV submitted a report to the International Control Commission. It specified among its complaints 'decapitations, eviscerations and the public display of murdered women and children. . . . 685,000 people have been maimed by firearms or torture.'

These accounts and these data convey what Tran Van Tung, the leader of the DPV, felt when he stated during an interview on CBS, reported in the DPV Bulletin for September 1963:

'It is certainly an ironic way to protect the peasant masses from

Communism—to herd them behind wire walls under police control, to subject them to intensive indoctrination, to burn their villages. Poor as the Vietnamese are, they are not domestic animals.'

The Federation of American Scientists quoted Defence Department sources on the subject of chemical and biological warfare. It concluded that chemical poisons are used by the United States in South Vietnam and that South Vietnam has been used as a proving ground for chemical and biological warfare.

The United States Government admits that defoliants and other chemicals have been used extensively and that they have caused the destruction of fruit trees, vegetables, cattle and domestic animals. The South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross has offered evidence to any international investigatory body showing that over 1,000 people were caused severe illness accompanied by vomiting, bleeding, paralysis and loss of sight and consciousness.

Other more deadly chemicals cited by the Liberation Red Cross are: white arsenic, arsenite sodium and arsenite calcium, lead manganese arsenates, DNP and DNC (which inflame and eat into human flesh), and calcic cyanamide (which caused leaves, flowers and fruit to fall, killed big cattle and seriously affected thousands of people). These chemicals were sprayed over densely populated areas of considerable size.

Ma Thi Chu, representing the Vietnam Women's Union and the National Liberation Front, told last year's World Congress of Women:

'During the period from January to March [1963], when chemicals were used against 46 villages, 20,000 people were affected, many of them women, children and old people. I have been on the spot. I have seen children with swollen faces and bodies covered with burns. I have met women blinded or suffering from sanguinolent diarrhoea. Many of them died afterwards. I have seen the luxuriant vegetation of the Mekong Delta devastated by chemicals. Our enemies have thus attacked all life, human, animal and vegetable.'

*The Baltimore Sun* of March 21, 1964 carried an Associated Press dispatch from Saigon reporting calmly:

'We supply a phosphorous explosive fired from artillery and from fighter bombers which erupts in a white cloud, burning everything it touches.'

I am reminded of the argument of an eminent Nazi that he did not kill a single Jew; he provided the lorries. On March 22, 1964, the *Washington Star* carried an Associated Press report which said, 'The spectacle of children half-alive with napalm burns across their bodies was revolting to both Vietnamese and Americans.'

When us journals brag of military exploits in Vietnam, it defies human imagination to visualize the horror involved. When, for example, the Voice of America transmitted a US Defence Department report (January 6, 1963) declaring that in 1962 alone the US Air Force carried out 50,000 attacks on virtually the entire rural population outside of strategic hamlets, how much suffering, destruction and brutality corresponded to these familiar words of war?

When the *Saturday Evening Post* declaims 'virtually all of the fighting is done by us troops,' it becomes clear who bears responsibility for the indiscriminate murder, arson and destruction inflicted on this devastated country. The *New York Times* unwittingly reports, on occasion, what it is at pains editorially to deny:

'Many of the "enemy" dead reported by the government to have been shot were ordinary peasants shot down because they fled from villages as troops entered. It is possible that some were Vietcong sympathizers, but others were running away because they did not want to be rounded up for military conscription or forced labour.' (July 25, 1962.)

Nguyen Thai Binh, an anti-Communist leader of DPV, cried out like Job:

'The people cannot follow the strange logic which decrees that they should be shot or imprisoned in the name of freedom. Offered the very finest facilities for forced labour, they rebel; installed in the newest of concentration camps, they protest. Showered with napalm bombs, they are so ungrateful as to think

in terms of a new government. The charred bodies of innocent women, children and peasants, lying in their fields; the bullet-riddled corpses of Buddhist demonstrators . . . this is the South Vietnam of today.'

In spite of the slaughter of their children, the peasants, incredible as it may seem, still dislike the Americans. . . .

These almost unbelievable atrocities have been committed by troops under American authority, an authority chosen by more than half of the voters of America. Those who voted otherwise were, for the most part, demanding even harsher measures. In the name of freedom pregnant women were ripped open, and the electorate did not rebel. Every American who voted Republican or Democratic shares the guilt of these sanguinary deeds. America, the self-proclaimed champion of freedom to torture and kill women and children for the crime of wishing to go on living in their homes. Is it surprising that American proclamations are looked on coldly?

It is sometimes stated by US authorities that the war in Vietnam is used as an opportunity to test weapons, men and anti-guerrilla methods. The American Federation of Scientists' report shows this.

The us military did not hesitate to admit this. They often express their enthusiasm to the press. Reports appeared in *Look* magazine of December 23, 1963 and circulated throughout the American press:

'The Army tested small-calibre ammunition as long ago as the 1920s, but it was not until the recent combat experience in Vietnam that it really sat up and took notice. About 1,000 AR-15s were sent out by the hush-hush Advanced Research Projects Agency in the Defence Department. A report has been issued marked Secret because of the gory pictures in it. The story of what happens to Vietcong guerrillas who get hit with the AR-15 is being kept under heavy wraps. But, aware that the enemy already knows what the AR-15 does, you can find an occasional returnee who will tell you what he saw:

"When I left out there it was *the* rifle. The effect is fantastic.

I saw one guy hit in the arm. It spun him around and blew the arm right off. One got hit in the back and it blew his heart literally out of his body.

"A man hit in the buttocks lived for five minutes. All others died instantly. His wound would have been superficial with other bullets. The fellow had his head blown clean off—only the stump of the neck left".

The article is accompanied by a photograph of a five year old child with his arm shattered and in tatters. What words are appropriate for such barbarism of which the military are proud?

The National Liberation Front was founded in December, 1960. It has a thirty-one member Central Committee headed by a non-Communist lawyer. Represented on the Central Committee are leading Buddhist priests, Catholic priests, Protestant clergy, small businessmen, professional groups and three anti-government parties.

Few will challenge the estimate made in a report of the DPV in July 1963 that 'seventy-five per cent of the people, in varying degrees, support the rebels who dominate ninety per cent of the land.' Many sources, including American sources, claim a higher proportion of rebel support.

It is clear that the rebels of South Vietnam speak for the people of that country. Any other view is insupportable. Even General Paul D. Harkins stated, 'The guerrillas are not being reinforced or supplied systematically from North Vietnam, China or any place else. They depend for weapons primarily on whatever they can capture.' (*Washington Post*, March 6, 1963 and *Free World Colossus* by David Horowitz.)

On December 10, 1962 *Newsweek* quoted a US captain as saying:

'All the Communists [in South Vietnam] have is their dedication. If I was [*sic*] in their shoes, I'd be pretty sore at Hanoi for letting me down.'

David Halberstam reported in the *New York Times* of March 6, 1964:

'No capture of North Vietnamese in the South has come to light.'

These statements refute the official US posture and also indicate the odds against which the rebels have fought.

In assessing the information about this atrocious war it is instructive to note the coincidence of reports from the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Party of Vietnam, despite the political opposition between them. The reports in Western newspapers have appeared, it would seem, in spite of US efforts to hide the true nature of the war. The Associated Press issued a dispatch from Washington on May 5, 1963:

'A potentially explosive document in the hands of a House subcommittee is reported to lay down administration guidance for restricting movement of correspondents covering the warfare in South Vietnam: (1) Keep reporters away from areas where fighting is being done entirely or almost entirely by US troops. (2) Keep reporters away from any area which will show the failure to attract full allegiance of South Vietnamese people.' (Quoted in DPV report for June 1963.)

When slogans about freedom are put aside some of the more basic purposes for this war emerge. The DPV report, for September, 1963 reveals:

'A tremendous dope smuggling racket has seen the light of day. One of the key figures is Mme . . . , wife of a prominent general.'

It was also reported in the *New York Herald Tribune* of February 3, 1964 that:

'General Khanh boasted he had ten million dollars and could flee to lead a life of ease if he wanted to.'

The most revealing article, however, was carried in *Aviation Week* for April 6, 1964:



'An air cargo company, Air America, incorporated in Delaware, is currently the principal instrument for the extension of the war in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. This company has some two hundred aircraft . . . used under charter . . . It is airlifting South Vietnamese Special Troops to various places . . . the return trip [carries] a load of opium for further transport to markets in the us in a big Boeing aircraft. These aircraft are under the command of us Army General Paul D. Harkins and the pilots are former us military pilots.'

A further consideration of this remarkable article can be found in the Asian affairs monthly *Eastern World* by Edgar P. Young, Commander, Royal Navy, rtd.

I should wish at this point to consider the actual programme of the National Liberation Front, if only in the hope that readers of *Dissent* will take note:

'... To carry out without delay, real and broad democracy in which freedom of thought, expression, the press, organization, assembly, demonstrations, trade-unions and freedom to set up parties, political, social and professional organizations; freedom of movement, trade, religion, worship, corporal liberties which are to be guaranteed by law for the entire people without any discrimination. . . .

'[We shall] stop persecution, arrest, detention and harassment of patriots and of opposition, of individuals and parties. We shall cancel the barbarous prison regime, especially torture, penitence, brain-washing and ill treatment of prisoners.

'[We shall] refrain from setting up in South Vietnam any form of dictatorial regime, either nepotic and militarist or set up by a group or party, and refrain from carrying out a mono-party or mono-religious policy, a policy of dictatorship in ideology, politics, religions and economy. . . .

'[We wish] free general elections to elect organs and to form a national coalition government composed of representatives of all forces, parties, tendencies and strata of the South Vietnamese people . . . a policy of neutrality [through which we] will not

adhere to any military bloc, nor let any foreign country station troops or establish bases in South Vietnam. We will accept aid from all countries, regardless of political regimes and establish friendly relations on an equal footing with all countries. We respect the sovereignty of all countries and form together with Cambodia and Laos what must be a neutral zone on the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Reunification will be realized step by step on a voluntary basis with due consideration for the characteristics of each zone, with equality and without annexation of one zone by the other.'

Why do American journals pontificate about the 'Vietcong' when they are so ignorant of the programme set out above? Are they aware that Ho Chi Minh of North Vietnam declared his desire for 'Neutrality for both North and South Vietnam and independence of Russia, China and America . . .'? (*The Times*, November 5, 1963.) The us Government, however, is in gross violation of its own official declaration at the conclusion of the Geneva Conference of July 21, 1954:

'We take note of the agreements and of paragraphs one to twelve inclusive of the final declaration. . . . The us will refrain from threat or use of force to disturb them . . . and would view any renewal of aggression with grave concern [and as] a threat to international peace and security.'

This declaration by W. Bedell Smith established American support for the Geneva Conference Report providing for neutrality, elections and non-interference. But us troops are the only foreign troops in Vietnam today.

W. W. Rostow, director of the State Department's Policy Planning Board, advanced a plan known as "Plan Six" providing for a naval blockade and air raids against North Vietnam. Representative Melvin Laird stated in a committee of the us House of Representatives that 'the us administration is preparing plans for a strike into North Vietnam.' The Associated Press reported a

combat force of fifty jet bombers training in the Philippines in preparation for bombing of targets in North Vietnam. The bombers are said to be furnished with intelligence data obtained by U-2 reconnaissance planes. During the Honolulu Conference of June 1964, attended by Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, it appears plans for air raids and sabotage against North Vietnam were discussed. I take these references from a letter which I received from the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam. They have been amply supported by independent sources, as well as American sources.

Substantiation for the contention that the United States has been deliberately provoking North Vietnam can be found in *Aviation Week* for April 6, 1964:

'War against the Communists has already erupted over the borders of South Vietnam with raids and infiltration moves as far north as China. . . . With us backing in aircraft, weapons and money, an estimated fifty thousand elite South Vietnamese troops are being trained to take the offensive in over-the-border strikes at Communist supply centres and communication routes. Despite Defence Secretary McNamara's implication in Washington (March 26) that the decision has not yet been made to extend the war, it is known here that guerrilla strikes against the Communists have been increasing since last summer.'

Despite this disclosure of plans and preparations, when the aggression actually occurred, us officials had no qualms about feigning utter surprise. *Aviation Week* goes on to discuss the specific preparations:

'Key factor in the current raids is the airlift provided by Air America, a us cargo company [which] camouflages its us Governmental sponsorship. us military advisers here are optimistic that extending the war beyond the borders, plus a stable government in Saigon, will force the Communist insurgency to collapse in a year. . . .

'Special forces—now one-tenth of the half-million South

Vietnamese under arms—are not connected with the formal military organization. They rely on Air America using numerous secret airstrips in South Vietnam and Thailand.

' . . . Last fall, when us officials decided it was impossible to win the war by confining it inside South Vietnamese borders, they began an expanded programme of training special forces at secret bases, emphasizing techniques of operation beyond national borders.'

To his credit, Senator Wayne Morse delivered a speech in the us Senate on April 14, 1964. He said:

'We have already aided and abetted the extension of the war beyond the borders of South Vietnam. I am fearful that as the proof of that becomes clearly established—as I believe it can be—we may wake up some morning to find charges levelled against us in the United Nations. . . .'

There were many more disclosures of raids into North Vietnam which had already occurred and more reports of plans for more ambitious military ventures.

James Cameron wrote in the London *Daily Herald* of March 4, 1964:

'W. W. Rostow's Plan Six provides initially for a naval blockade of Haiphong, the port of Hanoi. If Hanoi still refuses to call off support, the Northern ports should be bombarded from the sea, and finally us strategic bombers should attack Hanoi itself, if necessary flying the South Vietnam flag.'

In the vernacular of the State Department, whenever Hanoi is urged to call off its 'support of the South Vietnamese insurgency,' what is really meant is that Hanoi should apply pressure and sanctions to force the rebels to submit to the United States.

On April 10, 1964, the *New York Times* reported that 'Secretary of State Dean Rusk told SEATO nations the us [was] absolutely committed to remain in South Vietnam and reiterated that the war may be brought to North Vietnam soon.' On April 13, 1964, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that 'us planned South Viet-

namese bombing attacks on the North may commence as soon as late May or early June.'

After all these announcements, when the US finally attacked, the American press, which for days and weeks had carried the announcements, pretended shock and amazement as if the United States had been an innocent victim of surprise attack.

Senator Wayne Morse has been more honest and stated after a secret briefing by Dean Rusk:

'An expanded war in Asia could only be won if we used nuclear weapons.'

The report of James Cameron bears this out:

'The grim thing about Plan Six is that it has no end. If Hanoi must be bombed. . . . Shanghai must be bombed to stop Chinese help to North Vietnam. . . .'

American and British warnings are reflected in the memorandum sent to me and others by the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in London:

'On July 30, US warships intruded into the Northern territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and shelled Hon Me and Hon Ngu islands. On August 1 and 2, US airplanes bombed a border post and village of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The bombing of coastal towns of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on August 5 was a premeditated move by US imperialism to extend the war step by step. . . .' (Mr Hsiung Hsiang-hui, August 6, 1964).

The *Manchester Guardian* editorial of August 11, 1964 confirmed that the movement of the Seventh Fleet into the Gulf of Tonkin was calculated and directly related to naval attacks by the 'South Vietnamese' Navy:

'A new account is now emerging in Washington. . . . The North Vietnamese islands of Hon Me and Hon Ngu had indeed been attacked from the sea, as Hanoi had alleged, before the crisis blew up; this is now admitted in Washington. The attackers were

South Vietnamese ships, not the Seventh Fleet; but that distinction may not seem so significant in Hanoi as in Saigon and . . . at that point the US destroyer *Maddox* sailed into the Gulf of Tonkin. . . .'

Nonetheless, as far as the US press is concerned, all the warnings and admissions, the leakage of Plan Six, the formerly acknowledged preparations for extending the war by the US Government, are ignored in descriptions of the attacks on North Vietnam. The knowledge of editors and of reporters is not brought to bear on the situation; the editors and reporters instead bear false witness.

American dissenters, liberals and socialists who identify with the official presentation of the events in Vietnam and who accept the interpretation of national interest set out by the military and the industrialists, may be asked if they consider the facts discussed in this article to comprise a model of the Free World? Can national interest be allowed to mask such barbarism, however interpreted? Is it not time for 'national interest,' the 'Free World' and the professed principles of American dissenters to be scrutinized more closely? The time for protest is overdue. We may hope it is not too late and that this war of atrocity may be ended.

## CHAPTER 4

*Danger in South-East Asia*  
*March, 1965*

The Americans have at last succeeded—too late, alas—in shocking the conscience of mankind. They have been engaged for years in various kinds of atrocity in endeavouring to subdue ‘inferior’ races at home and abroad, but these acts have been excused as occasional excursions of a too energetic population. The British Labour Government has applauded them and has made itself an accomplice in unspeakable cruelties. But, in the endeavour to exterminate the inhabitants of South Vietnam in the sacred name of freedom, they have now adopted the use of what we are told is ‘non-lethal’ gas. For some reason, which I do not quite understand, people who thought nothing of the murder of babies and the torture of women and children are shocked by this new method of warfare. It is not their present shock that is astonishing, but their previous indifference. The present cries of horror are amply justified. What our Press tell us about these American ‘non-lethal’ gases is that, when employed against an enemy, they induce a state of nausea or in some way render the victims incapable of action for a period. During this period, however, it is clear that the possessor of the gas can murder his enemy, or imprison him, or capture his citadels so that he is killed or, when he comes to, finds the battle has been lost.

This is bad enough, but the recent history of Americans in Vietnam makes one doubt whether it is really the whole truth. Are the gases really non-lethal? One remembers the ‘defoliants’ which were said to poison only vegetation, but, in fact, also poisoned animals and human beings. We have been told that they were harmless weedkillers and that to deprive the population of

its crops is no grave matter. We learnt, slowly and with difficulty, that what were called ‘weedkillers’ were, in fact, poisons of which, after observation of their effects, the use in the United States has been forbidden. I cannot remember what excuse was given for the use of napalm bombs which burn people alive in unspeakable and prolonged agony. The American authorities have, in fact, indulged in a vast career of concerted lying. A Government official, the Assistant Secretary of Defence, Mr Arthur Sylvester, stated publicly in December, 1962, that lying is a proper weapon for a Government to use. One cannot, therefore, escape the suspicion that the ‘non-lethal’ gases are, in fact, lethal and that the purpose of their employment is the depopulation of Vietnam, both North and South.

We have been told on high American authority that the next step America will take will be the destruction of China. When China has been destroyed, Americans will turn to giving assistance to their henchmen in the British Labour Party in their struggles in Malaysia. She will then ‘liberate’ various other, hitherto happy, countries in Asia and Africa. When these tasks have been accomplished, America will rule the world. No one will dare to resist, since resistance will be useless. A population rendered cruel by wholesale slaughter will feel no restraint in practising cruelties, by this time become habitual, in any part of the world.

Is there anything that can be done to prevent this universal empire of evil? Certainly the first step is to help the people of Vietnam in their efforts to win and preserve their freedom. As for the further steps, if mankind is to be preserved from the threat of a nuclear war, there is only one hope for the world, which is that the better elements in the American population will refuse to follow collective mass murderers on their fatal course and will restore to mankind permission to remain alive.

This is a work in which individuals as well as nations and parties can take part. It may be that if the greater part of mankind expresses, forcibly, a horror of such a prospect and the almost universal hatred of America which its success would entail, the more ferocious elements in America would be res-

trained by those who have some feeling for human welfare. These are, I am convinced, the great majority of Americans—eighty-one per cent, according to a Gallup Poll. There is no reason why we should sit down and be overridden passively by organized murderers. It should still be possible, though it is getting daily more difficult, to induce Americans to choose a Government not composed of savage exterminators, a Government with some respect for human rights and happiness. The British people, despite the attitude of the leaders of the two great parties, can help to bring this about. The action of the ninety-four Labour MPs and of important trade unions in protesting against the American aggression, is a step in the right direction.

White men, generally, have been accustomed to some centuries of supremacy, but the day has come when men of other colours demand equality, possibly in combination with the better elements in the white nations. It may prove possible for more radical views to prevail. But it is necessary for these radical views to be publicized, to be strong and clear statements based on trustworthy information. This is a slender hope, but it is all that the present world can justify.

## CHAPTER 5

*The Cold War: A New Phase?*  
*February, 1965*

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Man is a quarrelsome and power-loving animal. Life without power and without quarrels would seem to him a tame and tedious affair. From the combination of quarrels and love of power most of history proceeds, and, more particularly, wars and empires. The possible size of empires increases with the advance of technology. Cyrus, whose empire was the first of any magnitude in Western history, depended for the stability of his empire upon a great road from Sousa to Sardis. To travel on a horse from one of these places to the other took a month for an emissary of state, but three months for a private traveller.

Roads dominated history from the time of Cyrus until empires began to depend upon sea power. Next came railways, and, then, air power. Many of the most important events in history were determined by roads—for example, Constantine adopted Christianity in York and immediately marched on Rome, arriving at its gates before his change of policy had become known within the city. That is why most of the West is Christian.

For thousands of years no stable empire could be as large as the world and, therefore, men's quarrelsome instincts remained satisfied. A new thing that has happened in our day is that a stable empire can be as large as the world. This is the result of nuclear weapons, and has caused perplexity to all who live by slaughter. The result of the invention of nuclear weapons is that war may exterminate our species and may, therefore, fail to satisfy any of the desires which have inspired the wars of earlier periods. In this situation, statesmen remain perplexed. All the satisfying wars of earlier times have become impossible. The

only probable alternatives that remain are peace or extermination. In this situation, traditional statecraft collapses. The old phrases become hollow, and the old aims of policy become unattainable. This fact has begun to be understood even by politicians and is necessitating new forms of the Cold War.

Until very recently, the traditional love of war and hope for victory fitted the developed powers of the world into two camps, East and West. The final conflict was imagined as one lasting for an hour or two and ending with six Americans and five Russians, or *vice versa*, thus giving final and absolute victory to the six. But, gradually, this picture lost its attractiveness. Warlike ferocity could not be sustained at a level involving the destruction of everything and everybody that had been loved or had been a cause of delight. It has come to be felt that a global nuclear war must be avoided. This requires new policies and an abandonment of the simple bi-polar organization that has satisfied statesmen since nuclear weapons were invented.

America, faced by this new situation, has developed a new policy, the aim of which is to transfer to America as much as possible of what used to belong to West European Powers. Wherever Britain or France or Italy were involved in a difficult colonial war, America would come to the assistance of the Power concerned and, by financial and military superiority, would gradually oust the former imperialist masters, thus replacing the former colonial empires with a puppet state of its own.

