

The facts about the war in Viet Nam

"IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE KNEW....."

The McGill Daily and the World Federalists of Canada

Neutral observers, and even American officials themselves, have agreed that both China and North Viet Nam have from the very beginning been extremely careful to avoid any action which might be construed as "aggression" in the South. Writing in the New York Times (June 21, 1964), Tad Szulc quotes top U.S. officials to say that North Viet Nam has not been sending men into the south.

"The guerilla units that infiltrate from the north are South Vietnamese who stayed north of the armistice line at the end of the war in 1954." The same story comments on an analysis made by top U.S. officials who concluded that China is unlikely to commit any act of aggression. In fact, China's refusal to be provoked into war over Viet Nam has been discussed repeatedly in the American press - often with sneers about her "weakness" or "cowardice".

Any talk of North Vietnamese "aggression" must explain these stubborn facts:

1. There has never been any evidence that more than a trickle of arms has reached the South, and the number of northern infiltrators there has always been considerably fewer than the number of American "advisors".

2. "North" and "South" Viet Nam are artificial entities, resulting from an agreement which was to last for two years only, and was not in any way to be considered as forming permanent political or territorial boundaries. This boundary still exists because of the refusal of the United States and its government in the South to allow reunification through a national election, in direct violation of the 1954 Geneva agreements. This boundary no longer has any validity, and the war has become a struggle for national independence against foreign intervention.

3. Since its creation the government of South Viet Nam has all

but declared war on the north, and has repeatedly violated its air space and territorial waters; it has with American help trained and dispatched special troops to infiltrate the North.

4. THE UNITED STATES OFFERS "UNCONDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS"

There has been world wide criticism of American actions in Vietnam. An apparent shift in policy, signalled by President Johnson's speech on April 7 offering "unconditional discussions" with North Vietnam, won a momentary propaganda victory. But since then the United States has "escalated" the war, pouring in additional thousands of troops, no longer euphemistically called advisors, and stepping up bombing raids against both North and South Vietnam, influential American critics of their own government's policies have concluded that the offer of discussion was "mere verbal trickery, to quell the peace-mongering critics at home and abroad." (New York Times, April 25).

Any objective analysis of the American position leads to the same distasteful conclusion. President Johnson's offer was predicated on the assumption that "North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam." This is simply not true. The government of South Vietnam is not independent. It is an American creation, and could not last a week without American military support. It is fighting, not against North Vietnam, but against the National Liberation Front, which is the effective government in large sections of the country, and controls most of its territory.

Senator Wayne Morse stated, in the Senate on April 7: "I am advised that if an election were held today, Ho Chi Minh would undoubtedly be elected President of both North and South Vietnam, as would have been the case in 1956 when the United States prevented the very election called for by the Geneva accords.

The offer of unconditional discussions contains conditions which cannot be met. North Vietnam cannot stop aggression against the south, because it has never been engaged in such aggression, it cannot stop the popular movement in opposition to American military rule in South Vietnam, even if it wished to do so.

NOTE

The Secretary general of the United Nations, U Thant, has called for negotiations to stop the fighting in South Viet Nam, and stated that if the American people knew the real truth about the situation they would want to withdraw from this war. The obvious implication of his remarks is that the American government has concealed the truth about its military operations in Viet-Nam from its own people.

The official American justification for its policies in South Viet Nam rests on four main arguments:

1. The Americans claim that they have a "right" to be there - that they were invited by the government of South Viet Nam.
 2. They state that this government represents the people of South Viet Nam, while the Viet Cong are "Communist Terrorists".
 3. They claim that North Viet Nam has been guilty of "aggression" against South Viet Nam.
 4. The United States, which originally defended air strikes against North Viet Nam as retaliatory, now has abandoned this fiction, and speaks of them as pressure necessary to force North Viet Nam into "unconditional discussions" to end the war.
- The purpose of this paper is to examine these arguments in the light of the facts, and so to determine whether U Thant's charges are justified. In doing so, only American and international control commission sources will be quoted.

