

Just Little Old Lyndon B. Jefferson—Till You Dare to Question His War

"One man alone within his conscience—whether in the laboratory or the study or the classroom or on the street corner—is to be jealously guarded from the thousand who,

believing him wrong, would deny his right to search and his right to speak the truth."

—LBJ awarding medals to 11 scientists, Feb. 10

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15 CENTS

The Counterfeit Language of A Counterfeit Cause

When the Axis forces were driven out of Occupied Europe, and the Japanese out of Occupied Asia, no one worried about "winning" and "pacifying" the people. The defeat of their oppressors was enough to bring them into the streets cheering. This would also be the case in Vietnam if our government's propaganda line were true. If South Vietnam's people were the victims of a foreign invasion, if the Viet Cong were a mere tool of that invading Northern power, if they held the peasantry only by fear and terror, there would be no need to worry about winning the people. The only "pacification" program necessary would be military victory. There would be no need to woo the South Vietnamese with promises of social reform if they were suffering under a foreign yoke. If the Viet Cong were foreign oppressors, all we would have to do is drive them out.

Fooling Them and Fooling Ourselves

The Honolulu conference and the Humphrey tour are only fresh strands in an old web of falsehood. The weaving, like the war, began under the French. One reason an old Vietnam hand like Mansfield is so appalled is because he remembers how he himself was taken in. Just six months before Dienbienphu, Mansfield returned with the first of his Senate missions to report, "The military prospects of the non-Communist forces in Indo-China are improving." The French military then, like ours now, were exulting in body count. Gen. Cohn announced triumphantly that a search-and-destroy mission had killed 4,000 guerrillas and put the crack 320th division of the Viet Minh out of action. That was more than 12 years ago and we, like the French, are still winning in the headlines. This is as true in the field of "civic action" as of the purely military. The language out of Honolulu was once heard, too, from the French. In Lucien Bodard's *L'Humiliation* we hear the French General Chanson talking in 1950 of the need to wage "a people's war" and saying "We must conquer the farmers by their hearts." It's still hashish because we, like the French, have allied ourselves with the landlords, the compradores and the native profiteers. Any real social reform would seem to our only allies hardly worse than a Viet Cong victory. They'll fight to our last dollar, and then flee with it to the Riviera.

Every key word—whether pacification or democracy or revolution—has had to be given a counterfeit meaning to suit the real character of the forces with which we are allied. Ky in the Declaration of Honolulu promised "a genuine

Open Letter to the Soviet Embassy

Dear Ambassador Dobrynin:

In casting about for some way effectively to protest the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, I decided the best way to have an impact on Moscow and to reach the grapevine of the new youth in Russia would be publicly to inform you that I am boycotting all functions at the Soviet Embassy until these writers are free. The trial disturbed all who remember the many writers liquidated under Stalin, and feel deeply the need to fight every regression toward that ugly past. We had been told labor camps had been abolished; now we learn that four different varieties are in operation and that the two writers have been sent to a "strict regime" camp for hardened criminals. The use in this trial of Article 70 of the Russian criminal code, which deals with "anti-Soviet propaganda," recalls the way the equally vague provisions about "counter-revolutionary crime" were used under Stalin against the best in your society while tale-bearers flourished. The barring of the court to foreign newsmen and to friends and relatives of the accused made a farce of the claim that the trial was open. And the conduct outside the courtroom of Komsomol toughs recalled the part the Komsomol played in hounding Pasternak. This fine flower of your party youth resembles the Fascistic vigilantes with which progressives have sometimes had to contend in this country.

—I. F. Stone

social revolution." So did Diem. He launched a National Revolutionary Movement as early as October 1954. Ky promised democracy. So did Diem. He had Brother Nhu launch a Personalist Labor Revolutionary Party dedicated to realizing "democracy at the level where people are fighting and working." That was in 1956—the year he also abolished election of village chiefs and set up concentration camps for political opponents. After four years of such model revolutionary democratic innovations, the regime was in such trouble that Kennedy had to rush Johnson out there to bolster Diem and promise him more "military advisers" to deal with the growing unrest. That's when Johnson—in the overstatement of the century—called Diem "the Churchill of Asia." (To match that we suppose Humphrey will soon be calling Ky the Napoleon of the Pacific.) The cast of characters changes but the tactics remain the same. When promises of social reform turn out to be false, the South Vietnamese ruling clique turns in new promissory notes to the U.S. Treasury. From 1955 to 1960 only 1.4% of U.S. aid to Vietnam went to help

(Continued on Page Four)

Unreported Insights from the Senate's Vietnam Hearings . . .

KENNAN: We must not assume any Communist faction that comes into power anywhere in the world will function simply as the spineless executor of the orders of one of the great Communist powers . . . It is not so that when men call themselves Communists some sort of magic transformation takes place within them which makes them wholly different from other human beings or from what they were before. Feelings of nationalism, ordinary feelings still affect them to a large extent . . .

The effect of the Vietnamese crisis, conflict, is not to restore the unity between the Soviet Union and Communist China. I think things have gone too far for that. But it is to give their rivalry a form very undesirable from the standpoint of our interests and the interests of world peace, namely the form of a contest to see who can look the most anti-American, the most critical of our policies. Who can appear to be the most violent defender of what they call the National liberation movements . . .

What Would Kennan Do?

SEN. WILLIAMS: But had you been in a position of authority at the time what decisions do you think you would have made that were any different from those that were made?