This process proceeded somewhat differently in different continents. In Latin America, large trading companies have been created, dominated by Americans and controlling completely the internal as well as the external policies of the various South American countries. The only exception to this policy has been Cuba. In Asia, the policy has been considerably frustrated owing to the fact that Russia, Pakistan, India and China owned much of the greater part of both the territory and the population of that continent. Where the policy has been possible, as in South-east Asia and Central Africa, it has proceeded by finding a small percentage of the population which was friendly to the West, recognizing it as the sole legitimate source of political power, and

keeping the government in its hands by means of American troops and American money.

American activity in these spheres is possible only because of American superiority to Russia in arms. The Soviet Government realized at the time of the Cuban Crisis in 1962 that, in a war between Russia and America, Russia, certainly, and America probably, would be ruined. This enabled the American Government to do things that were objectionable to the Russians—as, for instance, the war in South Vietnam. Not only America, but the whole non-Communist West, could play a perpetual game of brinkmanship in which Russia had always to retreat.

There were, it has proved, certain difficulties. Most of the smaller countries in which America was seeking power wished to be neutral and could only be subdued by abominable cruelties. The process of overcoming popular sentiments in the countries concerned caused the general population to become more and more anti-Western in their feelings. Americans hope that, in the course of time, the hostility of these countries may diminish, but former British experience in India makes this seem highly improbable.

Another difficulty that faces Western powers in Asia and Africa is that many parts of these two continents have achieved complete independence in the course of the struggle. Almost the whole of Africa is now completely independent, while the Congo remains doubtful. With some exceptions, the old colonial empires have passed under the political or financial domination of the United States.

But great questions remain: Can the new empire succeed and can it last? Can the American policy succeed? America has already encountered great difficulties of which, at the present moment, the most important are in South Vietnam and in the Congo. South Vietnam was part of the French region of Indo-China, but rebelled during the Second World War. The French were finally defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. An international conference took place at Geneva and decided that the whole region of Cochin China was to be divided into several separate states, one of which was Vietnam. Vietnam itself was divided

into North and South, but this division was to be temporary and within two years the two were to be re-united and a neutral parliamentary regime was to be established over the whole.

This proposed settlement, however, broke down almost immediately. North Vietnam decided to be Communist, while a large majority in South Vietnam wished to be neutral. The small minority which adhered to the West appealed for American support. America responded by a campaign whose object, it soon became clear, was to turn South Vietnam into an American colony. The Vietnamese supporters of America were those who had previously supported the French. They were headed by the Diem family which was Christian, while most of the population was Buddhist.

The Diem family proceeded to various atrocities. A number of eminent Buddhist dignitaries anointed themselves with inflammable oils and burnt themselves to death. This was too much for the Americans, who threw over the Diem family. The Americans, however, continued their opposition to the peasants, most of whom joined the roving bands of 'Vietcong,' a loosely organized band of guerrillas. The 'Vietcong' would descend upon a village and acquire the support of its inhabitants. To stop this, the Vietnam Government, with the support of the Americans, organized the rural population in 'strategic villages'. The post-Diem regime, with the support of the Americans, continued to do so. Those villages were virtual prisons. Previously existing villages were forcibly evacuated. In the new ones inhabitants were closed in and guarded. Meanwhile, the pro-American armed forces had established a reign of terror. The secret police grew into hundreds of thousands, and their behaviour was unbelievably cruel. The leader of the Buddhist hierarchy, the Venerable Thich Thien Hao, reported, in 1963, that a hundred and sixty thousand had died as a result of the regime. Seven hundred thousand had been tortured and maimed. Four hundred thousand had been in prison; thirty-one thousand raped; three thousand, disembowelled and their livers cut out while alive; and four thousand, burnt alive. Similar figures can be quoted from other reliable sources. The Americans learned with astonishment that, in spite of this treatment, they

were not loved by the population. Now they are contemplating an attack on North Vietnam, which the Chinese have undertaken to defend. It is not unlikely that the Russians will do likewise, as indeed they have announced they intend to do. If America persists, world war becomes an imminent threat.

How can it come about that ordinary, decent people in America support this war? How can they, by their votes, encourage the use of defoliants, nominally against trees, but, in fact, for the purpose of killing the population, including children? How can they favour a government which disembowels pregnant women and exhibits their unborn children to the public? How can they contemplate, as they are doing at this moment, the extension of the war to North Vietnam with the risk of its further extension, first, to China and, then, to Russia, which would in all likelihood entail the destruction of the human species? All this is rendered possible by a vast campaign of lies, partly governmental, partly journalistic. The purpose of the lies is to keep alive belief in the wickedness of Communists, which is represented as so appalling that, in order to put an end to it, the death of all human beings would not be too great a price. There is still hope that America may abstain from this last step, but the hope is diminishing daily.

The situation in the Congo is very similar, except in two respects. The first of these is that China and Russia are more distant from the Congo than from Vietnam. The other is that many of the states of Western Europe are equally concerned in the slaughter.

Ever since the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, it has been obvious to all thinking people that nuclear disarmament was the only solution to the world's troubles. In the countries that already possessed nuclear arms, it was loudly proclaimed that every additional country which acquired them increased the danger of nuclear war. But, in spite of this, new countries have become members of the 'nuclear club'. Britain and Russia quickly followed the example of America. These three finally concluded the partial nuclear test ban treaty, by which they hoped to prevent the further spread of nuclear arms. But France refused to sign the treaty and has developed her own nuclear bomb.

Since the conclusion of the treaty, China has become a nuclear power. India and Brazil are likely soon to become nuclear powers; the Middle Eastern countries, Scandinavia, Belgium and others do not wish to be left behind. Many in the West are urging that Germany be given nuclear weapons. Whenever disarmament is proposed, each side argues that the other side asks too much, is too heavily armed, and is so deceitful that it cannot be trusted to fulfil its promises. All these are forces tending to make nuclear war more likely.

What is there to put on the other side?

There are some powerful and growing movements for the avoidance of war, but whether they will grow fast enough to overcome the interests of the armament industry and the passion of national vanity is doubtful, since they cannot become decisive without a great change in public sentiment. There will have to be a much smaller belief in the wickedness of the 'enemy' and a much greater realization of the disastrousness of nuclear war. There will have to be a general spread of good sense in spite of the governmental pressure in the direction of disaster. There will have to be a realization that mass murder is not the most important duty of man, and that the only road to general welfare lies in co-operation. Whether this can be achieved before war breaks out is the great question of our time. Is it better for nations to live together in happiness or to perish in agony? It would seem that governments prefer the latter—or, at any rate, policies leading towards it. It is difficult for public opinion to reverse the policies of governments, but I do not believe that it is impossible. To attempt it is the supreme duty of every man who is either or both, sane and humane.

What are the steps in this direction that must be taken in 1965?

The first and easiest move that must be taken is to include China in the United Nations. The war in Vietnam must be brought to an end in a manner pleasing to the inhabitants of that country—North and South should be united and neutralized, as was intended by the Geneva accords of 1954. The civil war in the Congo must be terminated otherwise than by an extension of Western imperialism. The United States' influence in Latin

America must cease to take the form of upholding capitalist governments which prolong the poverty of the great masses of the population. The mutual hatred of Arabs and Jews must be mitigated. Some solution of the German problem must be found. But, above all, a beginning must be made of nuclear disarmament. Most of these should be done in 1965; all of them must be begun with a serious promise of their being soon accomplished. If all these things are done, there will be new hope for the world. If they are not, the drift towards disaster will continue, and with increasing rapidity.

Human beings will have proved themselves indistinguishable from either lemmings or Gadarene swine.



## CHAPTER 6

### *The Selection of Targets in China* *April 29, 1965*

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The selection of targets in China for bombing by the United States is very grave news. It follows a pattern of escalation of the war in Vietnam which has been developed for at least eighteen months. When it was seen that the United States had lost the war in South Vietnam, W. W. Rostow, the Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Board, advanced a plan known as the 'Rostow Plan 6' which has, in fact, proved to be the basis of the policy. It provided for the bombing of North Vietnam and naval blockade. Targets in North Vietnam were selected and combat forces of jet bombers were trained in the Philippines. Ground troops were also trained for strikes in North Vietnam. All were to be used unless Hanoi applied pressure and sanctions to force the National Liberation Front to submit to the United States. In August 1964, following repeated incursions into North Vietnam by aircraft, frogmen and assorted CIA agents and provocations by the US Seventh Fleet along the coast of North Vietnam and China, the aerial destruction of the North began in earnest. At first, it was necessary for the United States to claim that this was retaliation against acts by North Vietnamese torpedo boats or by the National Liberation Front, but even these pretences were soon abandoned. The bombing was extended further North. It was falsely claimed that only military targets were attacked. In fact, there has been a large number of civilian casualties and churches and villages have been destroyed.

Plan 6 has no end. If North Vietnam must be bombed for its encouragement of resistance to the United States in the South, so must China be bombed to prevent it sending help to North

Vietnam. The emphasis that McNamara now places upon a few weapons allegedly of Chinese manufacture found in South Vietnam comes ominously at the time of the announcement of the selection of targets in China. Escalation is to continue, evidently, as it has over the past year.

War with China means world war. If, as is likely, Russia comes to the support of China, nuclear weapons will be used, the war will be short and most of the inhabitants of China, the Soviet Union, the United States and elsewhere will be annihilated. I ask people everywhere whether this is the price they wish to pay for American refusal of peaceful independence and neutrality to South Vietnam.

## CHAPTER 7

*The Labour Party's Foreign Policy*  
*October 14, 1965*

(A speech to the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, London)

As some of you may possibly remember, I made a speech at the London School of Economics on February 15 in which I, first, recalled the election Manifesto of the Labour Party before last year's General Election and, then, compared it with what the Labour Government had been doing. It appeared that the Labour Government's record had completely failed to make even a beginning of carrying out its electoral promises. Today, I wish to consider the actions of the Labour Government since that time and to enquire, in view of their record, how anybody can continue to support them.

The Labour Government, as I shall try to persuade you, has acted in complete subservience to the Government of the United States. Those who had hoped for any improvement in international policies, have suffered a double misfortune: there were elections both in America and in Britain. In both elections, the more ferocious party was defeated. After those elections, the Governments which had been elected adopted the policy of their defeated opponents. The result has been a growth of atrocious cruelty in various parts of the world. Attempts have been made to conceal these acts. I wish to join those who try to defeat such attempts.

In my speech of February 15 I came to the conclusion that the only promise concerning foreign policy made by the Labour

Party in its electoral Manifesto which the Labour Government had carried out in its early months of office was to appoint a Minister for Disarmament in the Foreign Office. After a year, this remains the sum of the Government's achievement in carrying out its promises.

But I propose now to consider what the Government *has* done.

The sins of the present British Government in foreign policy are of two sorts: there are minor sins which consist of desperate efforts to hang on to some shreds of the decaying British Empire, and there are other, much worse, sins which consist of supporting America in unspeakable atrocities. Of the former sort, one might mention Aden, where Britain is carrying out her old Imperialist policies in support of her continuing imperialism in the Far East. One may mention, also, North Borneo where we have a large army at war with Indonesia. British Guiana has a constitution forced upon it by the Tories and so gerrymandered as to be totally unacceptable to the majority of the inhabitants. This constitution, our present 'Labour' Government continues to support. In all these cases its policy is merely a continuation of the bad policy of previous Governments.

In Rhodesia, the situation is in doubt. Though up to this time the Labour Government has continued Tory policy, it now appears to be making some effort to support majority rule there. It remains to be seen if it will act strongly, or merely talk.

To come nearer home, the Government has issued a White Paper concerned with the problem of immigration. It has attacked none of the problems which make the present immigration difficult—problems such as housing and education of immigrants—but it merely proposes to limit the numbers of immigrants. Even there, it misses the point; its proposals would limit the unskilled immigrants who are necessary to the British economy as it is now geared, but leaves loopholes whereby the number of skilled workers remains high while our own skilled workers, themselves, emigrate.

But what is much more serious is our Government's support of America no matter what America may do. The holders of

power in America have invented a myth by which they profess to justify cruelties equalling those of Hitler. This myth has two sides: on the one hand, it holds that all Communists are wicked; on the other hand, it holds that all movements of reform, everywhere, are inspired or captured by Communists and are, therefore, to be combated from their inception. This myth is held to justify the upholding of corrupt governments wherever the United States has the power to do so. It is pretended that populations cannot possibly like the sort of governments that Communists inspire, or dislike the kind of tyranny which Americans describe as 'The Free World'.

Throughout South America there are political contests between democratic parties and parties supported by America. The latter represents capitalism in its crudest form. But everywhere, excepting Cuba, American hostility has prevented the democratic parties from achieving power. The recent troubles in San Domingo are a case very much in point.

The worst aspects of American dominion, however, are being displayed in South Vietnam—again supported by Britain. America has no vestige or shred of right to take any part in the affairs of Vietnam. When the French were finally expelled from Indo-China, of which Vietnam was a part, an international congress at Geneva decided that Vietnam, North and South, should be independent and should if they wished be unified after free elections. Britain and Russia jointly were the initiators of this policy. The Americans, however, though they agreed to support it, did not like it. They sent 'Observers' to South Vietnam who reported that the country was too disturbed for elections. The Americans proceeded to make friends with the small faction that had previously supported the French. Their 'Observers' became more and more numerous and more and more in the habit, as 'Advisers', of giving orders to the puppet Government which they installed. The population rebelled and the peasants were moved into 'strategic hamlets'—'for their protection' it was said, but the hamlets were, in fact, concentration camps. They refused to submit and inaugurated guerrilla warfare. The guerrilla armies were nicknamed the 'Vietcong', and the civilian

authority which they acknowledged was called the National Liberation Front. A long, long war began. So far, there is no prospect of an end to it. The Chairman of the us Senate Committee on Preparedness stated recently: 'We still have a long, hard, bloody road ahead. We may have to keep our troops in Vietnam for fifteen years or longer.' (*Herald Tribune*, September 27, 1965.)

Gradually, we have been allowed to become aware that American troops in South Vietnam behave in a manner in which, one would have thought, no civilized troops would behave. They use napalm which adheres to the skin and causes unspeakable agony. They use gas to smoke out suspected 'Vietcong' hiding places. They attack civilians from the air. When they capture civilians, they torture them. According to the *New York Times* of October 3, 1965, there have been up to the beginning of October, 170,000 civilians killed; 800,000 maimed by torture; 5,000 burnt alive, disembowelled or beheaded; 100,000 killed or maimed by chemical poisons; 400,000 detained and tortured savagely. One method of torture used by the American troops is partial electrocution or 'frying' as one United States Adviser called it—by attaching live wires to male genital organs or to the breasts of 'Vietcong' women prisoners. Other techniques which are designed to force on-looking prisoners to talk, involve their watching the cutting off of the fingers, ears, fingernails or sexual organs of other prisoners. A string of ears decorates the wall of a Government installation. These details were reported by the *New York Herald Tribune* (not a subversive journal) on July 21, 1965.

On July 18 of this year, the us Associated Press reported: 'The wailing of women and the stench of burnt bodies greeted the troops as they marched in Bagia' (a province of South Vietnam). 'A United States Air Force officer said, "When we are in a bind we unload on the whole area. We kill more women and children than we do Vietcong, but the Government troops just aren't available, so this is the only answer".' I could continue indefinitely with such quotations. The stomachs of pregnant women have been ripped open and their unborn children publicly

exhibited. But the tale is sickening. I cannot bear to tell the whole of it—nor could you bear to listen.

Meantime, of course—and again with our concurrence—the Americans have carried the war into North Vietnam where they have deliberately bombed schools, hospitals and orphanages—more civilians than armed forces. They even proposed for a time to bomb the great dams which would have caused such flooding and devastation and loss of life that the rest of the world cried out against it and it has been ostensibly given up and the us has denied that it ever had such an intention.

There are other matters such as the problem of the refugees, who are suffering exposure and starvation, and the public execution of prisoners. But there is not time for me to go into all the horrors even if I would.

Apropos of the public execution of prisoners, however, I should like to bring up another problem:

These public executions were first indulged in by the United States Forces and the South Vietnamese Government. They have been answered by reprisals in kind, though so far, I believe, fewer in number, by the 'Vietcong'. There is an acceleration in savagery which is to be expected and which is one of the worst aspects of guerrilla war—indeed, any war. But this is the responsibility of the invader.

I should like to call your attention to an article concerning the Congo which appeared in the *Observer* of August 29 entitled 'Mercenary exposes Horror' which was answered in the following week's *Observer* by a letter, 'Congo Mercenaries'. This letter points up what I am trying to say about the inevitable and limitless hardening of cruelty under the stress of war. The policies at present condoned by the Labour Government involve, inevitably, the condoning of the methods of carrying them out.

In the Congo, as well as in Vietnam, our Labour Government has supported the United States.

Concurrently with the savageries and unbridled cruelty of the war in Vietnam the United States has initiated a programme of sweetness and light: The us Forces there are given small cards urging a display of strength, understanding and generosity upon

them and nine rules of conduct for their guidance. These were printed in the *Daily Worker*, September 22, 1965, and are as follows:

1. Remember we are guests here. We make no demands and seek no special treatment;
2. Join with the people, understand their life, use phrases from their language and honour their customs and laws;
3. Treat women with politeness and respect;
4. Make personal friends among the soldiers and common people;
5. Always give the Vietnamese right of way;
6. Be alert to security and ready to react with your military skill;
7. Don't attract attention by loud, rude or unusual behaviour;
8. Avoid separating yourself from the people by a display of wealth or privilege;
9. Above all else you are members of the us military forces on a difficult mission, responsible for all your official and personal actions.'

These cards of exhortations end: 'Reflect honour upon yourself and the United States of America.'

I ask you to contrast these precepts with the actions of the armed forces of the us in Vietnam to a few of which I called your attention a short time ago.

For anyone interested in hypocrisy these exhortations make an absorbing study. For anyone interested in humanity this gilding of a very rotten and stinking lily is nauseating.

But this propaganda campaign has been carried further than mere precepts. On September 11 our papers, most, if not all of them, carried reports of one of its most egregious actions:

On September 10, the day of a children's festival in North Vietnam, American aircraft showered on five North Vietnamese cities 10,000 packages of toys, school supplies and soap labelled 'From the children of South Vietnam to the children of North Vietnam'.

'The United States and South Vietnamese psychological war-

fare experts', reports *The Times* on September 11, 'devised the packages for which the Vietnamese Government paid. The five cities are all in an area from 30 miles north of the border to 70 miles north of Hanoi.' The report ends: 'In South Vietnam American and Vietnamese marines pressed on with a search and destroy operation which has so far killed 167 guerrillas.' The day before, the US aircraft had been employed in destroying bridges in North Vietnam.

It is to be noted that the area over which the packages were rained upon the inhabitants had been bombed by the US forces. As the *Daily Worker* remarked (11.9.65) the precious parcels fell upon children, some of whom had no eyes to see them and no hands to grasp them, because of previous raids of the US Air Force with their high explosives, napalm and Lazy Dogs.

The extreme cynicism of these propaganda actions has rarely, if ever, been equalled. Yet there has been little notice taken of them in our press—save in the *Daily Worker*—and very little outcry against them amongst the general public.

We, through our Government, are condoning such actions.

If further evidence of the hypocrisy that we support is needed, there is plenty of it: On September 23, the US Ambassador to the United Nations said: 'We seek only to ensure the independence of South Vietnam . . . and opportunity for its people to determine their own future . . . by the principles of self-determination.' On September 23 he also said, in arguing against the admission of Communist China: 'The Members of the United Nations, under the Charter, share a common responsibility to demonstrate to those who use violence that violence does not pay.' It will be difficult for the Pope's plea for peace to move very deeply those who subscribe to such double talk—and our Government is among such subscribers. Mr Stewart's 'handbook for nations' will hardly help.

We must remember that this sort of thing is supported by a Government for which we voted and which promised in its election Manifesto things far different from these. It may be that the Government finds it easier than many laymen to accept the cynical opposition of fair words and savage cruelty since it has

apparently accepted and defended the opposition of its actions to its own promises of little more than a year ago.

When I compare the horrors of the Vietnam war with the election Manifesto of the Labour Government, I find myself confronted with the most shameful betrayal of modern times in this country. Hitler, at least, seldom professed humanity, but these men who now pollute the chairs of office professed, before election, the most noble and lofty ideals of human brotherhood.

The British Government has, it is true, made some apparent efforts to bring to an end the Vietnam war. It has refused to send troops to South Vietnam—but that, one suspects, was due to the fact that all the troops that we could spare were needed in Malaysia. Our Government, supported by the majority of the Commonwealth countries, has suggested terms of peace, but these always have been such as would leave American forces on the soil of Vietnam and were plainly and blatantly illusory.

Concurrently with these unreal efforts for peace, the British Government has iterated and reiterated, again and again, its support of United States policy in Vietnam. It has done everything in its power, moreover, to prevent a knowledge of the atrocities which are taking place there—let alone a knowledge of the reasons for the Government's complacency in face of them.

Representatives of the National Liberation Front applied for visas to be allowed to state their case in Britain. Visas were refused by the Home Secretary, supported by the Prime Minister, without explanation.

It will be remembered that at Oxford Mr Stewart stated the importance of all points of view being heard by the British public on Vietnam. It will also be remembered that the Labour Party Manifesto states that the Labour Government would welcome criticism and discussion with all in the Party.

When the visas—for which the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation had applied on behalf of the three members of the National Liberation Front—had been refused, Field Marshal Auchinleck, Archbishop Roberts, The Bishop of Southwark, Lord Silkin (the Leader in the Lords), Kingsley Martin, and Professors from

several universities, joined twenty-five Members of Parliament in requesting the visas on the ground of free speech and the right of the British people to hear the spokesman on Foreign Affairs of the NLF. But the Home Secretary refused to receive a delegation of these people to discuss the matter as 'no useful purpose would be served'.

At the Labour Party Conference the Executive refused to allow the emergency resolution of Nottingham City Labour Party calling for the granting of visas to be put on the agenda. When the President of the Nottingham Labour Party tried to give a speech on the subject, the microphones were cut off by the Chairman.

And yet France has granted visas to them and they toured France. Sweden has officially invited them and Canada has granted them visas. Only Britain under the Labour Government refuses.

The Prime Minister, speaking at Blackpool, said that were the members of the NLF coming for the purpose of serious negotiation they would come to the Government. But since they were coming to speak to the British public, it was evident that they were coming for purposes of propaganda and that could not be permitted. One wonders why Mr Cabot Lodge was given a visa to come to speak at the teach-in at Oxford.

It is to be noted that visas which the CND tried to obtain for representatives of North Vietnam have also been refused.