Any genuine offer of peace discussions will have to be made to the National Liberation Front, which is fighting this war, but President Johnson has stated that he will not negotiate with this movement. If the United States is sincerely anxious to stop the war in Vietnam, it needs only to stop its military attacks, and to allow the people of that country to negotiate a peace settlement without outside interference.

CONCLUSIONS

1. No legal or moral grounds exist for the extension of the civil war in South Viet Nam by attacks on neighbouring states.
2. No legal or moral grounds can justify the continued maintenance by American power in South Viet Nam of a regime which can enforce its authority over only a fraction of the country and only by the most revolting methods.
3. This Study Group accordingly recommends the marshaling of Canadian public opinion to support:
 - (a) The policy recommended by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in his speech to the Canadian Society of New York, on March 5, 1965: "Today... the aim of the international community must be to secure conditions in Southeast Asia in which, under international control and international supervision and effective international policing, the states in that area can work out their own affairs and conduct their own policies without any interference from any neighbour or any outside power."
 - (b) The Policy Statement Re Viet Nam, issued by the World Association of World Federalists, March 1965: "The acceleration of hostilities in Viet Nam threatens the peace of the world and raises the spectre of escalation into world war III. The current action in Viet Nam is another case of force used by individual countries in conflict situations, which is the inevitable consequence of the absence of an effective world security system and of machinery for enforceable world law." The World Association of World Federalists urges:
 1. The re-convening of the Geneva Conference of 1954 which partitioned Viet Nam, in order to achieve a ceasefire and to seek a political settlement safeguarding from outside interference the existing political entities of South-East Asia.
 2. To bring the Viet Nam situation within the purview of the United Nations and to establish a viable role for the United Nations as observer and guarantor of any agreement reached by the Conference.

Far from being a group of communist "terrorists", the National Liberation Front is a broad organization including almost all political and religious opponents of the Diem dictatorship. Its thirty-one-member central committee is headed by a non-communist lawyer who had spent years in Saigon prisons for his defence of civil rights. Represented are leading Buddhists, Catholics and Protestants, as well as business men and representatives of the three leading opposition parties. Its programme is far from communist in tone - it calls for peace, withdrawal of United States armed forces, democratic elections and eventual reunification with the north around a policy of neutralism.

The actual civil war in Vietnam broke out long before the formation of the National Liberation Front, and was between the Diem regime and the armies of various anti-communist religious sects, some of which have since joined the National Liberation Front forces. It has been pointed out by many competent observers that the National Liberation Front was an indigenous movement growing out of widespread opposition to the Saigon government, and received little if any but moral support from North Vietnam.

Apparently there is some bitterness in its ranks over the strict neutrality observed by North Vietnam in the early years of its existence. Hanoi explained this neutrality as necessary in order to avoid violation of the terms of the Geneva Agreements.

Of the three regional governments of Viet Nam, that is, the South Vietnamese, the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese regimes, none is a multi-party democracy with a free press. Whatever methods these regimes may use to keep themselves in power, the Saigon regime is unique in at least two respects: (1) It is involved in the unilateral violation of Viet Nam by a foreign

power bombing "in the defence of Freedom," and (2) It has turned its Air Force against its own people.

A Reuter's despatch, published 18, 1965:

"Forty-eight persons, including 45 children, were killed Wednesday when South Vietnamese air force planes bombed a village (five miles from the major U.S. air base) at Da Nang. It was regarded as Communist-controlled despite its nearness to the U.S. BASE. Heavy civilian casualties have resulted frequently from air strikes on hamlets where Viet Cong are believed to be operating."

American newspapermen have been barred from the Da Nang Air Base. But they have reported that American planes are systematically bombing villages in both North and South Viet Nam, using napalm and phosphorous bombs as well as conventional explosives. According to the Washington Post News Service, March 4th "U.S. pilots are given a square marked on a map and told to hit every hamlet within the area." "I killed 40 Vietcong today," one pilot told the Associated Press on March 3rd. "That's the number they told me were in the village, anyhow, and I levelled it."

"NORTH VIET NAM IS THE AGGRESSOR"

This charge by the United States has been so widely repeated that it will come as a shock to most readers to learn that there never has been any evidence that the North Vietnamese or the Chinese are "the aggressors" in the war being waged by the United States in Viet Nam.