KENNAN: No, I think probably if there was any point where we went wrong it was in putting fighting men ashore for purposes of combat . . . It has been my relief for many years, and it is a belief based on the fact that at one time I had to make a very careful study of our difficulties in connection with the intervention in Russia in 1918, it has been my belief that one should be very, very careful about our putting American forces ashore into a situation of this sort unless one can see clearly how and at (one) point one can get them out again.

SEN. WILLIAMS: Now, my next question is, recognizing that we are at this point, we do have a couple of hundred thousand men in there, what would you recommend that we do now?

KENNAN: I would recommend that we do not expand either our own commitment of men and resources to this conflict. That we try to limit the conflict rather than expand it, that we adopt in general a defense strategy and put ourselves in a position where we cannot be hurried, where we cannot be panicked, where we can afford to wait and let the logic of this situation then gradually sink in on our opponent, and I think then there is a possibility that with a little greater patience than we have shown thus far, possibilities for an acceptable resolution of the conflict may turn up. . . .

If We Guessed That Wrong In Business

"If I were a businessman and looking at a potential market and found such miscalculation [as in Vietnam], I would have to do something about it. I would not long survive."

—Gen. Gavin testifying, Feb. 8

When Tito (Like Ho) Was Our Enemy

"I have good reason to believe that Ho Chi Minh would resist the Chinese as much as he resists the Russians. The present chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was a Colonel commanding the troops in Trieste [in 1946] when we were having serious trouble there. I was Chief of Staff at Naples at the time. We had a plane shot down. Our outposts were being attacked. The man [Mihailovitch] we supported in World War II was court martialled and assassinated by Tito, and people were up in arms wanting to attack Tito.

"I think that the best thing we ever did was allow that government to come into being and demonstrate this man could bring in being an independent government of his own free of Stalin, and defying him. I am not at all satisfied that Ho Chi Minh might come to that and it would be a good government. No one has demonstrated to me that this is not so."

—Gen. Gavin testifying Feb. 8

SEN. CHURCH: Now, the NATO defense lines didn't stifle Communism, that is to say there are still Communist parties existing behind the NATO defense line, the largest political party in Italy is Communist, and a very formidable Communist party exists today in France, isn't that right?

KENNAN: That is correct.

SEN. CHURCH: And the reason that we don't have behind the NATO defense lines guerrilla wars in Western Europe, wars of national liberation in Western Europe, is because the economies have revived, there is internal cohesion, there is strong majority support for democratic institutions in these countries, isn't that the reason that Communism has not come to prevail behind the NATO defense line in Western Europe?

KENNAN: Absolutely . . .

SEN. CHURCH: . . . We failed to take into account how very different the underlying situation was in Asia and in Africa the ex-colonial regions of the world. Would you agree with that?

KENNAN: I couldn't be more strongly in agreement . . .

A Different Enemy

SEN. CHURCH: . . . Would it be your judgment that in these areas of the world the people may be less concerned or less fearful or less opposed to Communism as such as they are to imperialism, colonialism, which they have just experienced for two centuries in which with great sacrifice and afterwards with great struggle they have finally overthrown?

KENNAN: Oh, yes. The power of these various semantic symbols is entirely different in Asia than it is in Europe . . .

SEN. CHURCH: Is there freedom as we know freedom in most of the countries of Asia and Africa today?

KENNAN: There is not, and I recall reading only two days ago an article by one of our greatest authorities in this country on Chinese culture, in which he pointed out that the Chinese language has only one word which remotely resembles our word freedom and that conveys the sense of license and rather turbulent indiscipline.

SEN. CHURCH: Who was that?

KENNAN: John Fairbanks [in New York Review of Books, Feb. 17].

SEN. CHURCH: Now, in these countries which are mainly totalitarian, although we always like to include them in that phrase we use continuously—the free world—change if it is to come at all, will often have to come through violence, that is to say through revolution, rather than through the process of free elections.

Wilson's Russian Hopes

KENNAN: I am sure that this is inevitable in large parts of the world . . . free elections presuppose a certain state of mind in great masses of people. We had the same problem again in the Russian intervention. Woodrow Wilson hoped there might be some sort of elections in Russia and couldn't understand that this was a country so torn by violence, by terror, by fear, by the miserable experiences of the past that no Russian would have trusted another Russian to open the election results and read them fairly. . . .

KENNAN: *I think things will change in China, as they changed in Russia. They always do. A new generation of Chinese leaders will come. They could scarcely be worse in their attitudes toward us than the present ones, and as I look over the history of international affairs, it seems to me that the counsels of patience and restraint have been more effective as a general rule, than the counsels of violence and unleashing unlimited violence.*

Now there has been great confusion precisely in this respect about Hitler and the Nazis and no statement of this sort that you make can be without its exceptions. There are no universally valid generalizations here. There are, there can be, threats to the peace that have to be faced in the way that Hitler

Wasting Bombs and Bombers

SEN. SYMINGTON: What would you say about a pilot who would say, "I am a regular, but I do not see why I should risk it a couple of times a week bombing targets that we would not even look at in Korea, bombing empty barracks or bombing a bus. If they want us to risk our lives in a \$2 million airplane, why do they not give us a meaningful target to attack?" What would be your comment?

GEN. GAVIN: I would agree with the guy that said that absolutely.

SEN. SYMINGTON: We have lost scores of pilots over North Vietnam. The figure is classified. We have also lost over a half billion dollars in planes over there."

—Senate Foreign Relations Com. Feb. 8