The immediate situation is dark. The Labour Government has not only not carried out its electoral promises, but has reversed them. In carrying out Tory policies and in its subservience to America, it is helping to bring the world to complete disaster. One must hope that opposition to this policy will grow stronger before long. Especially, it must be hoped that the young, who have not shared in the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or in the shameful dishonesty of so-called 'disarmament' conferences, will retain their indignation as they grow older and will, at last, prevail upon mankind to permit the creation of that happier world which was once the aspiration of the Labour Party.

For my part, I feel that I can no longer remain a member of this so-called 'Labour' Party, and I am resigning after 51 years.

It is time that a new movement leading to a new Party more nearly like the movement for which Keir Hardie struggled, be formed to carry out the aspirations of those who have hitherto upheld the present Party.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the end of this speech I tore up my Labour Party membership card.

## CHAPTER 8

*Peace Through Resistance to US Imperialism*  
*January, 1966*

Throughout the world today increasing numbers of people concerned with peace and with social justice are describing us imperialism as the common destroyer of peace and justice. To some, the expression 'us imperialism' appears as a cliché because it is not part of their own experience. We in the West are the beneficiaries of imperialism. The spoils of exploitation are the means of our corruption. Because imperialism is not part of our experience we do not recognize the aptness of the description for the economic and political policies of what President Eisenhower termed 'the military industrial complex'. Let us consider briefly the nature of us power.

3,300 military bases and vast mobile fleets, bearing missiles and nuclear bombers, are spread over our planet to protect the ownership and control by us capitalism of sixty per cent of the world's resources. Sixty per cent of the world's resources are owned by the rulers of six per cent of the world's population. The aggressiveness of this empire imposes on mankind an expenditure of 140,000 million dollars annually or 16 million dollars each hour. The current arms expenditure exceeds the entire national income of all developing countries. It exceeds the world's annual exports of all commodities. It exceeds the national income of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The us military budget is nearly 60,000 million dollars per year. One Atlas missile costs thirty million dollars, or the equivalent of the total investment for a nitrogen fertilizer plant with capacity of 70,000 tons per annum.

Consider this in terms of the United Kingdom only, to take the example of a prosperous country: one obsolete missile equals four

universities, one TSR 2 equals five modern hospitals, one ground-to-air missile equals 100,000 tractors.

During the past fourteen years the us spent 4,000 million dollars to purchase farm surpluses. Millions of tons of wheat, oats, barley, maize, butter and cheese have been stored and poisoned to keep prices up in the world markets. Blue dye is poured into great mountains of butter and cheese to render them unusable. By 1960, 125 million tons of bread grain had been stored in the United States to rot—enough food for every citizen of India for one year. Unimaginably vast quantities of foodstuffs are calculatedly destroyed by the rulers of us capitalism, for no other purpose than the continuation of their profits and the retention of their power. Like vultures the handful of the rich batten on the poor, the exploited, the oppressed. A drop of five per cent in the world price of staple exports of any country would, according to Dag Hammarskjöld, wipe out all investments of the World Bank, of the United Nations and all bilateral and other investments.

These were the fears of Hammarskjöld. What are the facts? In recent years prices have operated against poor countries not merely at five per cent but at forty per cent. The industrial production of Western capitalism is consciously employed not only to perpetuate the hunger which exists in the world, but to increase it vastly for profit.

In South Africa, 10,000 children die annually from gastro-enteritis. The smallpox which haunts many countries could be eliminated at a cost of 500,000 dollars. Hundreds of millions who suffer from yaws could be cured by a fivepenny shot of penicillin. Five hundred million people have trachoma. Sixty per cent of the children of Africa suffer from protein deficiency diseases such as kwashiokor, beri-beri or pellagra. When us capitalists hoard food and poison it they not only deprive the starving, but force the developing countries to buy food at high costs. The riches of the earth are destroyed, wasted, stolen by the few and used to murder the millions. 3,300 military bases are spread across the planet to prevent the peoples from destroying this evil system.

Let us examine the role of the war industry in the United

States. The United States Defence Department owns property valued in 1954 at 160 billion dollars.

This value has almost doubled. The US Defence Department is the world's largest organization. The Pentagon owns millions of acres of land, including thirty-two million in the United States and over three million acres of land outright in foreign countries. The Pentagon building is so large that the Capitol, which contains the United States Government, could be swallowed in any one of the five main segments of the Pentagon. The 1962 budget involved fifty-three billion dollars for arms, exclusive of the military space programme.

Thus, by 1962, sixty-three cents out of every dollar were spent on appropriations for arms and space. A further six cents were for army services, and more than eighty per cent of interest payments were for military debts. Seventy-seven cents out of every hundred are spent on past wars, the Cold War and preparations for future war. The billions of dollars placed in the pockets of the US military give the Pentagon economic power affecting every aspect of American life, and of the lives of mankind.

Military assets in the US are three times as great as the combined assets of the great monopolies, greater than the assets of US Steel, Metropolitan Life Insurance, American Telephone and Telegraph, General Motors and Standard Oil. The Defence Department employs three times the number of all these great world corporations.

This immense world concentration of power and wealth is directly linked to large scale capitalism in America. The billions of dollars in contracts are awarded by the Pentagon and filled by large industry.

In 1960, 21 billion dollars were spent on military goods. Ten capitalist corporations received  $7\frac{1}{2}$  billion dollars, three received one billion each and two others 900 million dollars. In these corporations there are more than 1,400 retired officers of the army above the rank of major. This includes 261 Generals and flag rank officers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the report of the Hebert Investigating Committee of the House of Representatives in the US *Congressional Quarterly*.

The largest company, General Dynamics, has 187 retired officers, 27 generals and admirals and the former Secretary of the Army on its payroll. American policy and the military bases serve a vast power complex inter-connected and interested in the perpetuation of the arms race for its own sake. This concentration of power spreads throughout the economy of the United States. Sub-contracts awarded by war contractors involve every city of any size. The jobs at stake involve millions of people.

Four million people work for the US Defence Department alone. The payroll of twelve billion dollars is twice that of the US automobile industry. A further four million people are employed directly in arms industries. Thus eight million people depend for their jobs on the military adventures of the US rulers. Eight million jobs mean twenty-five million people in total.

Missile production accounts for eighty-two per cent of all manufacturing jobs in San Diego, California, seventy-two per cent in Wichita, Kansas. Military contracts alone account for thirty per cent of all manufacturing jobs in six States, including California. In Los Angeles nearly sixty per cent of jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on the arms race. Thus the United States as a whole devotes over fifty per cent of all its public expenditure to military spending.

This colossal investment is in exploiting and domination. Every food store and every petrol station in America requires, under capitalism, the perpetuation of war production.

This is the world system of imperialism. And the system also has a silent army: the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA has a budget fifteen times the size of all diplomatic activity of the US. This vast agency purchases members of the army and police in countries all over the world. It draws up lists of popular leaders to be assassinated. It plots to start wars. It invades countries.

In Latin America, a band of reactionary generals, at the instigation of the Central Intelligence Agency and the US Ambassador in Brazil, Mr Lincoln Gordon, crushed the democratic government of Joao Goulart. In Argentina, American tanks smashed the civilian government of Arturo Frondisi, solely because this conservative spokesman for middle-class interests was insufficiently



subservient to US capitalism. Brutal military putsches have been imposed upon Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala and Honduras. For decades, the United States armed and supported one of the most barbaric and savage rulers in modern times, namely, Trujillo. When Trujillo no longer served their interests, they allowed him to suffer the fate of Ngo Dinh Diem, but the United States remained the enemy of the people of the Dominican Republic, as can be seen by the arrogant military intervention to crush the brave revolution of April, 1965.

The fact that this naked aggression is condoned by the United Nations, and the ability of the United States to escape expulsion from the United Nations for its gross violation of the Charter, demonstrates that the United Nations has become a tool of American aggression of the kind displayed in the Dominican Republic. All my sympathy lies with the struggle of the people of the Dominican Republic, which continues at this very moment.

In the Congo, mercenary troops, acting for Belgian and American interests and shamelessly supported by the British Government, have killed indiscriminately every living villager in the path of the advancing mercenary armies. The dregs of American militarism have been used for this purpose: the mercenary soldiery of South Africa and of the Cuban counter-revolution.

In the Middle East, United States' and European oil interests force poverty and tyranny on the people. British imperialism, relying on the military and financial power of the United States, is showering the people of Aden with napalm and high explosives in an attempt to suppress the popular movement.

In Southern Africa, incalculable riches are taken out of the Copper Belt of Rhodesia and of South Africa and the fascist states of Salazar and Verwoerd survive through NATO arms. In South-East Asia, 50,000 troops prop up the puppet state of Malaysia, and right-wing generals, with United States' money, have taken control of Indonesia. Throughout the South China seas, every patriotic and radical force is gaoled and persecuted by the imperialist powers. The United States boasts of its intrigues in the Maghreb. It brazenly publishes its plans to subvert all nationalist governments.

This is a predatory imperialism and nowhere has it been more cruel and reckless than in Vietnam. Chemicals and gas, bacteriological weapons and phosphorus, napalm and razor bombs, disembowelment, dismemberment, forced labour, concentration camps, beheadings, elaborate torture—every species of cruelty—have been employed by American imperialism in Vietnam. Clinics, sanatoria, hospitals, schools, villages have been relentlessly saturated with fire bombs: and still the people of Vietnam resist, after twenty-five years of struggle against three great industrial powers.

The people of Vietnam are heroic, and their struggle is epic: a stirring and permanent reminder of the incredible spirit of which men are capable when they are dedicated to a noble ideal. Let us salute the people of Vietnam.

In the course of history there have been many cruel and rapacious empires and systems of imperialist exploitation, but none before have had the power at the disposal of United States' imperialists. This constitutes a world system of oppression, and represents the true threat to peace and the true source of the danger of world nuclear war.

I have supported peaceful coexistence, out of the conviction that conflict in a nuclear age can only be disastrous. This conviction was based on the hope that the United States could be persuaded to come to an agreement with the socialist and communist countries. It is now painfully clear that US imperialism cannot be persuaded to end its aggression, its exploitation and its cruelty. In every part of the world the source of war and of suffering lies at the door of US imperialism. Wherever there is hunger, wherever there is exploitative tyranny, wherever people are tortured and the masses left to rot under the weight of disease and starvation, the force which holds down the people stems from Washington.

Peaceful coexistence, therefore, cannot be achieved by requesting US imperialism to behave better. Peace cannot be realized by placing hopes on the goodwill of those whose power depends on the continuation of such exploitation and on the ever-increasing scale of military production. The system which oppresses the people of the world is international, co-ordinated and powerful:

but it is hateful and oppressive and in various ways resisted by the people of the world.

A united and co-ordinated resistance to this exploitation and domination must be forged. The popular struggle of oppressed people will remove the resources from the control of US imperialism and, in so doing, strengthen the people of the United States itself, who are striving first to understand and second to overcome the cruel rulers who have usurped their revolution and their government. This, in my view, is the way to create a secure peace, rather than a tenuous and immoral acquiescence in US domination, which can neither work nor be tolerated by humane men.

If the Soviet Union, in its desire for peace, which is commendable, seeks to gain favour with the United States by minimizing, or even opposing, the struggle for national liberation and socialism, neither peace nor justice will be achieved. US imperialism has provided us with all the evidence to which we are entitled as to its nature and its practice. The peoples of the world bear witness to it.

War and oppression have a long history in human affairs. They cannot be overcome except through struggle. A world free of exploitation and foreign domination, a world of wellbeing for the masses of people of all continents, a world of peace and of fraternity, has to be fought for. This is the lesson US imperialism teaches us. It is not a palatable lesson, but nothing will be accomplished by ignoring it.

The danger of nuclear war will not be averted through fear of United States' power. On the contrary, the more isolated the wielders of power in the United States become, in the face of world rejection of their values and resistance to their acts, the more likely we are to succeed in avoiding a nuclear holocaust. It is the illusion on the part of US imperialism that it can accomplish an aim and defeat people by the use of such weapons that constitutes today the main source of nuclear danger. But when the people of Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Congo, the Cameroons, the United States, Britain—all the people—demonstrate and struggle and resist, nuclear power is of no avail. Its possession will destroy its user. Let us join together to resist US imperialism.

## CHAPTER 9

### *The Only Honourable Policy* *April 27, 1966*

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The United States must be compelled to get out of Vietnam immediately and without conditions. There are at least four important reasons why such a policy must be enforced. First, the United States is committing war crimes in Vietnam. These have been documented so frequently by Western observers that they need no further cataloguing here. Suffice it to say that repeated newspaper reports of chemical and gas warfare, concentration camps and indiscriminate destruction of civilians, torture and atrocities are so commonplace that we are in danger of overlooking their essential character: these are war crimes perpetrated in our names, on our behalf, with our money and our acquiescence.

Secondly, the United States has no right to be in Vietnam. The 'Government' in Saigon which, we are told, invited US troops is no more legal than it is representative. The ambitious Vietnamese generals who nominally rule a fraction of South Vietnam on behalf of the United States are nothing more than the linear descendants of the former French puppet 'ruler'. The United States has simply continued the French policy of selecting a safe nominee and imposing him on as much of the country as it can subdue by force of arms and foreign money.

Thirdly, Washington's talk of 'halting aggression' is shameless Orwellian doublethink. The United States wrecked the Geneva Agreements, prevented free elections and the promised reunification with North Vietnam, took South Vietnam into its sphere of control, pretended that the seventeenth parallel was a national boundary and North Vietnam a foreign country and repeatedly

failed to produce evidence for its allegations of massive Communist infiltration from the North. Only quite recently, after the South Vietnamese were being slaughtered at the rate of well over 1,000 a week, was there any evidence of substantial military support for the National Liberation Front from the North. And this, of course, is not 'foreign invasion'. It is support for their fellow countrymen who have been artificially and illegally separated from them by a Power from thousands of miles away. It is the United States that is guilty of foreign aggression.

Fourthly, if the Vietnamese are to lose, even partially, their independence, the United States will be encouraged to think that aggression pays and to act accordingly in three continents. I oppose United States aggression today as firmly as I opposed Nazi aggression in 1939—and for the same reason: appeasement of those who commit war crimes and blatant aggression does not pay. It serves only to increase their appetite for aggression. They must be isolated.

It is indeed instructive to recall the Nazi era if we are to understand what is happening in Vietnam today. The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the North Vietnamese Government, we are told by Washington, are not interested in negotiating a conclusion to the war. Therefore, the argument continues, responsibility for the war rests with them. Their belligerence, says the US Government, has two possible causes. The first is the 'false assumption' that victory is at hand. Of this they must be 'disabused'—by every means the United States finds necessary. The second 'cause' is that behind the Vietnamese lurks China, which desires the defeat of the United States and which could be asked to provide military assistance for its neighbour.

At first sight, one must admit, this interpretation contains the minimum number of half-truths necessary for a public already browbeaten with the myths of the Cold War. It can not, however, stand up to inspection. How would citizens of the United States respond if, say, China had an army of occupation seeking to dominate everywhere south of San Francisco, Denver, St Louis and Washington, and was systematically destroying everywhere to the north by aerial bombardment? How would Americans then

respond to Chinese invitations to 'negotiate' a reasonable conclusion to such a war? It is at this point worth recalling the response which Hitler encountered in his reckless pursuit of empire. In 1940 Britain's survival as a nation was at stake. In asking the House of Commons for a vote of confidence in his new Administration, Churchill used language which, shorn of its rhetoric, could be that of Ho Chi Minh today:

'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. . . . You ask, What is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized: no survival. . . . I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

A month later, as the danger to Britain increased, Churchill went further in calling publicly for the support of a foreign power:

' . . . we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender; and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire . . . would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the Old.'<sup>2</sup>

When we are the imperialist power, wars of liberation are at best placed in inverted commas, or more usually termed Communist aggression. In 1940 nobody in the West questioned the determination of Britain to be free, or its right to call for foreign

<sup>1</sup> May 13, 1940. The motion was carried unanimously.

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons, June 4.

assistance, or called Britain pig-headed for standing alone. Churchill's first message, on becoming Prime Minister, to President Roosevelt, stated categorically:

'We expect to be attacked here ourselves, both from the air and by parachute and airborne troops, in the near future, and are getting ready for them. If necessary, we shall continue the war alone, and we are not afraid of that.'<sup>1</sup>

One of the more absurd statements of Lyndon Johnson when he was vice-president, which history will certainly record against him, was to describe Diem as the Churchill of Vietnam. There is no doubt that the real national hero there is Ho Chi Minh, who led the successful expulsion of the French colonialists and has refused to surrender to the United States. If Ho Chi Minh today sounds like the Churchill of 1940, the following statement also has a familiar ring:

'In this hour I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense (among the enemy) as much as elsewhere. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal, since I am not a vanquished foe begging favours, but the victor, speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war need go on. I am grieved to think of the sacrifices it must claim. . . . Possibly (the enemy) will brush aside this statement of mine by saying it is merely born of fear and doubt of final victory. In that case I shall have relieved my conscience in regard to the things to come.'

This is not President Johnson addressing Hanoi. It is Hitler in the Reichstag, after the Nazis had overrun France, making what he called his 'Peace Offer' to Britain.<sup>2</sup> This gesture was followed by great Nazi diplomatic activity, but nobody was fooled. Three days later, in a broadcast, the British Foreign Secretary brushed aside Hitler's 'summons to capitulate to his will' and announced that 'we shall not stop fighting until freedom is secure'. Churchill's own comment is instructive:

<sup>1</sup> May 15, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> July 19, 1940.

'Naturally Hitler would be very glad, after having subjugated Europe to his will, to bring the war to an end by procuring British acceptance of what he had done. It was in fact an offer not of peace but of readiness to accept the surrender by Britain of all she had entered the war to maintain.'<sup>1</sup>

In reply to the King of Sweden's enquiry, the British Government formally rejected Hitler's 'offer' by cataloguing Nazi war crimes against bordering states, especially Belgium and Holland, 'in spite of all the assurances given to them by the German Government that their neutrality would be respected.' These 'horrible events', including vast massacres, darkened the pages of history with an 'indelible stain'. The British Government's intention to prosecute the war 'by every means in their power until Hitlerism is finally broken' had been so strengthened that 'they would rather all perish in the common ruin than fail or falter in their duty'.

Here the analogy ends, for the peace terms of Churchill and Ho Chi Minh are very different. Churchill demanded of the Nazis 'unconditional surrender', and was not satisfied until, following the saturation bombing of open German cities, the enemy capital was finally occupied. Ho Chi Minh, however, demands nothing more than that the Americans go away. The Vietnamese are not threatening a single American city; they plan no subjugation of the USA. If Britain's response in 1940 was reasonable, how much more so is that of Vietnam today. If we are to have one standard for the West and another for the Vietnamese, we deserve every accusation of racism.

Does all this mean that we are not to seek an end to the war in Vietnam? Must the slaughter continue? The Vietnamese know that President Johnson's suggestion of 'negotiations' is as unacceptable as was Hitler's to Britain. They have every right to their own country, to which the United States has none. If the Vietnamese were to suffer US invasion and destruction of their country, and then sit down and 'negotiate' with the invaders how much of it America should retain or control, then aggression would be legalized and encouraged. The Vietnamese have already

<sup>1</sup> *The Second World War*, Vol. III, Chapter 13.

tried negotiations at the conference table in 1946 and again in 1954. First the French and then the Americans took advantage of their desire for peace by utterly ignoring the terms of the agreements. A long-suffering and heroic people will this time, I earnestly hope, gain their independence. It is the duty of all in the West who value justice to help reduce the price they have to pay. I appeal to Americans, who have never in their lifetimes known a foreign army of occupation on their soil, and never suffered the systematic destruction of their country from the air, to try to understand imaginatively what is happening in Vietnam. The Government of the United States has fallen into the hands of war criminals who must be halted whilst there is yet time. World opinion can still help bring the only honourable solution: the United States must be compelled to get out of Vietnam immediately and without conditions.

## CHAPTER 10

*Broadcast on National Liberation Front Radio  
to American Soldiers  
May 24, 1966*

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This is Bertrand Russell speaking to you on the radio of the forces of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. I am speaking to you American soldiers in order to explain how your Government has abused your rights in sending you to occupy a country whose people are united in their hatred of the United States as a foreign aggressor. It is not difficult to understand why it is that the Vietnamese hate Americans. The people of Vietnam have been fighting for twenty-five years to secure their independence. They first fought against the Japanese, who were very cruel, and later against the French, who had set up guillotines in villages throughout Vietnam and who beheaded those suspected of being opposed to foreign occupation. Not many of you may know that the United States Government financed more than eighty per cent of the cost of the French war and supplied France with all modern weapons, in order to assist France in her evil task of killing and subduing the people of Vietnam.

When the United States first began to intervene militarily in South Vietnam, the pretence was made that the United States was merely helping a Government in Saigon put down subversion from outside. But you American soldiers have seen for yourselves what kind of governments have existed in Saigon. They are brutal, corrupt, dictatorial and completely despised by the people. Why is it that these governments have been able to continue, one after another, in Saigon, despite the fact that the students, the women, the villagers, everyone risks life itself to overthrow them? The sole answer is that the United States is using its enormous

military force to impose on the people of Vietnam puppet governments which do not represent them.

Let us now consider together why the US Government does this. The excuse that they are protecting the Vietnamese against the 'Vietcong' or the North Vietnamese can be seen by all of you to be the disgusting lie it is. Vietnam is one country. Even the Geneva Agreements acknowledge that it is one country. The North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese are not merely the same people, but the wives and children of men living in the North are in the South and many of those who live in the South were born in the North.

You may not know that between 1954 and 1960 more Vietnamese died than since 1960. Think hard about that. The 'Vietcong' had not taken up arms until 1960, and yet more Vietnamese died in the six years before that time than since the National Liberation Front began to struggle. The reason is simple. The Government of Ngo Dinh Diem killed, tortured, imprisoned and mutilated hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and was able to do this solely because of the military support and direction of the United States. Can any of you forget the brutality of Ngo Dinh Diem, which moved Buddhist priests to burn themselves in protest?

It ought to be clear that the National Liberation Front, which you know as the Vietcong, took up arms to defend their people against a tyranny more brutal than the Japanese occupation itself, for more died under Diem than under the Japanese. This is the responsibility of the United States Government.

The reason why you American soldiers are in Vietnam is to suppress the people of Vietnam, who are trying to free themselves from economic strangulation and foreign military rule. You are sent to protect the riches of a few men in the United States.