In fact all available evidence, including the White Paper issued by the U.S. State Department to justify its air raids on North Vietnam, points the other way.

The invasion of the North has always been a vowed aim of the South Viet Nam military dictatorship since the days of Diem. The Americans have been deeply involved in this aim. They have assisted by violating territorial waters of North Viet Nam (the Tonkin Gulf "attack" on U.S. ships came while they were in North Viet Nam territorial waters within three to eleven miles from shore, and while South Viet Nam vessels were shelling North Viet Nam positions on islands off its coast.) American planes have violated North Viet Nam air space on reconnaissance flights, dropping "special troops" by parachute, and in small scale bombing raids, long before the United States openly admitted its air attacks.

The pattern is remarkably consistent. The American Government at first denies such acts of aggression and then is forced to admit them and claim that they are justified. But there is no justification for bombing North Viet Nam towns and villages. A hospital and school were hit on the first big raid. These raids are acts of aggression against a country with whom the United States is not at war.

Writing in the New York Times (June 27, 1964) C.L. Sulzberger, a supporter of American policies in Indochina, had this to say:

"In 1961 a South Viet Nam 'First Operation Group' was established under U.S. direct-



A U.S. Army paratrooper sergeant gives a piece of candy to a blindfolded Viet Cong suspect. The youth was caught in a guerrilla-controlled hamlet during a search-and-destroy operation in the An Khe valley.

ion to fight secret operations in North Viet Nam. Now, as we have shown in Laos, we contemplate backing this sort of action with air support. The problem is that the forces dropped in North Viet Nam were unable to establish any base. They had no support from the local population, were quickly reported to the military authorities, and were wiped out."

(This last statement is odd in view of the American claim that the Ho Chi Minh regime is a "shaky dictatorship", and his people are yearning for "liberation".)

No one denies that fighting men and weapons from the north have found their way to the Viet Cong. The extent of this infiltration is not known, although it is reasonable to believe that it has increased since the large scale American intervention. However, General Paul D. Harkins, who plays leading role in South Viet Nam, stated in the Washington Post (March 5, 1963).

"The guerrillas are not being reinforced or systematically supplied from North Vietnam, China or anywhere else. They depend for weapons primarily on whatever they can capture."

Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon has opposed United States involvement in Viet Nam from the beginning. On the subject of alleged "aggression" from the north he has stated categorically in the Senate that he had repeatedly cross-examined witnesses from the Pentagon and State Department and has always received the answer that there are no military personnel in South Viet Nam from North Viet Nam, China, Laos, Cambodia or anywhere else. When he asked the question: "Are the Viet Cong South Vietnamese almost entirely?" he was answered "Yes". The same is true of their weapons. Senator Morse concludes that the so-called "supply lines" which Americans are bombing are little more than a myth.

Following the publication of the White Paper, I.F. Stone's Weekly obtained from the Pentagon press office a precise

statement of the number of weapons captured from the guerrillas and the number lost to them over the past three years. The figures were as follows:

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|--------------------------|--------|
| Captured from Guerrillas | |
| 1962 | 4,800 |
| 1963 | 5,400 |
| 1964 | 4,900 |
| 3-year Total | 15,100 |
| Lost to the Guerrillas | |
| 1962 | 5,200 |
| 1963 | 8,500 |
| 1964 | 13,700 |
| 3-year Total | 27,400 |

Appendix "D" of the White Paper provides a list of weapons, ammunition and other supplies of Communist origin captured from the guerrillas over the 18-month period from June, 1962 to January 29 last year. Out of the total of some 7,500 weapons captured during that period only 179 could be classified as Communist made, alleged to have been made or modified in North Viet Nam. The total additional supplies attributed to North Viet Nam sources included 16 helmets, one uniform and an undisclosed number of mess kits, belts, socks and sweaters. These figures were not only published

in I.F. Stone's Weekly News Letter of March 8, 1965, but were re-published in paid advertisements in the New York Times March 7, 1965, and their authenticity has not been denied. These figures represent less than 2 1/2 per cent of the total weapons captured.

