

# PEACE NEWS LETTER

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In Memoriam

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jan. 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

"I have a dream . . ."



On April 4, 1967, Dr. King spoke at Riverside Church, New York City, for Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. In that address he said:

A time comes when silence is betrayal . . . The calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak.

Told by many that peace and civil rights should not be mixed, Dr. King said those who say this

have not really known me, my commitments, or my calling. Indeed, they do not know the world in which they live.

As though anticipating the process of negotiation in which the United States may soon be engaged, he counselled:

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and non-violence when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves.

He saw that the war was no accidental delinquency:

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit . . ."

Dr. King also accused the United States of being

The Greatest Purveyor of Violence in the World Today.

Dr. King's death came one year later, almost to the hour. The Apostle of Nonviolence was himself the victim of violence.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Dr. King said that the United States was the greatest purveyor of violence in the world, he was severely criticized. Yet the empirical evidence supported his words.

His death in the week before Holy Week had a strange and disquieting symbolism. It reminded us that Dr. King was a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Memphis was his Jerusalem; an assassin's bullet was his cross.

April 4, 1968 was a tragic day for America. The nation lost a true friend. Blinded by racism, many Americans have been unable to recognize what a real friend he was.

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VIBENIAM: This was the theme of the 28th Annual Institute of  
CRISIS IN International Relations under the sponsorship of the  
CONSCIENCE Syracuse Peace Council, April 5-6, 1968.

Sidney Peck, Associate Professor of Sociology at Case Western Reserve University, and peace activist in Ohio, gave the opening address under the shadow of the tragedy of Dr. King's untimely death.

Peck warned that President Johnson's renunciation of further Presidential aspirations does not mean that he has suddenly become a leader of the anti-war movement. When one reads his speech, one discovers that the rationale for American involvement in Vietnam is the same. We are involved to protect the vital national security of the United States in response to an international Communist conspiracy. The speech gives no indication that the United States intends to give up its "client states" in Asia, nor its military presence there, nor its efforts to contain China. The address signalled a tactical response to a profound military defeat and to rising domestic opposition to the war.

Peck insisted that the United States has been following a policy of "global militarism" in which it tries to function as the world's policeman. Thus U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not an error. The speech marked no break with that basic policy, and signalled an effort to achieve through negotiation what cannot be achieved on the battlefield. Such a "victory" is beyond reach. Indeed, all that there is to negotiate is terms for leaving Vietnam.

activists must resist the temptation to retreat into their own privacy at a time when it appears that mechanics for ending the war have been set in motion.

Mitchell Goodman, one of the five indicted in Boston for support of Draft Resistance (along with Dr. Spock, Rev. Coffin, Michael Ferber and Marcus Raskin), pointed out that the legal jargon of their indictment failed to acknowledge the very large size of the conspiracy. More than 3,000 persons had signed "A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority," and other thousands have signed statements of support for the five. The Press, however, has sought to minimize the size and nature of the groups encouraging Resistance.

Goodman went on to discuss the quality of American government, suggesting that mediocre and deteriorated human beings, "debased human beings," are attempting to rule us, and this is a part of the contemporary American Crisis.

Congressman John Dow of Rockland County was the third member of the Institute faculty, and reaffirmed his own opposition to the war, stressing that there is growing antipathy to the war among Congressmen and Senators, and holding out hope for the political system as a means of inducing change.

THE  
GOVERNMENT  
HAS TOPPLED

Dr. Arthur Waskow, member of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, addressing a conference co-sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and Princeton University in early April said:

"For the first time in our history a Government has toppled."

It has toppled because of the military defeat in Vietnam, the gold crisis, and internal strains that were "hothouses for simmering change."

"Vietnam has proved that a real social revolution, as in Vietnam, can push one of the great world empires in world history to the edge of crisis. The war also has heated all those social strains and disaffected elements that in 1965 were only simmering.

"There are three major sources of the strains. Some elements of the American establishment, which owns the first permanent war machine in United States history and the most overwhelming in human history, are discovering that this war machine is useless -- cannot win political victories." Parts of the establishment "would like to move toward a nonmilitary way of managing the empire."

"Secondly, some elements of the 'new class' of the educated, which has been spawned by the multiversities, the bureaucracies and the national government, have turned against these sponsors.

"Third, the 'underclass,' especially its black elements, but also the Spanish speakers and the Appalachians, has begun to turn its desperation from a burden into a weapon."

STORM            In recent months a number of occurrences indicate that  
WARNINGS       Latin America will be the coming center of great unrest.  
                 In Guatemala, the involvement of some Roman Catholic  
missionary priests and sisters with the "underclass" resulted in their  
being expelled from the country.

More recently it has become apparent that the Roman Catholic Church is in trouble in Argentina, and the trouble within the Church is related to the social and economic conditions in the country. One priest insists:

"The Roman Catholic Church in Argentina has about 15 years left.

"If, in that time, the church and the nation have not both undergone a deeply rooted social revolution, Argentina will become Marxist." (N. Y. Times, 4/21/68)

Will there be more Vietnams closer to home?

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