Do you know that the United States controls sixty per cent of the resources of the world, but has only six per cent of the world's population, and yet one out of three Americans lives in poverty? Do you know that the United States has over 3,300 military bases in the world, almost all of which are used against the population of the country in which the bases exist? The US rulers have built

an economic empire which is being resisted from the Dominican Republic to the Congo, and especially in Vietnam.

Could you imagine yourselves voting for Cao Ky? If a foreign power occupied the United States to steal American resources for itself and if a traitor government were established by force, would you feel it was your government? Worse than this, because the Vietnamese people are so determined and show such fantastic heroism that the greatest military power on earth has found it impossible to conquer them, you American soldiers are trained to use every modern weapon of war.

Your Air Force is flying 650 sorties a week in the North and the tonnages used in the South are higher than those used during the Second World War or the Korean War. You are using napalm, which burns everything it touches. You are using phosphorus, which eats like an acid into those who are in its path. You are using fragmentation bombs and 'lazy dogs', which cut up in pieces and lacerate women and children in the villages hit without discrimination. You are using poison chemicals which cause blindness, affect the nervous system and paralyse. You are using poison gases which are listed in army manuals of World War II as poisons, and other gases which are so deadly that even soldiers with gas masks have been killed by their own gas.

When you return from battle, ask yourselves who are these people you are killing? How many women and children died at your hands today? What would you feel if these things were happening in the United States to your wives, parents and children? How can you bear the thought of what is taking place around you, day after day and week after week? I ask these questions of you because you bear the responsibility and within your hands lies the choice of whether this criminal war is to continue.

When Britain occupied North America in the eighteenth century, American farmers fought with pitchforks in their bare hands, although they were hungry and in rags. They fought for eight years and they defeated the British Empire in their own country. Do you know that in the United States today, 66 million people are living in poverty? Do you know that in the United

States today the unemployed equal the population of thirty-five individual states?

You are being used to enrich the few industrialists whose profits depend on taking the natural resources from other countries, and this is why the world is rising against this brutal war waged by the United States Government. You know that the Geneva Convention outlaws gas, chemicals, torture and mutilation and you also know that American special forces are trained in techniques used at Auschwitz and the other concentration camps.

Master-Sergeant Don Duncan has revealed the truth about the films showing Nazi tortures which were used for instruction of American servicemen. And you yourselves know from your daily experience what happens to villagers who are suspected of being 'Vietcong' and who are captured. You know also that the strategic hamlets are little more than concentration camps, where forced labour, torture and starvation occur. These things were the reason for the hatred the world had for the Nazis. These things led to the trials at Nuremberg, in which the Nazi leaders were hanged as war criminals. I know that most of you came to Vietnam not because you wished to but because you were sent. I know that most of you have been told that you were defending helpless people against a stronger neighbour. But you have been lied to and no one knows it better than yourselves.

You must not think that you are alone, for throughout the United States people are opposing this war. When 100 thousand people meet in New York City alone, and tens of thousands meet in other cities across the United States, it should be clear that the American people have seen through this war and want it ended. Why else has the Government been unable even to make a declaration of war?

Have you been present when an officer has attached electrodes to the genitals of a woman or a child? Have you been one of those who, out of fear or nervousness, pulled the trigger on an automatic rifle, releasing so many hundreds of bullets in an instant that, before you knew what had happened, women and children lay dead before you?

Along with world famous figures, Nobel prizewinners, novelists, philosophers, mathematicians, I am forming a War Crimes Tribunal in order to pass judgment, in most solemn terms and with the most respected international figures, upon the crimes being committed by the United States Government against the people of Vietnam. I appeal to you to end your participation in this barbarous and criminal war of conquest. I appeal to you to inform the War Crimes Tribunal of the truth about this war and to place before it the evidence of your own eyes. I appeal to you as a human being to human beings. Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do this, you will perform a courageous service to mankind. If you cannot, you will allow your rulers to continue to degrade your country and cause its name to be hated by decent people the world over.

Join us, Americans, Englishmen, West Europeans, Latin Americans, Asians, Africans, people from every walk of life, in our determination to defeat those in the United States responsible for the suffering and horror which you American soldiers have seen and for which you have responsibility. Refuse to fight any longer in this unjust war. Demand to be transferred anywhere but Vietnam. Make known that you will make public your opposition to this war and the way in which it is fought. There are too many people ready to support you for reprisals to take place. It is no use postponing your decision. The moment of trial is always. Now is the appointed time.

## CHAPTER II

*Speech to the National Conference of Solidarity  
London, June 4, 1966*

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I welcome you to this National Conference of Solidarity, which has been convened solemnly to create a national movement in Britain of active support for the people of Vietnam. Where is there a parallel for the heroism with which the Vietnamese have struggled to be free from foreign occupation and every species of brutality? When, since the reign of Nazism, have such barbarous tortures been applied to helpless people? It should never be forgotten by us that more Vietnamese died during Diem's reign, from 1954 to 1960, than in the post-1960 period, when the people of Vietnam took up arms under the leadership of the National Liberation Front. Nor can it be forgotten that the Vietnamese have known the horror of foreign occupation since the last century and have been struggling against it virtually since the Japanese occupation of 1940. The Japanese, the French and the Americans have attempted to subdue this people. They have all failed. But neither the Japanese nor the French equalled the United States in barbarism.

The United States today is a force for suffering, reaction and counter-revolution the world over. Wherever people are hungry and exploited, wherever they are oppressed and humiliated, the agency of this evil exists with the support and approval of the United States. Whether it is Mobutu of the Congo or Blanco of Brazil, whether it is Pak of South Korea, Thanom of Thailand, Ngo Dinh Diem or Cao Ky, the arms which kill the people bear an American stamp of origin.

When considering what horror has been perpetrated in Vietnam itself, it is more than I can bear than to describe it for

you. Eight million people were placed in concentration camps under forced labour. People have been subjected to experimental weapons such as poison gas which blinds them, paralyses them, asphyxiates them and causes convulsions. Chemicals which affect the nervous system and mental balance have been used over wide areas. Napalm and phosphorus, which burn and burn until only a cinder remains, have been dropped on the most densely populated areas. Weapons of sheer evil, such as the Lazy Dog, have been used throughout the country. In one province of North Vietnam alone—Thanh Hoa—100 million slivers of steel were rained on the population during the last year. 650 sorties per week, with vast tonnages exceeding those used in World War II and the Korean War, have taken place relentlessly, week after week, month after month.

And yet, despite all this, despite the fact that the United States is the most powerful military force the world has known, despite the fact that her Air Force is not challenged and her sea power is not hampered, despite the fact that the automatic weapons in the hands of her soldiers fire several hundred rounds of bullets per minute, despite the fact that the Vietnamese are an agrarian people with little industry, these people, like the Greeks at Salamis, have defeated a great and cruel colossus.

When I think back to 1940, during the Blitz, and recall the mood of Englishmen at that time, I know clearly and without hesitation what our responsibility is to the Vietnamese. Do you remember our feelings when the Nazis were bombing our cities. Do you recall the determination which swept Britain, never to surrender and never to accept a Nazi occupation of our country. Did we suffer gas and chemicals at that time? Was our country cut in half? Were our people in concentration camps? Was our countryside razed with gas, chemicals, jelly-gasoline and fragmentation bombs? No, none of this occurred. And yet Churchill spoke for all of us when he declared that we would fight on the beaches, but we would never surrender.

The purpose of this Conference is to declare our fervent hope for the victory of the people of Vietnam, total, unequivocal and swift. The purpose of this Conference is to build a movement in



Britain worthy of the heroism of the people of Vietnam themselves; a movement which will not equivocate or pander to the economic power of the United States. We wish to build a movement capable of exposing the sordid squalor of our Prime Minister's subservience and greed.

We wish to create a movement which will evolve concrete forms of action, such as a War Crimes Tribunal, which will call before it victims and witnesses of the great panoply of horror which is the war of aggression waged by America in Vietnam.

Our movement will be broadly based. It will seek its support amongst the working people of this country, from the trade unions, from the teachers, from the students and from all those who see in the struggle of the people of Vietnam that decency and dedication which calls forth the best responses in human beings. For let us have no doubt that we do the Vietnamese no favour by declaring our solidarity. Their struggle against economic domination is a guide to the road we ourselves must travel.

Britain has been made into a bully's lackey, and a brutal and heartless bully at that. If, today, we are not hungry because the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America die daily to keep us fed, we are degraded and corrupted by that unworthy plenty. Squalor serving plenty has always defiled the beneficiaries of misery, from the days of Egyptian slavery and from the times of early Christianity to our own.

So it is that the struggle in Vietnam is a struggle for human decency and our very own emancipation. The people of Vietnam will not be in our debt. They deserve no pity. They display heroism, not passivity, and they are overcoming and not turning to private disillusion and despair.

No one who enjoys a high standard of living in the West, which is inexorably derived from brutality and exploitation, has the right to ask people who struggle against our exploitation to abandon that struggle on terms we lay down. This is why it is unseemly for peace movements and movements of the Left to ask the Vietnamese to treat with Johnson, while he continues his criminal aggression against them. There can be no peace of any value or of any duration which is a slaves' peace, nor can we

obtain peace of mind by requesting the hungry and oppressed to die in silence. They will not listen to such pathetic advice. They must not. Nor must we give it.

Our Campaign for Solidarity, our War Crimes Tribunal, our films, our books, our meetings and our material help must have one aim: the victory of the Vietnamese over their tormentors. And I express the wish that this victory may herald similar victories of the oppressed everywhere until the day when our own people reclaim their government and transform it into an instrument of good.

## CHAPTER 12

*Appeal to the American Conscience*  
*June 18, 1966*

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I appeal to you, citizens of America, as a person concerned with liberty and social justice. Many of you will feel that your country has served these ideals and, indeed, the United States possesses a revolutionary tradition which, in its origins, was true to the struggle for human liberty and for social equality. It is this tradition which has been traduced by the few who rule the United States today. Many of you may not be fully aware of the extent to which your country is controlled by industrialists who depend for their power partly upon great economic holdings in all parts of the world. The United States today controls over sixty per cent of the world's natural resources, although it contains only six per cent of the world's population. The minerals and produce of vast areas of the planet are possessed by a handful of men. I ask you to consider the words of your own leaders, who sometimes reveal the exploitation they have practised. The *New York Times* of February 12, 1950 said:

'Indo-China is a prize worth a large gamble. In the North are exportable tin, tungsten, manganese, coal, lumber and rice; rubber, tea, pepper and hides. Even before World War II Indo-China yielded dividends estimated at 300 million dollars per year.'

One year later, an adviser to the United States State Department said the following:

'We have only partially exploited South-East Asia's resources. Nevertheless, South-East Asia supplied ninety per cent of the world's crude rubber, sixty per cent of its tin and eighty per cent

of its copra and coconut oil. It has sizeable quantities of sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, sisal, fruits, spices, natural resins and gums, petroleum, iron ore and bauxite.'

And in 1953, while the French were still in Vietnam fighting with American backing, President Eisenhower stated:

'Now let us assume we lost Indo-China. If Indo-China goes, the tin and tungsten we so greatly value would cease coming. We are after the cheapest way to prevent the occurrence of something terrible—the loss of our ability to get what we want from the riches of the Indo-Chinese territory and from South-East Asia.'

This makes clear that the war in Vietnam is a war like that waged by the Germans in Eastern Europe. It is a war designed to protect the continued control over the wealth of the region by American capitalists. When we consider that the fantastic sums of money spent on armament are awarded in contracts to the industries on whose boards of directors sit the generals who demand the weapons, we can see that the military and large industry have formed an interlocking alliance for their own profit.

The truth is that the Vietnamese popular resistance is just like the American revolutionary resistance to the British, who controlled the economic and political life of the American colonies in the eighteenth century. Vietnamese resistance is like the resistance of the French Maquis, the Yugoslav partisans and the guerrillas of Norway and Denmark to the Nazi occupation. That is why a small peasant people is able to hold down a vast army of the most powerful industrial nation on earth.

I appeal to you to consider what has been done to the people of Vietnam by the United States Government. Can you, in your hearts, justify the use of poison chemicals and gas, the saturation bombing of the entire country with jelly-gasoline and phosphorus? Although the American Press lies about this, the documentary evidence concerning the nature of these gases and chemicals is overwhelming. They are poisonous and they are fatal. Napalm and phosphorus burn until the victim is reduced to a

bubbling mass. The United States has also used weapons like the 'lazy dog', which is a bomb containing ten thousand slivers of razor-sharp steel. These razor darts slice to ribbons the villagers upon whom these weapons of sheer evil are constantly used. In one province of North Vietnam, the most densely populated, one hundred million slivers of razor-sharp steel have fallen in a period of thirteen months.

It is even more revealing and terrible that more Vietnamese died during the reign of Diem, from 1954 to 1960, than since 1960, when the Vietnamese partisans took up armed resistance to the American occupation in the South. What the papers have called the 'Vietcong' is, in fact, a broad alliance, like the popular fronts of Europe, including all political views ranging from Catholics to Communists. The National Liberation Front has the most ardent support of the people and only the wilfully blind will fail to see this.

Do you know that eight million Vietnamese were placed in internment camps under conditions of forced labour, with barbed wire and armed patrols? Do you know that this was done on the direction of the United States Government and that torture and brutal murder were a continuous feature of life in these camps? Are you aware that the gases and chemicals which have been used for five years in Vietnam blind, paralyse, asphyxiate, cause convulsions and result in unbearable death?

Try to imagine what it would mean if an enemy were bombing the United States and occupied it for twelve years. How would you feel if a foreign power had saturated New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, St Louis, San Francisco and Miami with jelly-gasoline, phosphorus and lazy dogs? What would you do if an occupying army used these toxic gases and chemicals in every town and hamlet they entered? Can you really think that the American people would welcome so savage an aggressor? The fact is that everywhere in the world people have come to see the men who control the United States Government as brutal bullies, acting in their own economic interests and exterminating any people foolhardy enough to struggle against this naked exploitation and aggression.

When the United States began its war against the Vietnamese, after having paid for nearly all of the French war against the same people, the US Defence Department owned property valued at 160 billion dollars. This value has since doubled. The US Defence Department is the world's largest organization, owning thirty-two million acres in the United States and millions more in foreign countries. By now, more than seventy-five cents out of every hundred are spent on present wars and preparation for future war. Billions of dollars are placed in the pockets of the US military, thereby giving the Pentagon economic power affecting every facet of American life. Military assets in the United States are three times as great as the combined assets of US Steel, Metropolitan Life Insurance, American Telephone and Telegraph, General Motors and Standard Oil. The Defence Department employs three times the number of people working in all these great world corporations. The billions of dollars in military contracts are provided by the Pentagon and fulfilled by large industry. By 1960, 21 billion dollars were spent on military goods. Of this colossal sum, 7½ billion were divided amongst ten corporations and five corporations received nearly one billion dollars each. I ask you to consider carefully that in the executive offices of these corporations there are more than 1,400 retired army officers, including 261 generals and officers of flag rank. General Dynamics has 187 retired officers, 27 generals and admirals and the former Secretary of the Army on its payroll. This is a ruling caste, which stays in power no matter who is elected to nominal public office, and every President finds himself obliged to serve the interests of this all-powerful group. Thus, American democracy has been emptied of life and meaning because the people cannot remove the real men who rule them.

It is this concentration of power which makes it necessary for the Pentagon and big industry to continue the arms race for its own sake. The sub-contracts they award to smaller industries and war contractors involve every American city and, thus, affect the jobs of millions of people. Four million work for the Defence Department. Its payroll is twelve billion dollars, twice that of the US automobile industry. A further four million work directly in

arms industries. In many cities military production accounts for as much as eighty per cent of all manufacturing jobs. Over fifty per cent of the gross national product of the United States is devoted to military spending. This vast military system covers the world with over 3,000 military bases, for the simple purpose of protecting the same empire which was described so clearly in the statements of President Eisenhower, the State Department adviser and the *New York Times* which I mentioned earlier to you. From Vietnam to the Dominican Republic, from the Middle East to the Congo, the economic interests of a few big corporations linked to the arms industry and the military itself determine what happens to American lives. It is on their orders that the United States invades and oppresses starving and helpless people.

Yet, despite the immense wealth of the United States, despite the fact that with only six per cent of the world's people, approaching two-thirds of the world's resources are in its possession, despite the control over the world's oil, cobalt, tungsten, iron ore, rubber and other vital resources, despite the vast billions of profits that are gained by a few American corporations at the cost of mass starvation amongst the peoples of the world, despite all this, sixty-six million Americans live at poverty level. The cities of America are covered in slums. The poor carry the burden of taxation and the fighting of colonial and aggressive wars. I am asking all of you to make an intellectual connection between events which occur daily around you, to try to see clearly the system which has taken control of the United States and perverted its institutional life into a grotesque arsenal for a world empire. It is the vast military machine, the great industrial combines and their intelligence agencies which are regarded by the people of three whole continents as their main enemy in life and the source of their misery and hunger. If we examine the governments which depend for their existence upon American military force, we shall always find regimes which support the rich, the landlords and the big capitalists. This is true in Brazil, in Peru, in Venezuela, in Thailand, in South Korea, in Japan. It is true the world over.

The result of this is that in order to suppress a national revolution, such as the great historic uprising of the Vietnamese people, the United States is obliged to behave as the Japanese behaved in South-East Asia and the Nazis behaved in Eastern Europe. This is literally true. The concentration camps to which I have referred, and which held nearly sixty per cent of the rural population of South Vietnam, were scenes of torture, massacre and mass burial. The special experimental weapons, like the gas and chemicals and jelly-gasoline, are as horrible as anything used by the Nazis during the Second World War. It is true that the Nazis systematically exterminated the Jews and the United States has not yet done anything comparable in Vietnam. With the exception of the extermination of the Jews, however, everything that the Germans did in Eastern Europe has been repeated by the United States in Vietnam on a scale which is larger and with an efficiency which is more terrible and more complete.

In violation of solemn international agreements signed by American Presidents and ratified by the American Congress, this Johnson Government has committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against the peace. It has committed these crimes because the Johnson Government exists to preserve the economic exploitation and the military domination of subject peoples by us industrial magnates and their military arm. The Central Intelligence Agency, which has a budget fifteen times larger than all the diplomatic activity of the United States, is involved in the assassination of heads of state, and plots against independent governments. This sinister activity is designed to destroy the leadership and the organization of peoples who are struggling to free themselves from the stranglehold of American economic and political domination. United States' militarism is inseparable from that same predatory capitalism which reduced the American people themselves to poverty within the living memory of this generation. The same essential motives have led to barbarous and atrocious crimes on a great scale in Vietnam.

I have called on intellectuals and eminent independent men and women from all parts of the world to join in an international War Crimes Tribunal which will hear evidence concerning the

crimes of the US Government in Vietnam. You will remember that Germans were considered guilty if they acquiesced in and accepted the crimes of their government. Nobody considered it a sufficient excuse for Germans to say that they knew about the gas chambers and the concentration camps, the torture and the mutilation, but were unable to stop it. I appeal to you as a human being to human beings. Remember your humanity and your own self-respect. The war against the people of Vietnam is barbaric. It is an aggressive war of conquest.

During the American War of Independence, no one had to tell Americans the purpose of their struggle or conscript them against their will. Nor was it necessary for American soldiers to go ten thousand miles to another country. In the American revolutionary war against foreign troops Americans fought in fields and forests although they were in rags and the occupying army was the strongest of the day. Americans fought the occupier, although they were hungry and poor, and they fought them house by house. In that war of liberation, the American revolutionaries were called terrorists and the colonial power was the one labelling them rebels and rabble. American national heroes responded with words such as Nathan Hale's and Patrick Henry's. The sentiment, 'Give me liberty or give me death', inspired their struggle, just as it inspires the Vietnamese resistance to United States' aggression and occupation.

The Nathan Hales and Patrick Henrys of Vietnam are not the United States army. Those who display heroism, love of country and that deep belief in freedom and justice which inspired the American people in 1776 are today the people of Vietnam, fighting under the revolutionary leadership of their National Liberation Front. And so the American people are to be used as cannon-fodder by those who exploit not only the Vietnamese but the people of the United States themselves. It is Americans who have been killing Vietnamese, attacking villages, occupying cities, using gas and chemicals, bombing their schools and hospitals—all this to protect the profits of American capitalism. The men who conscript the soldiers are the same men who sign the military contracts in their own benefit. They are the same men

who send American soldiers to Vietnam as company cops, protecting stolen property.

So it is that the real struggle for freedom and democracy is inside the United States itself, against the usurpers of American society. I have no doubt that the American people would respond just as the Vietnamese have responded if the United States were invaded and subjected to the atrocities and tortures which the United States army and Government have inflicted on the Vietnamese. The American protest movement, which has inspired people all over the world, is the only true spokesman for American concern for individual liberty and social justice. The battle-front for freedom is in Washington, in the struggle against the war criminals—Johnson, Rusk and McNamara—who have degraded the United States and its citizens. Indeed, they have stolen the United States from its people and made the name of a great country stink in the nostrils of people the world over. This is the harsh truth, and it is a truth which is affecting the daily lives of Americans irrevocably and increasingly. There is no looking the other way. There is no pretending that the war crimes are not occurring, that the gas and chemicals do not exist, that the torture and napalm have not been used, that the Vietnamese have not been slaughtered by American soldiers and American bombs. There is no dignity without the courage to examine this evil and oppose it. There is no solution for the American crisis short of the emancipation of the American people themselves from these barbarous men who speak in their name and defile a great people by doing so. The American people, however, are becoming alert and are showing the same determination and courage which the Vietnamese have so movingly displayed. The Negro struggle in Harlem, Watts and the American South, the resistance of the American students, the increasing distaste for this war shown by the American people at large, give hope to all mankind that the day when greedy and brutal men can deceive and abuse the American nation is drawing to a close.

My appeal to Americans is made with full awareness that the rulers of the United States have spared no device in propaganda to hide from the American people the ugly face of their rulers

and the truth about their behaviour. Abraham Lincoln gave expression to the hope that a people, once aroused, can be deceived no longer. All Americans who know from their own experience and from that of their closest relatives what has been done in Vietnam should come forward now. Speak the truth and take your stand alongside your brothers throughout the world. Struggle for an America free of murderous production, free of war criminals, free of exploitation and free of the hatred of subject peoples. These peoples look to the ordinary people of the United States to understand their plight and to answer their struggle with an American resistance capable of making the United States again a citadel of individual liberty and social justice. The international War Crimes Tribunal is itself an appeal to the conscience of the American people, our allies in a common cause.