It has been freely admitted in the American press that the South Vietnamese troops, in addition to being unwilling to fight for their government, have deserted to the Viet Cong in large numbers. (The Viet Cong claim that more than 50,000 went to their side in the first nine months of 1964). These troops bring their United States-made weapons with them. They are trained in their use by American "advisors", and technical pamphlets on using the weapons have been published in their language. Successful raids on American bases have been made with U.S. mortars and ammunition (this was admitted by the Pentagon). Vietnamese troops stationed in defence of these bases have either not intervened or, in some cases, have helped the Viet Cong raiders.

Kashmir Border

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In violation of international law, Pakistan gave away to China by agreement 2,000 square miles of Jammu and Kashmir as if it were her own, without bothering about self-determination. China, on her part, is supporting Pakistan temporarily in line with her expansionist policy and in continuation of her illegal occupation of 42,000 square miles of Indian territory in Kashmir and in the north-east.

India, as a democratic country, has become a stumbling block for China's ambitions in Asia. To humble and humiliate India is China's design today. And humiliation of the Indian democratic set up would be the death of democracy in Asia.

Youth and students of the world, who have been on the forefront of the pursuit for peace have been gravely concerned with the deteriorating situation in Kashmir. The International Student Conference (ISC) has deplored the infiltrations and urged cessation of armed conflict, and has always upheld the principles of justice and territorial sovereignty of free nations in its stand on the dispute.

Major powers of the globe as represented in the security council of the U.N. have still greater responsibility. The permanent settlement of the Kashmir problem does not lie in discovering arrangements to suit interested powers, but in seeking the truth behind the story.



"I killed 40 Viet Cong today. That's the number they told me were in the village, anyhow, and I levelled it." Associated Press, March 3, quoting a United States pilot

Pose major domestic problem

By MARK DEWOLF
Features Editor

Since the turn of the century, Canada's Indian population has grown to its present figure of 230,000 people. Instead of a decrease in the numbers of the Canadian Indian, the increase in their population is at present among the highest ever recorded for any group. It is this explosion in population and the sub-standard living conditions of most Canadian Indians that will in the near future demand the attention of Canadian government and indeed the whole nation.

An exploding Indian population which has no hope of anything beyond minimal standards of living raises a threat to the Canadian government and non-Indian population that is fast becoming our major domestic problem.

The problem, growing steadily under the noses of both government and citizen, is essentially one of numbers. If there is no decline in the rate of natural increase of the Canadian Indian in the near future which statistics prove unlikely, the Indian population of Canada could reach 1,000,000 within the next 25 years.

This would be a rate of growth in excess of the Colonial American rate that Malthus called "almost without parallel in history."

to have stabilized at about 46 per 1,000 population.

This remarkable growth took place without the aid of immigration and despite the loss of some people who disappeared into the general ("white") population. It is to be accounted for in part by the reduction of mortality resulting from much improved health services and better diet, and is partly a manifestation of the rapid rise in the rate of natural increase that began in most segments of the population of Canada and the United States in 1941.

The striking feature of this population explosion is its effect on the age structure of Canadian Indian, creating new social problems, which may someday explode in our faces.

In January of 1963, 55.8 per cent of the total Indian population was under the age of 20, while 45.7 per cent (90,631 people) were under the age of 15.

The point to note is that the Indian population is a young one. The Indian is not dying; he is being born to parents (or an unwed mother) in a reservation already backward in economic and educational facilities. He is taking a lead from elders who often have little to offer, at least compared with "white" values.

The present living standards of the Canadian Indian cannot be overlooked. Over 16 per cent of Indian families in Canada live in one-room shacks against eight per cent of non-Indian families in similar

communities. Over 50 per cent of Indian families live in a house of three rooms or less. Only 43.9 per cent of Indian families in Canada have electricity in their homes against a percentage of 98.6 per cent among the non-Indian population. Only 13.3 per cent of Indian homes have running water compared to 92.4 per cent of non-Indian homes.