The War Crimes Tribunal is under urgent preparation now. I am approaching eminent jurists, literary figures and men of public affairs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States itself. Vietnamese victims of this war will give evidence. Full scientific data concerning the chemicals used, their properties and their effects will be documented. Eye-witnesses will describe what they have seen and scientists will be invited to examine the exhibits in the possession of the Tribunal. The proceedings will be tape-recorded and the full evidence will be published. There will be documentary film material concerning the witnesses and their evidence. We aim to provide the most exhaustive portrayal of what has happened to the people of Vietnam. We intend that the peoples of the world shall be aroused as never before, the better to prevent the repetition of this tragedy elsewhere. Just as in the case of Spain, Vietnam is a barbarous rehearsal. It is our intention that neither the *bona fides* nor the authenticity of this Tribunal will be susceptible to challenge from those who have so much to hide. President Johnson, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Henry Cabot Lodge, General Westmoreland and their fellow criminals will be brought before a wider justice than they recognize and a more profound condemnation than they are equipped to understand.

## POSTSCRIPT

### *The International War Crimes Tribunal*

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This book went to press in the autumn of 1966, as I was preparing the international War Crimes Tribunal mentioned in it. At the Nuremburg war crimes trials, Chief Prosecutor Justice Jackson of the United States Supreme Court declared:

'If certain acts and violations of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or whether Germany does them. We are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us.'

There was, however, a moral ambivalence rooted in the nature of the Nuremburg trials and in the role of Justice Jackson. Nuremburg was a trial conducted by the victorious party over the defeated. Nuremburg was carried by a real-politik alliance of powers and yet, through the legalisms of *force majeure*, crept the voice of humanity, a voice crying out against the unconscionable criminality of the Nazi terror.

I have called for an international War Crimes Tribunal to be held in 1967 because, once again, crimes of great magnitude have been taking place. Our tribunal, it must be noted, commands no State power. It rests on no victorious army. It claims no other than a moral authority.

Over a period of years, an industrial colossus has attacked a small peasant nation. The Vietnamese revolution is part of an historical development through which exploited and hungry peoples are establishing their claim to the basic necessities of human life. The United States has shown itself determined to overwhelm with brute force this struggle for life. We have, on American authority, the fact that three million pounds of bombs have been falling daily on North Vietnam, involving an average

of 650 sorties per week and tonnages in excess of those used during World War II and the Korean war. Beyond this, the armies of the United States have been using experimental weapons such as chemicals, gas, napalm, phosphorous, 'lazy dog' fragmentation weapons and bacteriological devices.

Who, in the West, is unaware of these facts, as they have been presented on film, on television and almost daily in our newspapers? Who among us has not seen the photographs, or read the statistics? Who among us can deny the David-and-Goliath character of this incredible Vietnamese struggle for national autonomy and social transformation?

It is this awareness which provides the proper background to my call for a War Crimes Tribunal. I do not maintain that those who have been invited to serve as members of the Tribunal are without opinions about the war. On the contrary, it is precisely because of their passionate conviction that terrible crimes have been occurring that they feel the moral obligation to form themselves into a Tribunal of conscience, for the purpose of assessing exhaustively and definitively the actions of the United States in Vietnam. I have not confused an open mind with an empty one. I have not believed that to be just one must be without conviction. The authority of the Tribunal and its reputation for fairness follows from the character of its membership and the correctness of its procedures.

The Tribunal was convened in London on November 13, 1966, and was expected to announce its structure, statement of aims and time-table. It was anticipated that commissions would be appointed by the Tribunal to prepare evidence in roughly five areas:

1. the crime of aggression, involving violation of international treaties.
2. the use of experimental weapons, such as gas and chemicals.
3. the bombing of hospitals, sanatoria, schools, dykes and other civilian areas.
4. the torture and mutilation of prisoners.
5. the pursuit of genocidal policies, such as forced labour

camps, mass burials and other techniques of extermination in the South.

The Tribunal members will function as a commission of enquiry, and the commissions under its direction will prepare the evidence, subjecting documentary data to thorough and verifiable scrutiny. Defence witnesses can not be compelled to appear, but the US Government and President Johnson have been formally requested to provide representation for their policies before the Tribunal.

The prima facie evidence of crimes sufficient to warrant the calling of such a Tribunal involves the assumption that the crimes of the apparent aggressor are unique, and that no equation can be made between the oppression of the aggressor and the resistance of the victim. Only those who can not distinguish the rising of the Warsaw Ghetto from the violence of the Gestapo, or the struggle for survival of the partisans of Yugoslavia, the resistance of Norway, the underground in Denmark and the Maquis in France from the invading Nazi armies could fail to recognize the merit of examining the actions of the United States in a manner morally and qualitatively different from the actions of the Vietnamese resistance.

The hearings are planned to last approximately twelve weeks and to take place in Paris from March, 1967. The secretariat of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation has been established in Paris at 58 bis rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, Paris IX. A team of very eminent French lawyers has been preparing a plan of procedure for the attention of the Tribunal. Preparatory sessions will be heard in London. Documentary film will be taken from the testimony of the witnesses, the proceedings of the Tribunal and the evidence. Tape recordings will be made of the hearings and pressed into gramophone records for wide distribution. All data, testimony and evidence will be published.

Those who have accepted my invitation to join the Tribunal, at the time of writing, are:

Gunther Anders, German writer and philosopher. He left Germany as a refugee from the Nazi regime in 1933, and now lives in Vienna. His book, *Burning Conscience*, has made known

the story of Claude Eatherly, one of the fliers involved in the bombing of Hiroshima.

Mehmet Ali Aybar, Turkish intellectual and Member of Parliament for Istanbul. He is president of the Turkish Workers' Party and a former professor of International Law at Istanbul University. In 1948 and 1949 he was convicted of the crime of public criticism of the President and Government of Turkey.

Lelio Basso, Italian lawyer and parliamentarian. He has been a Deputy in the Italian Parliament since 1946 and a member of the Commission on Foreign Affairs. A former general secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, he is now chairman of the Proletarian Socialist Unity Party. He is Professor of Sociology at Rome University, editor of the *International Socialist Journal*, an expert in international law and a lawyer at the Court of Milan.

Mme Simone de Beauvoir, French social historian and novelist. She is the authoress of *The Mandarins* (which received the Prix Goncourt), *The Second Sex* and other widely-acclaimed works.

Stokely Carmichael, American Negro leader. He is the chairman of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC).

Lazaro Cardenas, former President of Mexico. He was Commander-in-Chief and a general of the Mexican army and was awarded the State Peace Prize in 1955.

Lawrence Daly, British trade union leader. He is general secretary of the Scottish National Union of Mineworkers and a writer and lecturer on trade union affairs. He has also spoken widely in Britain on the war in Vietnam.

Vladimir Dedijer, Yugoslav writer. A former professor of Modern History at the University of Belgrade, he has also held university posts at Manchester, Oxford, Harvard and Cornell. He is a Doctor of Jurisprudence and was Yugoslav delegate to the UN General Assembly, 1945-52. During the Nazi occupation he was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Partisan army. He was wounded three times, awarded the Order of Liberation of Yugoslavia and published his *Partisan Diary*.

David Dellinger, American writer. A leader of the US anti-war movement, he is editor of *Liberation* magazine (New York) and

chief organiser of the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee. Isaac Deutscher, Polish-born political historian and essayist. He is the biographer of Trotsky and Stalin and a leading Marxist theorist. Since 1939 he has lived in Britain and has established himself as a prolific writer on Soviet affairs.

Amado V. Hernandez, Philippino poet laureate and labour leader. As President of the Philippine Congress of Labour Organisations, he was sentenced in 1951 to life imprisonment. After six years he was released and totally vindicated in 1964 by the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court. He is chairman of the Philippine Democratic Labour Party and co-founder of the Philippines Newspaper Guild. He has received the Republic Cultural Heritage Award and the Manila Cultural Award for Literature.

Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Pakistani lawyer and politician. A barrister at law and Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, he is also general secretary of the West Pakistan National Awami Party, the leading opposition party in Pakistan.

Floyd McKissick, American civil rights leader. He is the secretary general of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Kinju Morikawa, Japanese civil liberties leader. He is an attorney at law and vice-chairman of the Japan Civil Liberties Union. He is also secretary-general of the Japanese committee for the investigation of US war crimes in Vietnam and was president of the investigating committee into the Tonkin Bay incident (August 1964).

Shoichi Sakata, Japanese scientist. He is a Professor of Physics and a leading member of the Japan Civil Liberties Union.

Jean-Paul Sartre, French writer and philosopher. In addition to his philosophical writings, he is a notable literary critic, playwright and novelist. He was offered, but declined, the Nobel Prize for Literature. He is founder-director in Paris of *Les Temps Modernes*. During the Nazi occupation he was active in the resistance movement.

Laurent Schwartz, French mathematician. He is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Paris and has received the Fields Medal of the International Congress of Mathematicians



and the Grand Prix de Mathematiques of the Paris Academy of Sciences. He is also a member of the French National Vietnam Committee and of the central committee of the League of the Rights of Man.

The Tribunal received from the beginning very considerable public support, not least from very many citizens of the United States. National committees of support were soon established in Britain, France, Scandinavia, the United States and Japan. This support included mass meetings, an international signature campaign, the preparation of evidence, the creation of photographic exhibitions, the distribution of literature and the donation of substantial sums of money to help meet the vast expenses incurred.

If readers of this book would like to assist in any of these ways, or in the distribution of reports after the Tribunal, I should be grateful if they would write to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 3 & 4 Shavers Place, Haymarket, London, S.W.1.

## APPENDIX

*Report from North Vietnam*  
(by Ralph Schoenman, April 11, 1966)

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Over many years, Bertrand Russell has sought to alert people in the West to the nature of the war waged by the United States in Vietnam. He has established international committees of support for the people of Vietnam and is, at the moment, preparing a War Crimes Tribunal in which eminent people have been asked to participate. One American among many who have taken up resistance to the war in Vietnam is David Mitchell, who is on trial for his refusal to participate in the us Army in Vietnam. Mitchell is neither a pacifist nor a conscientious objector. His contention is that the United States is guilty of crimes against peace and crimes against humanity, in the precise sense laid down at Nuremburg, and he cites as evidence the Geneva Convention, the Geneva Accords of 1954, the Kellogg-Briand Treaty, the London Agreements of Nuremburg and the United Nations Charter. Nearly all of these agreements were formally ratified by the United States Senate and signed by American Presidents. As such, they are fully binding within the terms of the American Constitution upon all officials of the us Government and upon citizens of the United States. Thus, says Mitchell, the use by the United States of poison gas, poison chemicals, napalm, experimental fragmentation bombs, nerve gases and the vast bombardment of hospitals, schools, tuberculosis sanatoria and leprosaria are not merely in violation of legally binding treaties, but are war crimes for which Germans were hanged. Indeed, ordinary citizens of Germany who failed to refuse orders by the government of the day were executed at Nuremburg for complicity in crimes against humanity and crimes against the peace. American Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson stated at Nuremburg that

the justification for the War Crimes Tribunal lay in the fact that it mattered not whether the perpetrators of war crimes were Germans or Americans. He stated that if the day should come when the United States Government were guilty of such crimes, it would be the duty of its citizens both to refuse to carry them out and to oppose those who issued such orders. David Mitchell is on trial for insisting that that day has arrived.

Bertrand Russell sent me to Vietnam to gather first-hand evidence concerning such war crimes, evidence which was to be used not only in defence of David Mitchell, but in the international War Crimes Tribunal which Lord Russell was in the process of establishing. I arrived in Hanoi on February 21, 1966, and travelled in five provinces under heavy bombardment. South of Thanh Hoa, in Ha Tay, Nam Ha, Ninh Binh and the surrounds of Hanoi I saw the result of 650 sorties per week, bombs of 1,000 pounds, napalm, phosphorous and a fiendish weapon known as the 'lazy dog'.

Seven o'clock on the morning after my arrival in Hanoi, I was received by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and President Ho Chi Minh. Ho Chi Minh moves with agility and dresses in simple baggy trousers, a long, open shirt and open sandals. His manner is direct, and his humour immediate. The warmth and the comradeship which were shown me moved me. I retained the terrible feeling that I was an American, moving amongst the victims of the crimes of my Government and obliging them to repeat for me their everyday experience, so I might write it down. Although an American citizen, I have lived in England for eight years. I return frequently to the United States, and went there immediately after my trip to North Vietnam to give evidence in the trial of David Mitchell in Hartford, Connecticut.

Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong know the West well, our culture and our history. Ho Chi Minh is familiar with the streets of London, Paris, and New York. They are lifelong revolutionary leaders, internationalists, literally men of the world. Both recall clearly and personally the Nazi invasion of Europe. They discussed the requests made to them so frequently by westerners to accept negotiations with the United States. How, they had been asked,

could they expect the war to end unless there were negotiations? The Vietnamese leaders are reminded of England in 1940, when the Luftwaffe was bombing London, Coventry, Bristol, Manchester, and Glasgow. To the English, this was their finest hour, because, after a few months of bombing of a few cities the expectation on the part of others that the great power of Germany would intimidate the British was not fulfilled. The English were proud, and indignant at the thought that they would yield. What is it that makes such resistance and such sentiments permissible for Englishmen after a few months of bombing, but impermissible for an agrarian people withstanding the invasion and atrocity of the United States of America? The people and leaders of Vietnam view this very simply: racism. I feel it passionately since my return to the West: the racism of imperialism, which is in the air we breathe, the same racism displayed by Johnson when he said, 'Unless the United States has unchallengeable air power, we shall be hostage to every yellow dwarf with a pocket knife.'

Just as a peace mission from Mussolini would have been absurd to any Englishman in 1940, and just as negotiations with Hitler while the bombs fell on London and Coventry would have been treated as an insult to the self-respect and intelligence of every Englishman, so to the Vietnamese the suggestion that they must negotiate with the United States, while American troops are in occupation of their country, is but another expression of Western arrogance and racism. It does not matter whether the Communist Party USA, the Soviet Union or President Johnson request them to betray their struggle, the response will be much the same. They have negotiated once in 1954 when they abandoned half of their country, having liberated it, for the sake of international considerations which proved to be illusory—considerations which led to twelve years of horror. When Ho Chi Minh says: 'We will go on another five, ten, fifteen or twenty years, if necessary,' he is not indulging in rhetoric. The Vietnamese resistance will not be ended. The Vietnamese war will be ended when the resistance within America has made it impossible for it to go on.

We travelled by night, a team of eight, including doctors and

photographers. We were without light and we stopped often during alerts. The road was pitted, though passable, and the extraordinarily beautiful countryside showed the effects of unrelenting bombardment. The radio carried the poems continually recited by Vietnamese in a living oral tradition, applying recitative to the experience of recent days: the poetry of Vietnam and its people.

In village after village I listened to the accounts of the survivors and surveyed the results of napalm. One afternoon, rummaging in the rubble of a school, I picked out stained pages from the lesson book of a twelve-year-old Vietnamese child:

- Page 2: *The Little Korean Child*—  
a poem composed by a Vietnamese poet at the time of the Korean War:  
'Where is your mother?  
There is nobody around to ask.  
Everywhere there are but fire and smoke.'
- Page 9: *Memories*  
'I am losing my father. I am losing my mother.'  
(Excerpts from the story of a young girl).
- Page 15: The last days of Huang Van Thu (executed by the French in the early forties).
- Page 1: Our hands can do everything.
- Page 5: *Land Reclamation Song*.
- Page 24: How he faced the firing squad.
- Page 19: Grammar: subordinate clauses, auxiliary verbs.
- Page 10: Human efforts can turn arid soil into rice.

On this village and school were dropped thousand-pound bombs and lazy dogs. At another part of the village I picked up a lazy dog bomb. This was Van Dinh hamlet, Van Hon Village, Thieu Hon district, February 26, 1966. A 'lazy dog' is a grenade-like bomb containing 250 slivers of razor-sharp steel. There are forty such bombs in a cylinder: 10,000 pieces of steel in a sudden storm of hail, lacerating anyone exposed or seeking shelter from the half-ton bombs. The 'lazy dog' has been dropped continuously on the most heavily populated areas of North Vietnam. 10,000

cylinders of lazy dog bombs have fallen on Thanh Hoa province since April, 1965. 1,281 rockets have been used. 37 guided missiles have been launched against villages in Thanh Hoa province. 3,000 bombs alone were dropped on Ham Rong bridge which still stands. Roads, means of communication, schools, hospitals, the tuberculosis clinic, sanatoria and old age rest houses have been bombed in Thanh Hoa province. I visited all. I picked a 'lazy dog' out of the ruins of a school where it had fallen after the thousand-pound bombs had made great craters, destroying the shelters and exposing the inhabitants.

'Usually, my friends go to school every day. We like to sing "Ha Tinh Quang Binh". My friends are Nhung, Ky, Chau, Nguyen. They are thirteen, twelve, fourteen, twelve. They are all girls. I have a friend who is a boy, named Liem. He was thirteen. My friend Ky liked to play. She would say: "You go first. You go quickly, or I will step on your heel."' (Rhymes in Vietnamese).

'When the bombs fell I saw Ky's bowel and intestine come out of her body. Her head blew away. Her arm and leg blew away. Nhung was buried alive and was dug out dead. Chau's teeth were broken by stones which shattered them. Nguyen was buried alive. Liem was beheaded. My friend Phuong laughs sometimes; cries; speaks without knowing what she says; she screams; she is twelve. I was buried completely. Teacher Minh dug me out. I have pains in my spine. Canh and Khoa had their chests crushed.

'When I become a grown-up I would like to be a teacher. I would like to ask you, uncle, to convey my best wishes of good health to my American small friends.'

Nguyen Thai Mao was recently twelve. She has been strafed frequently on the way to school. She spoke of a bombing attack on her village on February 9 of this year. Her teacher, a young man of twenty-four named Thai Van Nham stated:

'Fragments of clothing, books and furniture flew so high that all in the vicinity knew the school was bombed. Students were blasted. Many were buried in the earth. I was among those

buried alive. I was dug out later and was brought to consciousness. There was nothing left but a bomb crater, fifty-five feet wide and twenty-one feet deep. Everything was levelled. Parts of the children were protruding from the earth. We found their heads twenty yards away. Their bowels and intestines were scattered everywhere. Two of my children were spattered on a palm tree and hung from it. Children were pressed to the trench walls. Blood filled the trenches. Children clutched their books tightly to their chests. The books were smeared in blood and ink. Some of them could speak a little when dug out. Then blood shot from their mouths, due to their crushed organs and they died. One little girl, Hoang Thai Nha, twelve, could only be recognized and identified by her rubber shoes. Six of the children were too mutilated to be recognizable to the parents. One dug out became conscious and asked how many of her friends died before haemorrhaging. Little Hung's body was found on top of unfinished poems he had written, along with a notebook of paintings. He had aspired to be a poet, painter and composer. His poems, paintings and songs are all signed: "Composer, Dinh Hung". He was thirteen.'

The bombing of Huong Phuc school on February 9 is one event: a daily event for the past fourteen months in Vietnam. For Vietnam, 650 sorties per week with tonnages in excess of those used during the Second World War, with napalm and fragmentation bombs, the targets and the victims are the population at large. There are no other targets. The population knows that the United States wishes to impose so ghastly a price in national suffering that the will to resist will be broken.

The will to resist is like ozone after a bombing storm in Vietnam. In every village, production teams work round the clock to increase food output. Militia units, under the command of nineteen-year-old girls, mount the most exposed positions to fire at diving jets with rifles and what amount to little more than muskets. Old machine guns are mounted on the very bridges subject to attack. The militia do not take shelter. When American planes are at the climax of their dive, bullets fly from thousands

of rifles and machine guns and the whole population is in arms. Everyone who can hold a rifle is firing one.

The old-age and invalid home in Thanh Hoa was levelled. It is a scene of vast craters, filled with water, and the shells of buildings. Mosaics litter the ground—lovely pieces of the floor and walls in soft water-colour design. Out of one crater I picked the tattered pages of books which had once been part of the old-age home library. Here, those Vietnamese who had lived through three generations of struggle against the Japanese, the French and the Americans had retired in the ill health of old age to rest. Many of them were feeble through years of brutal labour before the victory of Dien Bien Phu released them from their feudalism. Even in their old age, the fruits of their struggle were denied them and, like the children of the schools, their soft bodies were smashed and splattered. One very famous hero of the resistance to France, recuperating from severe wounds, went insane in this final attack.

The destruction of Than Hoa tuberculosis sanatorium is a study in horror. On Sunday, February 27, the Director gave the following account:

'This is the second most important sanatorium in our country. It was set up by our own efforts. We had no help from abroad. We cherish it all the more because of this. The third floor of the tuberculosis sanatorium had very large Red Cross flags hanging outside. There are large Red Cross crosses on the entrance, clear to any aircraft. At 8.00 a.m., four groups of four aircraft came. Among the sixteen were five F105D jets. The rest were F101 and F102. The planes circled several times and attacked. They dived at the clinic. Five F105D jets dived together. Each dive released ten bombs per plane, totalling fifty. The others dropped two each, totalling twenty-two. Many patients were got to the trenches with difficulty. After the first attack, they circled, and each plane dived repeatedly, strafing everything standing with rockets. There was thirty minutes of uninterrupted bombing, with 1,000 ton bombs, accompanied by rocket strafing of all who ran out of the buildings. Five doctors were hit and killed instantly. Two of

them were women. Physicians and specialists and nurses were killed. Fifty-eight patients were killed almost immediately by strafing. One of the gravely ill tuberculosis victims was a famous Vietnamese resistance hero, who went insane as a result of the bombings. All through the bombing, the shrapnel fragments, lazy dogs and the rockets, doctors and personnel carried patients to trenches. Patients and the sick carried others, while vomiting blood and haemorrhaging. It was only this heroism which kept casualties down.

'If we had been dependent upon only the ability of doctors and nurses to rescue patients, the number of deaths would have been infinitely higher. Some of the patients, though weak and ill, tried to save medical equipment: X-ray machines, medicines, implements, files. Throughout these efforts they were strafed. In the surrounding area, people whose own houses were bombed and burning abandoned them, and also the shelters, to help rescue patients and equipment of the clinic.

'After the first bombing, the personnel tried to evacuate surviving patients from the ruins. Five days later, the survivors were removed to new hospitals and sanatoria. A few days later, two jets came again and bombed the ruins of the sanatorium. They strafed everywhere in the vicinity. They bombed and strafed the clinic and all buildings of the sanatorium for thirty minutes. Two planes were F105 jets. Each dropped ten half-ton bombs at a time. Other planes came and fired rockets. Two planes dispersed and returned again to fire rockets. There were three total bombings and strafings. Thus, of the sanatorium and clinic, nothing is left.'

As the doctor spoke, I moved amidst the rubble, the great craters, the twisted ruins of X-ray machines and the broken glass of medicines and photo-electric lamps. Occasionally, there were bloodstains. It was difficult to imagine the vast sanatorium, with its many operating rooms and quarters for patients. The Director continued:

'All of our people understand now that the sanatorium was a clearly intended target of the attack. There was no error. We were

hit in three separate and prolonged waves from diving planes. This was a hospital. There were large Red Cross flags flying. Our patients and doctors were strafed, seeking shelter. We realize that the enemy will do anything. The US maintains that the treatment of tuberculosis and leprosy is one of our most urgent and difficult tasks, so they destroy. It is entirely in keeping with their bacteriological warfare. The bombing of our sanatorium has affected us profoundly. Every effort has been made by the population to assist in the lodging and treatment of the surviving patients.

'They talk about civilization. It is unimaginable. Our hatred is great. The more we confront this bombing of our leprosaria, hospitals, clinics, sanatoria, schools and villages, the more we struggle.'

The K71 tuberculosis sanatorium covered 2½ hectares. There were thirty large buildings and 560 resident patients. There were 425 visiting patients per week and 350 doctors and nurses.

The equipment destroyed included X-ray machines, sterilization equipment, refrigeration facilities, circulatory and respiratory machines, oxygen equipment, distilling and purification equipment, electronic machinery, modern operation rooms and facilities, antibiotics and drugs. I inspected the remnants and ruins of the following stores of drugs: INH (produced in Vietnam); Streptomycin; Rimifon; Subtilis; Filatov; vitamin compounds; vitamin oils; cod liver oil; sulphur; iodine and various medicines and serums. Medical supplies for the surrounding population were destroyed. Tonics, food supplements, enriching additives for special regimens and diets were all lost in the bombing. Plasma, the blood bank, ambulances, first aid units, the medical library, monographs and notebooks of doctors, microscopes, bacterial cultures, all operating equipment and chambers, tables, electronic devices, lamps and infra-red equipment were all devastated. This was not an isolated event. Wherever I went I saw comparable destruction.

I returned to Hanoi, after some time, and met with Dr Nguyen, a young man who had recently arrived in North Vietnam from

liberated areas of the South. The doctor had been blinded by poison chemicals and was under treatment. He was planning to return to the South. I spoke to him from 8.00 in the morning until 11.30 at night. He described to me the nature of the chemicals, their properties, their medical peculiarities, the villages where they had been used and the curious effects they had on human beings. He gave me parts of his medical diary, dating back to 1961:

'I am a victim blinded by toxic chemicals. I have recovered part of the vision of one eye. I have treated countless victims of chemicals. I married after 1954, but the terror of the Saigon Government forced me to leave. Had I stayed, I should have been conscripted by force into the puppet army. Since that time I have devoted myself entirely to the treatment of victims of torture and of chemical and gas warfare. My family is in the same situation as so many others in South Vietnam. The Government forced my wife to divorce me and to marry an officer in the puppet army. I had no children, thank God. I was born in Binh Dinh province. My father was a doctor of herbal medicine. I am 36.

'Because of the vast bombing and terror of the US, I had to keep moving in the jungle and in the mountainous area of South Vietnam. I have always been on the move and have been in other provinces in the South. The general situation was impossible to imagine. The atrocities by US officers and soldiers have never ceased. The crimes of the US army have resulted in vast numbers of cases, in indescribable suffering, which I have encountered daily for almost twelve years. I have cared personally for the victims of US governmental crimes and for the victims of Saigon puppet soldiers, almost all of whom have acted with American advisers or officers present. I know this from my first hand experience. The victims, when surviving, are invalids for life. The most common diseases are those of the nervous system and digestive tract. After this, tuberculosis ensues, induced by the general condition of the victim. I must say to you that the policy I have observed is one of extermination of our people, of exter-

mination and of experimentation. They have used various kinds of poisons which I have analysed. The poisons are chemicals, gases, bombs of phosphorus and napalm bombs. I understand that the US authorities state that these chemicals are intended to clear trees and grass. The truth is that these chemicals combine heavy toxic concentrations, which affect fatally both human and animal life. Among the chemicals I have encountered and analysed are:

1. DNP (Dinitrophenol)
2. DNOC (Dinitricorto)
3. 2;4D (Acid Diclophenocyncetic)
4. 2;4;5T (Acid 2, 4, 5 Triclophenocyacetic).

'These chemicals have been sprayed by various means. Usually, they are employed in a powdered form, or spread as a liquid over vast areas by aeroplane. Areas sprayed are ten or fifteen square miles. These toxic chemicals poison water, food, vegetation and animal and human life. The poisoning of the water and vegetation spreads the chemicals in larger areas. Toxic chemicals are also mixed with rice, which is then sold or distributed to the people. I encountered this in 1962, throughout the provinces of Kon Tum and Gia Lai. These poisons have also been mixed in sugar, which was distributed to people. I examined victims of this and analysed the poisoned sugar in Long My village and in Kan Tho province in 1964. Chemicals have been put into the wells and the springs supplying water in Tra Bong, Ba To and Son Ha districts of Quang Ngai province. In these three districts, there have been 450 buffaloes killed, and I have personally examined 41 people killed, who died as a result of drinking this poisoned water. They died in great pain. I examined eleven children who were critically ill as a result of having swum in a stream which had been poisoned in this way. Three of these children were blinded. This chemical warfare has been carried out continuously. I have been in all provinces and have encountered it everywhere I have been. I have studied and treated its effects everywhere I have gone in the South, since 1961.

'Since June, 1964, I have encountered frequently the following two poison gases:

1.  $C_6H_5-CO-CH_2-Cl$  (Chloroacetophenone)
2.  $C_6H_5-CU-BR-CH$  (Bromoborzylicyanure).

'Since 1965, these chemicals and poison gases have been employed on a vastly increased scale. The gases I have encountered have been used in different forms. Some have been contained in hand grenades, others in bombs and in bottle-containers. In certain dosage, the Americans have designated these as "tear gases", but this is very misleading, for in any degree of concentration these gases cause perforation of the lungs, asphyxiation and beri-beri. They are fatal in any confined area and kill through lack of oxygen, as well. A fatal dosage of the so-called "tear gas" is 0.3 milligrammes per cubic metre—a small dose.

'In the beginning of November, 1964, four skyraiders bombed and strafed the area where I lived in Lam Dong province. Raids and bombing lasted about two hours. Then came one helicopter and two Dakotas. The smell of the chemical was unbearable. It was very sharp and burned the nostrils. It had characteristics of chloroform. After five minutes, leaves of sweet potatoes, rice plants and trees became completely desiccated. Domestic animals would not eat and almost all died. People in the area experienced very severe headache. They then displayed a racking cough. They vomited on the spot.

'I was operating on a bombing victim at the time and had no chance to cover myself with a nylon cloth. I was heavily affected. My first impression was one of suffocation and asphyxiation. I felt great, burning heat on my eyes. The suffocation was extreme and I vomited violently, excreting considerable blood.

'Only fifteen minutes later the Dakota planes returned and sprayed chemicals a second time. By now, my nose was infected, and I had no sensation. I could not smell, nor taste anything. But I observed the leaves, which had a shiny coat, like the shimmering of a film of petrol. I was less acute in observing and noting the effects of the second chemical, because I had suffered the first

chemical attack very shortly before the second one. I now experienced, however, great cold and even more severe headache. Others around me had the same symptoms.

'When they spray chemicals, our people run to try to save their crops. They try to save the tubercles of the manioc from rotting. The people cut off the leaves and stems of the trees. To prevent us from saving our crops, the attacking US planes used time bombs of chemicals and napalm, which burned everything and completely destroyed the crops.

'No one was able to eat that day, because of the effects. Everyone (including myself) was unable to sleep. The effects on the nervous system were very unusual. I had the sensation of flying in the air. I could not feel my weight. I felt hot, sharp burning in my eyes, which was extremely painful. It was as if my eyes were filled with acid, or chilli pepper. The next day, all our poultry were dead. The fish in streams and lakes were floating on the surface of the water, discoloured. The buffaloes were dead. The grass was poisoned. All crops were without leaves and burned and the unburned vegetation was rotting.

'All the women who were pregnant and all pregnant animals had miscarried on the spot. I felt the symptoms of the first day increase—all of them. I could no longer see clearly. I continued to vomit blood, which weakened me and was painful. Everyone was ailing gravely. Ten days later, a squadron of US aircraft came and spread chemicals a third time, destroying all the crops which the ailing people had planted with great difficulty. This spraying was accompanied by bombing and strafing. I saw nineteen people killed and 600 gravely injured. Three were blinded by the chemicals. My eyes were so affected that my sight was gone. I have remained blind until only very recently, when part of the sight in my left eye returned. All the crops were completely destroyed and burned out. The people were driven to eat contaminated roots and fruit, for they were starving.

'People were unable to work or do anything, for weeks and months. I was unable to move. I vomited all the time. My throat, mouth, stomach and bowels were inflamed. Fifteen days later, I could not read. One month later, I could no longer see. In three

months I could eat only soup. During that entire three months, I was unable to sleep. The effect on my nervous system made it impossible to gain unconsciousness. Throughout the time that I was awake, I had headaches which lasted day and night. My eyes had been burned. I had recurring sensations of flying in the air. My hair fell out.

'After three months, my weight had fallen to 107 pounds. There was great famine. The people had food for the first time three months later, when the sweet potatoes they had planted after the third attack began to sprout tubercles. Many of those plants were infected.

'The care which has been given me by my people has enabled me to begin a recovery. My right eye is permanently blinded and you can observe the crystalline, which is pitted with small holes. I am a physician and I know my right eye is beyond cure. My nervous system is so affected that I can sleep only rarely. My ability to operate has gone, but I shall return, nonetheless, to treat people as best I can.

'As I mentioned, many people were completely blinded and have no hope of cure. After I had moved out of that area, to try to treat other victims, I learned that again the planes came and sprayed new chemicals. Whenever they see green on the soil, they come to kill the crops, to cut off the source of life of the people and to cause famine and epidemic, in addition to the painful disease and death resulting from the chemicals.

'Every time they spray chemicals, they threaten us with loud-speakers, broadcasting from the aeroplanes, telling people to go to areas controlled by Saigon, or they will suffer death. Our people cling to the land, no matter how it is affected. The people of other areas have come to assist them to survive. It is also true that national capitalists have come with rice, which they sell us at exorbitant prices. This is hard. When survivors regain strength, they clear forests in order to have unaffected land. We have organized watches for aircraft.

'I have treated victims now since 1961. Most of the time our people are left to their own cure, for there are not enough medical officers to treat them. After long periods of struggle, our people

have devised masks which they have made to give them some protection, but as the chemicals affect the food and water, it is almost impossible to escape their effects. Our people are victims in their villages and fields continuously and indiscriminately.

'I have always thought that scientific achievement should aim at serving the wellbeing of people and to help their lives. The US rulers are using scientific knowledge to torment and massacre our people. They are doing this throughout South Vietnam. This is the behaviour of the so-called most civilized nation in the free world. This is what is being done to my country. I want to tell you that I personally am moved and deeply impressed by the protests of American intellectuals and students. These protests have made a profound impression on my people. I hope you will convey my sincere thanks. We feel that we are struggling, not for Vietnam alone but for the people of the world. I hope I can welcome American intellectuals to an independent Vietnam. Please accept my warmest greetings and wishes for the longevity of Bertrand Russell. I wish his activity for mankind every success. I am grateful to you.

'Let me tell you this, as well. Even when our people are so ill, they establish anti-aircraft units to resist the planes. They are determined not to be intimidated or defeated, and that determination sustains them, through everything. I can tell you that these people are not "Vietcong". They are common people, who have escaped from strategic hamlets. All the chemicals I specified have been used in a compound mixture to gain multiple effect on both vegetation and animal life. As far as poison gas is concerned, this is carried in bottles and spread in shelters, where local women and children seek protection. I was present in Phu Lac during a US attack, in which the American troops used poison gas. I examined eighty people killed by the gas. Those affected by what the Americans call "tear gas" could only be saved if treated immediately. The other gases killed and were impossible to remedy. This tear gas is used against people in shelters and it removes oxygen, killing those inside. The effect is the same as that of the more deadly gases. The United States Government and Robert McNamara have declared that poison gas is a 'basic



weapon' of their forces in Vietnam, and so in every raid and in every district attacked they use poison gas; from planes, from helicopters and in ground raids. When they see green on the ground they spray toxic chemicals and gas. Thus it is that my life since 1961 has been one steady stream of encountering victims and treating them. Let me show you my medical diary. Some of my notes are in French:

*"3, 4, 5 March, 1965:*

Air spray of chemicals in Long Phung village, Binh Dai district, Ben Tre province. 30 people examined, dead. 200 critically ill. 90 per cent of domestic animals dead. All crops and vegetables destroyed. Famine and epidemic inevitable. Once again, nothing to be done.

*"23 March, 1965:*

Phanh Thoc village. Chemicals dropped in rubber balloons; beri-beri. Boi Loi region: napalm over a vast area, everything burned. Unextinguishable. Whole forest afire. Have to abandon all victims. No hope. Little boy, Ho Van Bot, burned all over, deep burns, napalm eating.

'"Phosphorus: victims of phosphorus rotting after exposure. No hope for Nguyen Van Ba".'

But the Vietnamese have endured more, for they have fought from the forests since 1940, and the Resistance was unable to enter the villages until the French were driven out. The population is locked together with that bond of profound self-esteem and mutual regard which a child of the West has never had, and cannot understand without encountering it. Their self-respect is based upon the dedication they see around them. All struggle, all sacrifice and what we understand by heroism comprise the minutiae of everyday existence.

On February 22 I met with Colonel Ha Van Lau in Hanoi. Among other things he spoke to me about new developments in the military struggle:

'Formerly, the us used puppets as their mainstay. Now they must add the expeditionary corps. Therefore, now a true full-scale

war operation of us aggression against Vietnam and the occupation of South Vietnam have made the South into a us neo-colony.

'The us has not succeeded in using "special war" to achieve its objective. At first they thought that "special war" could accomplish the end, but the defeat (by August, 1964) forced them against their will to use their own troops. They have suffered a complete political defeat. Now the use of us troops exposed to our people the true nature of the aggressive war and this spurs our resistance. This use of more troops by the us has made ALL in the South, even in the puppet administration and army, see the aggressive nature of us imperialism.

'The us rulers want to strengthen the morale of the puppets BUT the more they introduce us troops the more this morale falters. In 1964, apart from defeats, there were 80,000 desertions. By 1965, 100,000 desertions occurred, including over 40,000 regulars. These vast desertions took such proportions that many divisions can no longer fight for lack of men. So, by introducing more troops the us has, against its will, lost the initiative on the military field; and on the political level it exposes its true face to world opinion. At the same time the presence of us troops aggravates contradictions both between the us government and world opinion and also between the us government and its puppets.

'There are also such contradictions between the us government and its allies AND within the us government. This is the fundamental weakness of the policy of introducing more troops into Vietnam. The fighting morale of us troops must become lower and lower. As they meet harsh reality in the South and confront the lies of their own government these will become more and more clear to them. After one year of sending increased numbers of troops to Vietnam, the us government is further than ever from its aims. The Mansfield delegation report confirms this. It says, in effect, that the situation has not changed in a year. The us has lost real initiative. Militarily it has certain strong points, but due to internal contradictions in policy, arising from the intensification of the war and the introduction of more troops, the us cannot make the most of its strength. On the contrary. For example, the us is waging a war but hasn't proclaimed war. It dares not. So how

can it win the support of its people? The US military strength is large, but its impact is enormously diminished by its very introduction into Vietnam.

'Secondly, while US troops and equipment are powerful, this power can not be applied to Vietnam. It is not the same as in Korea. Two hundred thousand troops at the 38th parallel could block it, but 200,000 to cover all South Vietnam are not remotely enough. So they must settle in strong points like Chu Loi and Da Nang. Then those points are encircled by our people like islands. When the US troops engage in "mopping up" operation they must fragment themselves. The First Cavalry Division must break up into company groups; but in Plei Mei each company parachuted separately into the jungle and was immediately decimated, group by group. So the US cannot make the best use of its manpower and artillery. It is limited both tactically and strategically. Even when planes and troop activity are co-ordinated, the men are bombed by their own planes. This is simply because there is no front. Every battle is interrelated and entangled. There are no distinct and separated fronts.

'Moreover, US equipment is very heavy and cumbersome. In jungle battles, its forces fragmented into small groups, the US is quite unable to use its equipment, which then becomes a burden and hindrance rather than an advantage. This makes more certain the troops' confusion and heavy losses. When they are defeated they flee in helicopters, abandoning this heavy equipment to the NLF who use it against US strongpoints. There it is effective! In short, US troops have been organized, educated and equipped for modern warfare. But South Vietnam is a peoples' war, a guerrilla war. Every contact with the National Liberation Front results in defeat. This can be demonstrated for battles throughout 1965.

'The contradiction between the concentration of troops and simultaneous dispersal of troops is basic. By now the NLF controls four-fifths of South Vietnam. If US troops want to occupy South Vietnam, they must disperse; but then *how* can they administer heavy blows to the NLF? This is the plague of all imperialist operations in Vietnam. Thus, with over 200,000

troops, Westmoreland appeals for more. And all US troops sent here are crack troops! On February 19, 1966, the NLF attacked Anh Khe. US sources revealed that only US troops were used in maintaining this base. All these crack troops have been sent here to be used as custodians. The first cavalry, the marines, the paratroops all serve only to occupy the strong points as guards! They can't trust the puppet troops to do this. So, militarily speaking, the US is not making good use of its crack troops. What use is this? The US cannot use its puppet troops at all any more. Even operations by US troops are no longer told to the puppet high command out of fear of leakage—this enormously heightens the conflicts between them. The contradiction between invading troops and the people, tactically and strategically, and between the people and government, is very serious.

'Added to this is the great contradiction of their logistics! Warehouses, harbours, ships—all means of transport—are needed for the vast army, and the US press knows this. The US tries to solve this but cannot. If its best attempts to solve logistic problems with 200,000 troops bring no results, how can the US solve it with even more troops? These problems are all the more intensified by the guerrillas' destruction of the means of communications. The US has to resort to airplanes even for internal transportation, even for drinking water and rice. And this is true not only for the needs of the army but for the needs of the civilian population in the occupied areas. Even Saigon suffers greatly from the lack of meat, vegetables, rice and other kinds of foodstuffs, as well as coal, in fact all supplies. All communications around Saigon have been cut. But the US troops use houses, electricity, cars, taxis and buy all the things they like, so the very people of Saigon now suffer directly from the presence of US troops in Saigon. The logistical problem is quite insoluble and will be made worse by the sending in of more troops. Recently, reports have appeared about the introduction of more troops—up to 300,000 or 400,000. Insofar as manpower is concerned, this may be possible, but logistically it will be VERY difficult. Even if the US solves the logistical problems, it will have to face political crises.

'North and South, our people have long experience in guerrilla

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'North and South, our people have long experience in guerrilla

struggle. We fought from weakness against strength and have built up our strength from nothing. Our struggle is a just one, so with each passing day it draws more support from the peoples in the world including the American people which will more and more support us. We are firmly confident in our final victory. But on the other hand, the US imperialists are die-hards. Before submitting to reason they will still frantically try to create difficulties and calamities. But peoples' warfare is invincible and peoples' struggle is unconquerable. By the peoples' strength we mean the strength of our own people, that of the American people and of the peoples of the world. We are co-operating in our efforts against US imperialism; we are solidarizing with each other in one common effort.'

Pham Van Dong had offered to make all facilities available for the gathering of evidence. Our requests that victims should be able to give evidence at the trial of David Mitchell and during the proceedings of the international War Crimes Tribunal under preparation were willingly accepted by the Prime Minister, and by President Ho Chi Minh. One of the requests made was to meet captured US pilots, in order to learn from them the nature of their targets in Vietnam, and their feelings about what they had been doing. This request was also met, and a meeting was established with the then most recently captured pilot, Lieutenant-Commander Gerald L. Coffee.

When I met Coffee, I introduced myself and told him I was an American. I did not inform him of the purpose of my visit. I had decided beforehand that I should keep this information to myself until after our discussion had concluded, so as not to influence his words with knowledge of what information I was seeking. After our discussion had concluded, I sent him a letter, informing him of all aspects of my mission.

Lieutenant-Commander Coffee is a professional who was based on the US aircraft carrier *Kittyhawk*. He was evidently in sound health, alert and showed no signs whatever of maltreatment. He had been shot down on February 3, thirty miles north of Vinh city. I asked him what happened to him, after that. He said:

'I received a broken arm from the ejection point. I got medical attention quickly. I was down in a remote area and taken to a village, to a hut where I was treated. I got the best attention possible. They made it as comfortable as they could. They bandaged me. Within a couple of hours I was given a meal of hot rice.

'When I had regained consciousness in the water, I found everything necessary had been done for me. My parachute was removed. My flotation gear was inflated. We were about half a mile from the beach. The two small boats which had rescued me were full of people. When the boats arrived, the cover jets came and strafed the boats carrying me. The people in the boats were armed with rifles, pistols and machine guns. The American jets made six strafing passes before I was able to get to the beach.

'No mistreatment occurred at any time. The strafing of our planes had no effect on their attitude to me. I was amazed. I couldn't understand it. I had expected the worst. I stayed at a village until sundown on February 3. There were six windows in the house. People came from the whole vicinity. My belongings were taken from me. I was utterly astonished at the treatment I was getting. It became apparent to me, after a time, that this was their policy. They took me to another village. People were curious and gathered around to see me. I was offered hot tea. The children followed me and tried to touch me. That night, I was taken to another place, where I was also treated well. I was fed; my bandages were changed; they gave me all I could eat. The man in charge said that the people were deeply angry, as the bombings were still going on, and they took me to another area because of the aroused feelings of the people, but I encountered no hostility, anywhere.

'We came to Route 1, which is the main north-south highway. The military car took me toward Vinh. We stopped at the driver's house and spent a long time with his family. I was offered rice in tea leaves, with much meat and fish. It was extremely good. They told me to go into the house. I was told to lie down on the driver's bed. I slept on the bed next to his small son. The next morning, I arrived at the new place, which appeared to be the

centre of provincial administration. I began to realize that this area has been bombed continually and without stop since the beginning. That is over a year. For more than one year, they have known nothing but bombing by us. And yet, they showed no hostility to me. I was disturbed. They questioned me firmly, but always treated me well. I had to admit that my government had not declared war against Vietnam and that legally I had no right to be considered as a prisoner of war. I was told that I was a criminal and that the crimes which I had committed against ordinary villagers were such that would entitle them to try me and shoot me. I was kept in a home with a family. There was an old couple, a young woman and her three-year-old child. They gave me a soft, warm straw bed. Everybody treated me so well; constant hot tea, more food than I could eat, stew, rice. They picked limes off the tree for me, as many as I wanted. I thought I would need the citrus, so I ate as many as I could.