The housing situation is becoming worse every year because the home-building program has not kept pace with the growing population. What chance has the average Indian youngster to advance in education when in all likelihood, he will have no quiet place to study, only lamp light, no table or desk, and no means of keeping himself clean, etc.?

There has been no significant attempt over the years to help our native communities to develop new industries to take up the slack from the declining traditional industry of hunting and trapping.

It has been easier to give Indians relief than to help them adjust to modern life economically and socially.

Over 47 per cent of Indian families on Reserves in Canada earn \$1,000 per year or LESS and 74.5 per cent earn \$2,000 or less. To this, add the fact that Indian families are larger than the Canadian average.

After a study of the Canadian Indians' reservation locations, their known real and potential resources, together with the huge population increase, the conclu-

sion seems inescapable that the independent survival of the reservation Indian will soon be impossible.

The question we should now ask - or will soon be forced to ask - is to what extent do we, the "white" population and government, have a duty to help the Indian on his terms? How far can help go before it becomes assimilation or interference to which the skeptical Indian will become hostile?

The scope of the Indian problem is too big for the Indian, in his present economic and educational condition, to handle alone. Standards of housing, nutrition, sanitation, and medical care are low, although efforts are being made (from within and without) to improve them. Very few Indians have any profession, trade or skill, and the vast majority have sporadic incomes derived from construction, labor, and seasonal work in fruit, tobacco, trapping, and fishing.

Perhaps it is a consequence of their marginal position in Canadian society, lack of employment, deep feelings of hostility to the "white man" who they believe stole their heritage, and a very general feeling of frustration that the standard indices of deviation are very high on the reserves.

Delinquency, both adult and juvenile, is dishearteningly common. Desertion, common law unions, and illegitimacy are rife. Drunkenness is a common vice of both sexes, and child neglect as a consequence is widespread. Most

Indian communities show a condition bordering on demoralization. In many Indian units, traditional values and disciplines have faded out, while no new or white-man sense of responsibility has been found as a modern substitute.

The situation can be summed



What about them

up as follows: existing reserves, even if their resources were fully all of these problems will be exploited, could not in most instances support existing populations; the Indian people as a whole have few marketable skills and have such low educational levels that training or retraining of adults is hardly possible (among equal co-existence with white

society through cultural pluralism, and peonage-type exploitation of the Indian who is kept in a position of economic and social subservience.

Until recently, there were few signs of a policy of integration or assimilation. The Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration regarded its functions as largely supervisory, custodial and protective. The director of the Branch believed it was not possible to change the Indian way of life economically or socially to make it more conformable with white society.

Programs to improve health, housing and agricultural technique have been coupled with a major effort to improve the educational level of the Indian people.

Education will allow the Indian to become competitive in the labor market, and improve his knowledge of our modern urban-industrial society. Such policy, now developing, shows a recognition that there is an increasing disparity between Indian and white standards of living; it shows a realization that few reserves can now support their existing populations, let alone vastly increased ones.

Indian response to white efforts to improve and extend reserve education, however, has been less than enthusiastic. The word or sense of assimilation evokes hostility in almost all. Even those Ontario Indians who recognize their situation and welcome ed-

ucation for their children seem to envisage no great change in the structure of reserve life.

Yet the one real hope for the betterment of the Indian people is for a massive improvement in their levels of general, technical and professional education. Should this not occur, they will just not be able to find employment and their situation, bad as it is now, can only become worse.

Recent government efforts to improve standards and to increase coverage so as to keep children in school beyond minimum leaving age have had small success. Even now, reserve-educated Indian children, in comparison to white children, do not perform well in reserve schools. Most still leave school as soon as possible.

There are relatively few high-school graduates. In 1961-62, only 48 Indians were enrolled in Canadian universities.

Given the situation of the Indian as sketched above, and the seeming inability of the Indian people as a whole to take advantage of the educational opportunities now increasingly made available to them, it is time the "white" Canadian asked himself why the Indian has not improved his lot. The answer to this question - probably one of pure environment - should prompt us to ask further what duty or right, if any, we have to save the Indian from himself by forcing "white" values on the large but potentially self-destructive younger Indian generation.