'During the questioning, I came to realize that they could just as well have shot me. They had it non-stop, the bombing, for over a year. Everything was under attack. I wholeheartedly accept their designation of criminal. I was kept at the second place for three days. My wounds were treated. I was fed. Anybody who could speak English or French asked me: "Why are you here? Why have you come to Vietnam?" I couldn't answer them.

'What impressed me more than anything was the overall gentleness of the people to me. Gentleness is the right word. I can hold nothing against them. The civilian casualties they suffer are not ordinary ones. They are, in my opinion, unilateral, criminal aggression. I have to say that I played a definite part in this. The word "criminal" is exact. It is true. I can't deny it. I have observed the gentleness of these people, not only in the way they treated me. While I was in their homes, they talked together. They joked. They took tea. The atmosphere was gentle, in a family way. What I like and prefer. They made me feel at ease. They were simple people, tillers of the soil, farmers, peasants and they treated me kindly. Two things became apparent. One was their real love for Ho Chi Minh. Whenever his name would come up their eyes would light up. They obviously revere him. The second

was this fantastic and unanimous determination of theirs not to be intimidated by the bombing. I could see that each new bombing raid, with its death and destruction, brought more and more hate to their hearts for Americans.

'I was brought north slowly. My interpreter was from Thanh Hoa. We stopped at his home. We visited his family and he took me in to them. I was offered hot tea. We stayed and talked. When we arrived in Hanoi, my arm and dislocated elbow were bad. They were swollen and beginning to be infected. That was February 7. By the 11th, I had seen practically a corps of doctors, who visited me at the prison. They diagnosed me and then they operated on my hand. On the 11th I was taken to a hospital and my arm was X-rayed. They gave me an anaesthetic and returned my elbow to its socket. They put my arm in a cast, which I kept on for two weeks. Throughout this time, I was given medication. They gave me four injections in four days. On February 26, they took more X-rays and they put a new cast on, which I will keep on until the end of March.

'In prison they have questioned me and they have tried to explain their view of the true issues of the Vietnamese war and the feelings of the Vietnamese people. The living conditions are simple, but always adequate. The sanitation is fine. I am given enough clothing and more than sufficient food each day. I am able to wash when I wish. They have given me a toothbrush and tooth-paste, along with soap and towel. I can't get over the fact that the guards are so sympathetic. They help me to dress and do small things for me, ungrudgingly. They button me, because I have trouble with my broken arm.

'Apart from the discussions which I have, they have given me a great amount of literature. I received this with complete scepticism and suspiciousness. It all deals with South Vietnam and the origins of the war and the involvement of the United States. I have to say that I am unable to refute the logic of the whole story. It is unanswerable. I believe now I know, for the first time, who we are really fighting in South Vietnam.

'I know the pretences under which I was willing to fight. The pathetic thing is that you can't call it political indoctrination. I

could have found out the same damn things at home, in the library, on my own. If I had only taken the time, it would have been just as easy for me to find this out at home. I was willing to take part in this war for the usual, rather vague reasons of protecting our democratic way of life, honouring our agreements with our allies and resisting communism. I have been here a short time, but I have seen enough to know that none of this applies here. My contemporaries and I are all guilty of the same thing: of not making the effort to really find out what it is all about. Unfortunately, that is really the way the majority of the American people are. Right up to February 2, I considered the anti-war demonstrations intolerable. I couldn't understand what they were stirred up about. It seemed to me outrageous. I never thought about what they were doing. I never took the time to find out. Now I feel very strongly, because of the very deep love and affection I have for my country. I feel very strongly. We have no business here. We are involved in a situation in which we have no right. I think I understand how we became involved. I have thought a lot.

'When the Vietnamese were fighting their resistance against the French, we aided the French. We gave them arms and officers and paid for most of it. Mainly for two reasons. Under the French, we could still get the tin, rubber and tungsten the United States wanted from the Indo-Chinese area. They showed me a statement of Eisenhower's. Also, under the French, we were assured of a military hold in Indo-China, which we thought was necessary. But in spite of our aid and our willingness to get involved, the Vietnamese revolution defeated the French. As far as I can make out, Ho Chi Minh was able to unite a number of different revolutionary fronts and, therefore, to lead the defeat of the French. The Geneva Agreements were convened and stipulate that there should be no foreign military personnel or military goods in Vietnam. The Agreements clearly guarantee the territorial integrity and independence of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

'These are the things I have been reading, and they correspond to what I remember vaguely, from talks we used to have. The division of the Seventeenth Parallel was provisional. There was

supposed to be demilitarization and neither Government was supposed to enter into military alliances or permit any foreign military intervention. There was supposed to be an election after two years to reunify the country, but two months after the Agreements we formed SEATO and included Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos as areas under our military protection. It was obvious that we still wanted a military hold on Indo-China. So the French left, and we put Diem in power and made Bao Dai the Emperor. Then he was made Premier, after a referendum which we ran. Then we started putting in massive aid to keep control and built up the army, police and militia. We set up the Military Advisory Aid Group and sent us troops. I can't deny that this violates the Geneva Agreements. Those Agreements were supposed to unify Vietnam.

'The Diem Government was obviously unpopular. He persecuted people and he persecuted non-Catholics and established a dictatorship. He put his family in office. He could never have lasted without our military backing. As the elections approached, he refused offers from North Vietnam for elections and ignored the provisions of the Geneva Conference, and this was done with the insistence of our Government. It is perfectly clear, and even Eisenhower said it, that elections would have put Ho Chi Minh in as President. I tell you, I think rightly so. What is the difference between him and Washington? He is their revolutionary hero. He brought land reform and economic stability. I could see that myself. That is why we did not let Diem hold elections. These people want reunification. They want to see the labour of their revolution bear fruit. They don't want their victory over the French to be made meaningless and they dream of reunification, and we had shattered that dream. Only a revolution was left to them. The revolution was based on their bitterness at their betrayal. It seems to me that the National Liberation Front was trying to free them and was called "communist" because it tried to defeat our plan to stay. Maybe it has communist inclinations, but it seems to be a national body. We are fighting the people of Vietnam. We are refusing to deal with the people of Vietnam. I thought I was stopping the spread of communism, but I have

seen the life here. They are fed. They are productive. They seem to be happy, despite what we are doing. How can it be worse than the South?

'I know the literature I read was printed in Hanoi and, as I told you, I was completely sceptical. But I remember the reports of what Diem was like, and we always joked about how there was a coup every day, and we were setting up another bunch. At the time, I thought it was the thing to do. I don't know if anyone had the foresight to realize what it meant. We make so much of the supposed aid from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, as if they were a disinterested party, horning in on something none of their business. But what they want is the reunification of their country, and they are the same people. Reunification is part of their national purpose. It's practically in the Constitution. I think, logically, they have every right in the world to assist as best they can. They have the same goal—reunification and independence of the country. If we escalate further, it will result in drawing in other countries, including China. The devastation and the sacrifice of life will be appalling.

'Everything I have read and everything I am telling you is compounded by the fact that our cause simply isn't just. We are sacrificing whatever honour and respect we might have. We could honour these Geneva Agreements, say we were wrong, accept the four-point plan of Ho Chi Minh, because all that is the implementation of the Geneva Agreements. We should leave Vietnam.

'I am thirty-one years old and I am from Modesto, California. My parents are in Hanford, California. I have a wife and three children in Sanford, Florida. My wife is expecting our fourth child and I am really worried about her. She doesn't know whether I am dead or alive. I want to write an open letter to the American people. My feelings are what I have told you. I am neither a journalist, a political scientist nor a crusader. But I have a unique point of view because of my experience here and maybe people will listen to me. Don't rely on what I say. Find out for yourself and, when you see, take any step you can to stop this war. I want to write to *Time*, *Newsweek* and the *US News and World Report*. I may be naïve, but maybe they will give me space.

'To attest to my integrity, I want to tell you that I have been a respected naval officer for eight years. I hold the Distinguished Flying Cross. I have taken part in reconnaissance flights over Cuba. I have a personal letter of commendation from the Director of the Marine Corps, General Shoup, for my reconnaissance flights over Cuba during the missile crisis in October, 1962. I have been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander a year earlier than my peers. By writing these letters I am going to be laying my military career on the line. I have always been loyal to my profession and I love my country deeply. But the time has come when the two are not compatible. I must do what I think is right for my country.

'They will say: "He is a prisoner. It is the way he will get home". There are over 100 pilots captured, but it is not that with me. It will save lives and also our country's honour. Please point out the bit about political indoctrination. With the exception of my contact with the Vietnamese people, everything I have learned and everything I have told you I could have found out at home, if I had taken the time. Believe me. Nothing I have said to you is rehearsed. It reflects the thought I have given the whole thing after what I have seen and experienced. I speak to you and I want to ask you how can I best reach the American people? I want to write to *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*, and I chose them because they seem to me to be the best way to reach the people I want to reach. But I have had no favours here, no special treatment, no offers. I want people to know, I really do. I am laying it on the line.'

Lieutenant-Commander Coffee is a professional. It was apparent to me that he believed what he had been told by his officers and, because he believed this, he was all the more shaken and disturbed by the realities he encountered. The first shock was the disparity between what he had been told about communists and the medical attention he was given by them after his capture. The second fact was the horror of the bombing in which he had so recently participated. These things become clear in the letter to his wife:

From: Gerald L. Coffee  
 To: Mrs Gerald L. Coffee,  
 306 Tucker Drive,  
 Sanford, Florida,  
 USA

1 March, 1966

'My Dearest Family:

'I pray to God this letter reaches you very soon. My desire to let you know that I am alive and well has been almost overwhelming as I have wanted to spare you the grief of thinking the worst and the worry of just not knowing. I had written and submitted an earlier letter but I was very much afraid it wouldn't reach you by mid-April. Last night I had the opportunity to talk with an American visitor to North Vietnam and he assured me he would carry this back to the States and then mail it on from there, so I am confident that this will reach you on time.

'I am in good basic health both physically and mentally and, Darling, I pray this finds you the same way. I do have a problem with my right arm and hand, however, hence the left hand-writing. When I ejected from the aircraft my right forearm was broken and my elbow dislocated. I also received many cuts and burns on both arms and was knocked unconscious. Right after my capture the people who held me did what they could for my wounds and made my arm as comfortable as possible. I was amazed at how gently they treated me in spite of their obvious hate for us for what our bombings have done to their homeland. I was soon to find out, however, that this kind of treatment was the rule and not the exception. After arriving at my present location, I was taken to a hospital where my hand was operated on and my arm X-rayed and set. My elbow is healing well. There is still some offset of the bones in my forearm but I think they may come around some. I have since been back to the hospital for more X-rays and a new cast. This one, palm to shoulder, won't come off until the end of March. You can see that I am very grateful to the people and the doctors of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) for all the medical care I am receiving.

'Our immediate future is truly in God's hands now, Darling.

I pray to Him every day to watch over all of you and to take good care of you. I'm sure He's doing a better job of it than I could.

'Kimmie, Steve and Dave, Daddy thinks of your bright little faces every day. I'm sure you're all keeping busy in school or in helping Mommie every day in as many ways as you can.

'Kim have you started preparing for your first communion yet? It's a big job and if you do go this time I'm sure you will do very well. I know some Grandma will see that you have the prettiest white dress there. Of course, it's the little girl in the dress that will make it the prettiest. I know you must be getting very anxious for the new baby to arrive and I hope it's a baby sister for you.

'Steve, Daddy has been counting on you to be the Daddy while he's gone. Take good care of your Mommie and your sister and brother. Be sure and pass that football around with Grandpa and also keep hitting those tennis balls over the fence. I'll bet you sure got a lot of Valentines at school on Valentine's day, didn't you.

'Dave my boy, I'm sure you have learned many new tricks on the new swing set by now. Have you been behaving like a good boy in church? Have you been helping Mommie get ready for the new baby? She will sure be needing a good helper like you. Pretty soon you and Tippie won't be the littlest ones in the family any more, will you. Start watching out for the Easter bunny now and don't forget to say your prayers each night at bed time.

'Honey, I have had some time to think of names and I hope my thoughts will be of some help. For a girl I like Chris, Mary and Susan in that order, and specifically, Chris Marie. For a boy, Matt, Tim, or Jay or any combination; possibly Timothy Jay. Don't worry yourself over this at all. I'll be perfectly pleased with whatever you decide, Babe.

'I dearly hope that all has been going smoothly there for you Sweetheart, and that John has been taking good care of you. Just don't ever forget that my thoughts and prayers are with you constantly and will continue to be especially around mid-April. Only by explaining the significance of April to the authorities here have I been allowed to write this letter so soon. Normally I believe I would have had to wait much longer to contact you.

'My experiences with these people this past month have



certainly given me new insight into this war and situation here. You know I could never understand or even tolerate the motives of the anti-Vietnam war demonstrators but, Honey, now I know they are right. It is the bulk of the American people, like us, who think we know why we're involved here but really don't understand the true issues or nature of the war at all. I haven't been brainwashed or politically indoctrinated. I'm still the same man I was when I left home except now I'm a little wiser. This comes from reading which I had started aboard ship and from observing and talking with these people here. I feel I must pass at least some of this on to you so you will understand. Very briefly, it goes like this:

'After WWII the Vietnamese people, under the leadership of the present president of the DRV, Ho Chi Minh, revolted against French colonial rule. Because we, the US, were interested in the natural resources and the militarily strategic foothold in Indo-China, we supported the French with substantial military aid and advisory personnel. In spite of this, the Vietnamese people defeated the French in 1954 at the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu. It had taken nine years but they had won their freedom and independence. The 1954 Geneva Convention, convened for this specific purpose, stipulated that the independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam be recognized and that participants in the conference shall refrain from internal interference in her affairs. The agreements called for a provisional military demarcation zone or line dividing the country to facilitate its demilitarization and that in two years free, national elections would be held to reunify the entire country. Finally, the agreements prohibited foreign troops or military personnel into either zone nor may either zone enter into any military alliance. So the intent of the agreements is quite clear: to clear all foreign troops from Vietnam as expeditiously as possible and to guarantee the Vietnamese people the rights for which they struggled so hard i.e., self determination in a united country with no foreign intervention whatsoever. Still with our eye now on South Vietnam, President Eisenhower said: "The us has not been party to or bound by the decisions of the Conference." Two months later

the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was formed with the US as the major power. In spite of the clear intentions of the Geneva agreements, SEATO included South Vietnam in its "protection area".

'As the French evacuated S. Vietnam, our next step was to ease Ngo Dinh Diem, a western educated and completely us controlled puppet into the government. We supported his regime with massive aid both economic and military. We established the Military Advisory Aid Group to train his troops. His government was never popular with the people and couldn't have lasted without our continued support. In 1956 when it came time for the national elections, he rebuffed all overtures and pleas from the North to arrange the elections. Naturally we backed him up for now we had our foothold in South East Asia.

'The people were furious. They protested but, of course, to no avail. It was well known that had the election taken place Ho Chi Minh would have been elected President of all Vietnam, and rightly so. He was the revolutionary hero of the people, just as Washington was ours. He had made good progress in the north with land reform and economic stabilization. With Diem's refusal to allow reunification, the people were seeing their victory over the French become meaningless. Their only recourse was to revolt against Diem; our man. Because they were revolting against a government which supposedly represents our Democratic way of life and because they were for unification with the now socialist north, they were labelled Viet Cong: Communist. They have since called themselves the National Front for Liberation. So this people's revolution, founded on their bitterness at their betrayal, is the war we are fighting here now. And yet, these are the people we have refused to negotiate with. I don't understand why on either count.

'Worse yet, we have been bombing N. Vietnam because they are supporting the revolution in the South. We have inferred that they are intervening and that this is none of their business. The DRV has every right to support their country-men in the South. They are one and the same people. Reunification of their country is a part of the national purpose of the people of N. Vietnam.

'All this time I have been content to fight for those old standby and often vague reasons such as "to protect our American way of life" or "to honour our commitments and agreements with our allies" or "to stop the spread of communism". Well these things just don't apply here at all. The Saigon Government certainly doesn't represent our way of life and the people have never really known our way of life. All commitments and agreements in this case are strictly self-imposed for our own convenience to have "reasons" to be in South Vietnam. The S. Vietnamese "government" wants us there but the people certainly don't. Why should we now be so anxious to help the people whom we were aiding the French to put down? It is true that if Vietnam were unified she would probably fall under the same socialist government as that of the DRV. However I have observed these people in their homes and in their dealing with one another. The simple and contented lives which these people lead is far better than the lives of war and terror led by their countrymen in the south. I'm not really sure but that a socialist government was the only answer to N. Vietnam's social, economic and agricultural problems at the end of the revolution. Furthermore, we barely lifted our finger to stop the spread of communism 90 miles off our own coast so why this almost fanatical commitment of lives and resources 9,000 miles from home?

'What it all means is this. We just don't belong here. This is not our war. We knowingly undermined the Geneva agreements all along and kept the Vietnamese people from realizing the fruits of their own revolution. Our country loses more honour with each new involvement. We have got to leave Vietnam strictly to the Vietnamese. Our country must live up to its greatness and say "we were wrong". Further escalation will be catastrophic because the N. Vietnamese are prepared and determined to fight forever.

'God knows and you know, Honey, that I love my country dearly and that I am loyal to my profession. These are the very reasons I feel so strongly about it. Aside from my actual contact with the peasants and the authorities here, I could have found all this out at the station or city library if I'd just taken the time.

'People might think: "Sure he's advocating an early end to the

war. That's the only way he'll get home". Of course an end to the war would hasten the repatriation of scores of American pilots and crewmen but it would also save thousands and thousands of lives, millions and millions of dollars in resources, and a measure of honour for our country in initiating an end to the fighting and withdrawing our troops. We are fighting an illegal, dishonourable and unjust war here.

'Please show this letter to our family and friends. They have got to know the truth. Use the letter to its fullest extent to show our people what's going on here. Once our people know the truth, they must make it plain to our legislators that they will tolerate this situation no longer. Yes, this is really me talking, Sweet, and, believe me, I'm speaking right from my heart. But enough of this for now.

'These people have been generous so as to allow me to receive one letter per month. It may contain letters from any of my immediate family and may contain photos. The envelope may not weigh over 20 grams and must be sent by regular air mail. The address must be:

Gerald L. Coffee,  
Detention Camp for Captured American Pilots,  
Democratic Republic of Vietnam,

and, of course, your regular return address.

'Please give my love to all our dear family and friends whom I know are taking good care of you and the children. Tell each of our precious children how very much their Daddy loves them and give them a kiss for me. You must know that my thoughts of you sustain me from day to day. I'll be right there with you when that time comes in April so just think of me holding your hand. Also, happy birthday, Honey. You can be sure we'll make this one up. My love for you gives me the strength and courage I need each day, Darling, and I dearly hope it works the same way for you.

'I love you,  
'Jerry.'

Coffee is a Catholic and a very religious man. It is plain to

me that his views are prompted by no ideological commitment other than the sentiments induced by the direct contact with the situation and population of Vietnam. When I returned to the United States within a few days of my leaving Vietnam, I telephoned Mrs Coffee to tell her of my meeting with her husband. I said 'Mrs Coffee, I have just come from Vietnam where I have seen your husband and I want to tell you that he is in perfectly good health.' Her reply was rather disturbing: 'Anything you have to say to me you can tell to Captain Fowler of the US Air Force.' I said: 'Mrs Coffee, I have a letter for you from your husband. Would you like me to read it to you?' Her reply was: 'What is your name?' I told her: 'That is not important. Do you wish me to tell you of my meeting with your husband?' She said: 'Anything you have to say you should tell to Captain Fowler of the US Air Force.' I posted the letter of her husband to her and retained a photostatic copy, which I released to the Press after she had had time to receive the original. Those who are concerned about brain-washing might consider who it is who is so victimized, Mrs Coffee or the Lieutenant-Commander.

My meeting with the Lieutenant-Commander lasted almost four hours. He spoke with earnestness and listened with great attentiveness to all that I might say. He seemed eager to be reassured that his new-found thoughts and sentiments were worthy. I resisted the strong temptation to tell him precisely what I felt, but conveyed these feelings in my letter to him subsequently. When I asked him if there was anything I could do for him, he asked me if I would make known as widely as possible what he had told me and if he could give me a letter to his wife, and would I make known to the American people the feelings he expressed in this letter about the war?

My thoughts during the time I was with the Lieutenant-Commander turned again and again to my experience of the previous week, to the moments when the blood pounded my head as I fought down cries and sought to retain composure in my conversations with children and parents, doctors, teachers, poor peasants, militia girls. Faces flashed before me. I think of Le Van Lac, whose eight-year-old daughter was killed on

September 15, all of whose neighbours were killed, including a mother and four children, a wife and husband and two children. Le Van Lac's eye, ear, shoulder and right arm were lacerated. He had been rendered deaf and impotent—unable any longer to work. As we spoke to one another, I tried to convey something of my feelings. I told him of my determination to translate his suffering into effective action against my Government and, as we said 'Good-bye', he suddenly embraced me, yelling very loudly in Vietnamese: 'I am very painful. Please recognize my pain.'

A poor peasant, wizened and old at forty-one, told me of the simple heroism of her thirteen-year-old son, Ngoc:

'It was Sunday, April 4, 1965. Ngoc was at home. Suddenly, the jets came and bombed. There is nothing in my village but huts, no buildings. I do not know why they attacked us. Ngoc was writing a lesson for his little brother, Hoa, who is seven. We tried to get to a shelter, but the children of the neighbours, who were having their meal, were injured and could not reach the shelter. One of them had been killed immediately. Ngoc leaped from the shelter and, although the bombs were exploding, he was able to bring back one of the injured children. The second child he brought back had a broken leg, with the bone protruding. Blood was everywhere. The third time he was hit by a lazy dog. His left side was sliced open and, although he was so wounded, he crawled into the shelter with the small child. He told me: "I may die, Mummy, but don't cry. You and Daddy must work to have enough food for my brothers and sisters. If I die, I have done as best I could."

'That was eight in the morning. He remained in that shelter with me until eleven. He was taken to a provincial hospital to be operated on. They tried to remove the slivers of steel, but the tiny darts had pierced his liver and pancreas. I followed him to the hospital, but he asked me to go back to his younger brothers and sisters, who were so small. He said: "Don't worry. I shall come back to help you with the farming." So I stayed in the house and the next day I learned he had died at 7.00 a.m.

'I have no place to house my children. On that day, four of Ngoc's friends in the fifth grade were killed. The first air raids made me afraid. But now I am used to the bombing. We produce and farm and that is our resistance. I am utterly defiant. I will never forget that Ngoc sacrificed his life. I will revenge him. I will work to produce rice, so we can defeat the people who bomb us. Everyone loves their children. I love my children. So you can know my pain. I believe if the us pilots saw their children die like I saw Ngoc die, I believe they would not drop these steel bombs on my village.

'I have learned that you are an American. I want to tell you I have not done anything harmful to the Americans. Neither did my boy. us bombs killed him. I bear deep anger and hatred in my heart. I wish you American boys could help stop these bloody killers who are killing our children.

'Before the revolution I was a servant with a landlord. I cannot read or write. I cannot speak well or use nice words. I just tell you about what has happened in my village and to my family and to my son. I hope you will bring the truth to your people. My boy died and so I have this opportunity to tell you of his sacrifice. I am more determined than ever to do anything I can to defeat the attackers. I request you to make them know this.'

But, above all, the woman who is fixed in my mind, whose small figure, round, brown, sober face and quiet, patient eyes haunt me is Madame Nguyen Ti Tho, with whom I spoke for fifteen hours one day, from early morning to late at night. It was Thursday, February 24, and she came in wearing a shawl and a light brown dress. She had a solemnity which was communicative, and I sensed that she had lived through something that could not be formulated easily or completely.

'I am a woman living in the province of Thu Dan Mot, north of Saigon, near the rubber plantations on the east coast of South Vietnam. I am forty years old. I live by farming. I work gardens and the rice fields. My husband is dead and I live with my mother and have one son, who is fourteen. I should like to tell you something of my experience.

'I was arrested in a bus when I spoke to passengers. In 1956 people were held under the point of gun everywhere in the South. To terrorize people in my province, Saigon opened the Truong Tan Buu, or mopping-up operation. Regiments of troops came against the people. The elections of 1956 were not to take place. When I was put in gaol, I found it full of people. They arrested as many as 700 in a raid. There were members of all groups and organizations—social organizations, women's organizations. Many were arrested because they had tried to spread the Vietnamese script, others for teaching people to read and write. There were many religious believers and there were intellectuals. Terrorism was carried out everywhere against the people. Anyone who had been in the former resistance was hunted. Even people who spoke about an election were arrested. People who tried to meet the International Control Commission to tell them about violations were immediately arrested. Tens of thousands of people were being gaoled. Prisoners did not have enough room to sit down or lie down. They had to stand through the night. The "anti-communist" campaign was started, and the wives of anyone who had been regrouped to the North, under the Geneva Agreements, were made to divorce their husbands. People were gaoled for six years without trial. I was gaoled for many years, without ever being brought to trial.

'Sometimes, the Press published the release of a person like Mrs Nguyen Thi Tu, who was supposed to have been released after years of imprisonment, because she had committed no crime, but, in fact, she was never released and had been sent to a new prison in Paulo-Condore island.

'Poisonous snakes were put in the vaginas of the women. Women died agonizingly. The authorities used broken bottles, which they forced into the vaginas of the women. The women fell unconscious and usually died. The guards used iron nails, which they drove under the finger nails of all fingers of the prisoners. They, then, bandaged the fingers, soaked them in gasoline and set them alight. They pumped water into our mouths and noses. The water was mixed with fish sauce, which was extremely spicy. It burned the membrane. They also used soap.

They used "Crezil", which is a very powerful sewer disinfectant, used in lavatories and toilets to kill germs.

'How can I tell you? There are so many people to mention. They failed to arrest Mr Kiem, so they arrested his wife and small daughter. She was tortured for long hours, but did not reveal anything about her husband's whereabouts. They brought a petrol drum, full of water. They put her small daughter, whose name was Nga and who was five years old, into the drum. She was completely immersed. They then beat the outside of the drum. The pressure of water caused the child's eyes, ears, nose and mouth to issue blood. I saw this with my own eyes. Madame Thi was forced to witness it.

'There were 150 women in the same room. The room was 12 feet by 21 feet. We had no toilet. They put a container in the room. The stench was overwhelming in that small place. Almost all those who survived and were eventually released are now invalids, incapable of walking. They suffer from nervous diseases and from periodic loss of consciousness.

'On the first day I was called to the security officer. I was not asked anything. I was simply beaten continuously for eight hours. One would beat me and then others would take their turn to beat me. They used various kinds of torture. At first, I was beaten with rectangular sticks with four, sharp, angled edges. I was beaten on the breasts and on the back. After some time, I lost consciousness and collapsed. After recovering consciousness, I was tied up. They used sliced strips of cane, which were very strong and sharp. They had tied my two feet together and suspended me from a hook in the ceiling, upside down. Each blow made me think my limbs would be torn from my body. The pain and the nervous reaction caused sharp and severe pangs in my heart. The first session lasted over an hour. When I regained consciousness, they began to beat me again. When I was finally lowered down, I could not stand. They stripped off all my clothes and tied me, naked, to a table. They covered my mouth and nose with a piece of thin cloth. They forced a rubber pipe into my mouth and nose and poured water into my mouth and nose. I could not breathe and was forced to swallow. My stomach was

extended larger and larger. First, it was only water. Then they mixed fish sauce, then soap, then very powerful disinfectant, which burned. They tortured me like this for forty minutes. Then I felt a black screen fall over my face. I lost consciousness. When I recovered consciousness, they were pressing my belly and shaking my head, violently. Water came out of my mouth and nose. It spread over the floor of the room. There was a period when I felt as if I were immersed in the water coming out of me. I heard, very faintly, the voices of the security agents. One was saying: "Look at you, a security agent for years and you still don't know how to tie them. She can move her head."

'They tied me, naked, to the table. My head was fixed tightly. Then began drops of icy water on the centre of my forehead. It went on, hour after hour. I felt as if my whole face and head were being constantly attacked. At first, it had seemed nothing. After some time it was unbearable. Drop after drop. I endured it, at first, for four hours. Then my brain became numb and paralyzed.'

(There was a doctor in the room, who broke in: 'The cold contracted the arteries and veins, preventing blood from feeding the brain. This method of torture is very dangerous, because the brain is under constant excitement and must resist. Full recovery from this torture is very difficult.')

'When I was about to lose consciousness, I heard them saying to me: "We will make you a lifelong invalid." In fact, since my release, and to this moment, I have heart ailments, attacks and a disease of the nervous system which affects my brain periodically. After attacks, I suffer from bleeding of the rectum, which is one effect of the torture I endured.

'In the gaol they put my mouth in a lock made of wood and shaped like a bit. It was forced into my mouth and it was impossible for me to close my mouth, which was kept open all through the night in this way. The lock was fixed round my head. Breathing was extremely difficult.

'I had been arrested together with a man. I was tied up with him for one month. One night, we were taken to a small room from the early evening until 2.00 a.m. They listened to us from outside.

They wanted us to have sexual intercourse. They wanted to humiliate us. At last, they removed us and we were told: "You know what we want you to do." I replied: "You, who are odious and barbarous, are of such character. We will never lose our dignity."

'After endless torture, I was put in the Gia Dinh gaol. This gaol was the most densely populated, as it is the gaol from which they despatch prisoners to the others. It is the central gaol. During the daytime, people can only sit by being on top of each other. At night, people slept on each other. If one wished to turn, let alone move, all had to turn. We had to sleep on our sides. The gaol was so hot that every prisoner tried to fan himself. Each night, there would be twenty or more people who would become unconscious because of the lack of oxygen. They were removed.

'After one month in these conditions, everyone had rashes, pimples, blisters and swellings.'

(The doctor commented: 'Each person had a space of less than one foot—thirty centimetres—and had one cubic metre of air.')

'During the first month of gaol in Gia Dinh, I watched seven men die from asphyxiation. I could not understand how the women survived or endured it. The ration of food was so poor that in every meal one person received a tiny cup of rice with almost no vegetables or sauce. I lived there seven weeks and was sent finally to Paulo-Condore Island prison. In Paulo-Condore gaol every possible device for killing people slowly was employed. People died before our eyes every day. The means used ensured very slow but certain death. I was detained one year in Paulo-Condore Island. Out of twelve months, I was kept in a cell for ten months. The cell was a small shelter on the surface of the ground. It was three feet by six feet in area. The walls were made of stone, eighteen inches thick. The ceiling was made of concrete. The walls were painted black. The ceiling was under six feet in height.

'The bed was made of stone. It was a cell for one prisoner, but I was kept in this cell, six feet by three feet, with four people. One slept on the "bed". One slept in each corner. There was a can of excrement, changed once a week. It held four gallons. The room connected with the sewers and a sewer hole was open inside

the cell, causing a constant stench. The door was made of petrified wood, eighteen inches thick. This wood is harder than steel and nails cannot be driven into it. It is known in Vietnam as "iron-wood". The window of the room was eight inches by six inches and covered with an iron net of bars. We were without any clothing in the cells, as the heat was so unbearable that we removed our clothing. Through the window, a ray of light collected our drops of sweat and showed them evaporating from our bodies and condensing again on the walls and ceiling. After only one day in the cell we all cut off our hair. It was too unbearable to have hair, such was the stifling heat.

'In twenty-four hours we received a small cup of water, each about three mouthfuls. We were sweating constantly. In over four months we had no water with which to wash. During our monthly periods, blood dropped on ourselves and on the floor. We tried to clean the floor with our rags of clothing and with our hands. We slept on the floor. We were so thirsty that the noise of rain drove us to frenzy. We yearned for a drop to come into the cell to touch our parched faces or soothe our raw throats. We were starved for air to such an extent that we looked at the opening of the door as a famished child looks at her mother's breast.

'The rice was mixed with paddy husks. The flies were inside the rice and covered it like a black veil. The flies clustered everywhere. Due to the sewer-hole and the can of excrement in the cell, it was perpetually filled with odours so powerful that it was a torment to breathe. They often put eight and even twelve people in this cell, six feet by three feet! When we were four, it was possible to sleep lying down. When we were eight, it was possible to sit; when we were twelve, we stood. When there were twelve people, if there was no help from a few of the guards, we should have died in forty-eight hours. Some guards would secretly open the door for ten minutes every six hours. This enabled us to survive. This form of detention is an ingenious method of slow death, slow murder; we died of shortage of water, of air, of food, of disease and of exhaustion.

'As the guards helped us in their meagre way, we barely survived. But in the cells in which the men were kept, they died constantly

from vitamin and protein deficiency—slow, torturous death.’  
(The doctor broke in, once more: ‘Vitamin deficiency caused flesh-dehydration.’)

‘When we saw a prisoner with toes and feet black, we knew that the process of slow, painful death had begun. The body would die before the eyes of the victim. We needed only four vitamin pills, but we got nothing. The guards used Oreomycin and Theramycin to prevent disease of their chickens. All of us suffered from dysentery and worms—all the prisoners.

‘After ten months of detention, I was reduced to a skeleton. Just bones. Very few people could walk. If we could survive, it was because we tried to appeal to the humanity of some of the puppet-soldiers. Some few who observed our suffering helped us a little, enough to enable some of us to survive. The men, alone, in Paulo-Condore died 300 at a time from atrocities in the prison. They were left dead for days in the cells. Thousands upon thousands were attacked by disease in epidemics. There were mass burials. In the midst of this death and suffering, the Chief of the Island, Bach Van Bon, clapped his hands and laughed at us on inspections.

‘On Christmas Eve, the Catholic prisoners could not go to church. So they organized a Mass, in gaol. They were beaten for this from midnight, Christmas Eve, until 1.00 p.m. the following Christmas Day. Although the prisoners surviving were weak from disease, we were compelled to do forced labour.

‘One strong man can produce one cubic metre of firewood per day. We were forced to produce three cubic metres per day from the jungle. At the end of each day we were beaten and bled profusely because of insufficient amounts of firewood. There was a time when we went on hunger strike to protest the meagre ration of rice. We were forced to be exposed to the boiling sun all day. Hundreds died. I was in Paulo-Condore during one year when there was a strong protest movement in Saigon demanding the release of women from Paulo-Condore. The strength of the movement against detention of women in Paulo-Condore, which took place in Saigon, led to our removal to another gaol on the mainland.

‘We were too weak and almost unable to walk to the ship going to the mainland. We had to assist each other. Nineteen hours on board ship was terrible. We were all vomiting. On arrival in Saigon, we could not walk off it. The ship did not actually pick us up at Paulo-Condore. They used small boats to bring us to the main ship. When we were on board, forty-one fell unconscious from exhaustion. This ship, called *Phu-Ong Khanh*, was a cargo ship. There was no air. We were crowded in the hold. It was utterly exhausting. After we had been suffocating in the hold, the sailors who observed this argued and protested fiercely with the security men. They knew we would die in the hold and demanded that we should be allowed on the deck. The sailors helped us much. They intervened with the ship’s captain for medicine to give us strength to survive until we reached the mainland.

‘From the ship we were led to Phu Loi concentration camp. It was vast, holding 8,000 people. At Phu Loi camp, they forced us to salute their colonel and to shout slogans of support for the Diem regime. We refused to do so. We were beaten and sent to another prison, called Thu-Duc gaol.

‘After we left Phu Loi, they carried out an enormous massacre in the camp. They effected a mass poisoning, which killed over 1,000 and made 6,000 gravely ill. When I was in Thu Duc I met a friend who told me, first-hand, of the mass poisoning in the Phu Loi concentration camp: ‘The Phu Loi concentration camp was situated in the midst of a plain; it was intolerably hot and exposed. There was almost no water in the camp. The concentration camp was built by forced labour. The labourers had to work in broiling sun to build the barbed-wire fences, shelters and huts. The prisoner had to perform brutal work, but only received a tiny portion of rice. Any resistance or disaffection led to our being placed in cells underground, without air and which were broiling hot. Many became unconscious. Because of the solidarity of the prisoners, the authorities were forced to make certain provisions. Then, they began systematic reprisals. One day, they gave us a good meal of beef, other meat and bread. People were starved and ate eagerly. After the meal, there was

violent pain, bloody vomiting and bloody evacuation. Then death. Furious, survivors captured the loudspeakers and broadcast the crimes and appealed for first aid. Troops and police came and slaughtered us in the course of repression. Many more were beaten to death."

"There was a woman named Phung who was beaten and then tortured, as follows: The security agent used his baton and rubber truncheon to penetrate deeply and with brutal force into her vagina. To this day, she bleeds when she feels weak or sick. She was a nurse who had saved many people in the camp. She still lives in a Saigon-occupied area of South Vietnam. After some time, I was returned to Phu Loi concentration camp. Blood was visible on all the walls.

"The second time I was there, they started all the same torture again. Everything I endured in Paulo-Condore and before was repeated. I was hung from the ceiling for hours; they beat me endlessly; they forced water with soap into my lungs and stomach, causing lesions and perforation. It went on for periods of two to two and a half months at one time, for one entire year. I was almost insane. The first session lasted two and a half months. I was with an eighteen-year-old girl who was stripped, hung from the ceiling and tortured. In winter it was bitterly cold. All the women were subjected to the same, without exception. After torture, we had to lie, naked, on the floor. Cold water was flooded upon us. The torture was started all over again.

"Each campaign of torture lasted, without stop, for two months. I was treated this way continuously, until six days before my release. Until that moment, I was tortured almost constantly. If I am still alive, it is thanks to the care given me afterwards by my fellow countrymen. I consider my life a great victory. I live. Tens of thousands, when set free, have become both invalids and sterile.

"I was released in 1960. In 1962, I was again arrested and herded into a strategic hamlet. Let me tell you how they organized the strategic hamlet and what it meant. First, they sent aeroplanes to bomb the villages. Then troops to attack the villages. Finally, bulldozers to destroy completely all the people's houses. The homeless were then forced into these strategic hamlets, built

through their own forced labour. In my province there were 200,000 people. All 200,000 were herded into strategic hamlets. The herding of people directly violated the whole fabric of life of the people. The people resisted in any way they could. There were many women whose houses were being destroyed by puppet troops. The women set fire to their own houses to trap the puppet troops destroying their homes. Many old men burned incense in the houses of their ancestors and pledged to their ancestors to die protecting their houses and sacred places. Then, with knives in hand, they sat at the door of their house and waited for the puppet troops to come to destroy the house: "Please, fellow countrymen, if you wish to take tea with me you are welcome in my house; if you come to destroy my house, take care. I shall defend it with my life."

"As our people live on their own piece of land and on their rice fields, and they live in scattered spots, they are against these concentration camps. They resist the strategic hamlet, encircled by five barbed-wire fences, watched by patrolling puppet troops with machine-guns, dogs and look-out towers. In the hamlet, people were forced to pay high taxes and conform to forced labour, unpaid, at any time. People are forced to join Government organizations and youth are forcefully conscripted into the puppet army. They are forced, at gunpoint, to take weapons against other villagers, their brothers and sisters. Let me give you the example of Tan Cu village; 59 were herded into strategic hamlets. Three months later, thirty of them were dead. In Hoa Trung, of 400 people herded, 200 died. In Ben-Tuong hamlet, organized and directed personally by US officers, the people demonstrated during the visit of McNamara, for food, rice and freedom to return to their villages. People in the hamlets are forced to inform the secret police if anyone has a relative in the North, anyone had participated in the resistance against the French, or anyone who has spoken about peace or neutrality, about elections or democracy; or if anyone has criticized the Saigon puppet Government or US officers or the US Government.

"Most of the girls were raped by troops in the hamlets. Strategic hamlets were not only organized in the countryside,



but also applied to the cities. The girls in the cities were forced into teams of prostitutes for US troops. The Saigon Government forced, at pain of death, literally tens of thousands of young girls into camps to be used as perpetual instruments of official recreation for US troops.

'In order to force the labourers of the cities into the strategic hamlets, agents and troops burn down the people's houses. They send fire engines to the fire and spray not water but gasoline! To destroy everything! Due to the poverty suffered, many thousands of girls, and students as well, had to sell their bodies for food to the US soldiers. This is in addition to the force applied by the Government in organizing girls as forced-prostitutes. Poor and starving children rummage like rats amidst the garbage dumps for food. That is the life imposed in our cities of the South.

'As the organization of strategic hamlets was against the interests of our whole people, everywhere, in countryside or in the city, all resist—men, women, children, old people—resist bitterly as a matter of life and survival. As I have told you, they succeeded, at first, in herding us by brute force into the concentration camps of forced labour—their so-called strategic hamlets—but finally the people united together to fight against it. They have overthrown many strategic hamlets and turned them into fighting villages of resistance. When people do not allow children to take part in the struggle against the strategic hamlets, our children reply: "When US soldiers kill us they do not distinguish children from parents." The "strategic hamlet" now has been changed by McNamara into "new-settlement camps". In these camps, terrorism is far worse and far more atrocious. The struggle against being forced into them grows ever more fierce. People struggle to get out and the Government tries to force them in.

'Once they came to Binh Dinh province and shot dead a pregnant woman, and a bed-ridden woman, who had given birth two days ago, was shot dead at point-blank range. This is ordinary practice when herding our people, in order to terrorize them. I was told this by eye-witnesses. Twenty-two women, twenty-two children and six old men were shot down in cold blood to intimidate the people of the area. They took babies of two years

and tore them into pieces, literally, and threw the pieces into the bushes. They broke the heads of infants with poles of wood and threw the infants on a fire. A little boy I knew, named Zung, had his leg broken by a bullet at point-blank range and was then buried alive by US soldiers. Troops were committing other horrible atrocities. This was on December 22, 1965, in Tai Quang village. In this same raid, a family of seven was killed by US soldiers; another of nine was completely annihilated by raiding US troops. I know of so many such atrocities I could go on for hours. These are absolutely typical, everyday examples. The people are stirred to such hatred and outrage that all of them, every last one, resist US atrocities against them.

'I was herded again and again into these hamlets, after my release from the concentration camp. I have witnessed these crimes repeatedly in the hamlets. A man named Dong saw the families and he survived. Now he has been hospitalized, after his escape. This is a part of the story of what I have seen, what I have endured and what I have lived through.

'There are so many things I want to tell you, that I cannot because the people and the witnesses are still living in occupied areas. I would tell you of the bombardments, the fragmentation bombs, the gas, the chemicals, the napalm, and phosphorus, the poisons—the daily events of which these barbarous atrocities are a part—week after week in the South. I have seen it, I have endured it and struggled against it. I know people who have carried the victims to the local US officers responsible, to confront them.'

Madame Tho is under treatment. I was told later that she insists upon returning to the South, as soon as possible. No one considered this unusual.

More Vietnamese died between 1954 and 1959, the years of 'peace', than in the years 1960 to 1966, the years of popular resistance in the South and American bombardments in the North. But the Vietnamese, from the President and Prime Minister to the villagers who spoke to me of their sufferings, are patient and exceedingly gentle. Nothing was so harrowing as their gentleness.

They know that our people have been corrupted. Americans and Europeans have been the beneficiaries of the exploitation against which the people of Vietnam struggle.

During my talk with Premier Pham Van Dong, we dwelt on the level of consciousness in the United States and the possibilities of serious resistance. There were moments in the conversation when the weight of American responsibility and my feelings of shame and humiliation pained me too deeply, and I was silent. Pham Van Dong took my hand and said:

'My dear brother, the struggle is long and our people endure much. We are comrades in arms: you, Americans, who work to awaken your people and to resist your rulers and we, who struggle in the field. It is the same fight.'

Even while they expect little from us, they are moved and grateful for the little they receive, for they see the birth of an American resistance as one of the rewards for their sacrifice. An American emergence and an American consciousness of our place in the world and our relationship to our rulers will be the gift of the people of Vietnam to the people of the United States. The pity of the horror which has been borne by Vietnam is not a pity deserved by the Vietnamese. There is nothing pitiful about them. In their very suffering they are heroic. It is not passivity which marks them, but sacrifice and resistance. The pity lies in the cruel historic reality which renders the American people pathetic and acquiescent as this horror is perpetrated in their name. I feel certain that the American emergence of the next generation, and the generation after that, will trace its origins to the quarter century revolution in Vietnam: that great and liberating event to which we owe more than solidarity.

Bertrand Russell has said:

'The people of Vietnam are the world's soldiers for justice. Their struggle is epic, a permanent reminder of the heroism of which human beings are capable when dedicated to a noble ideal. Let us salute the people of Vietnam.'

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