

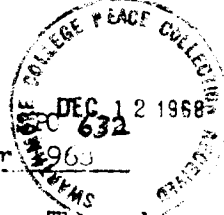
PEACE NEWS LETTER

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ON THE TRANSFER OF POWER

"Four years ago, the cheering had not stopped. Through-
out that autumn Johnson savored the adoration and the
physical tumult of the crowds. He campaigned ebulliently
across the country, a Banyanesque figure, rolling up 61
percent of the popular vote, the biggest majority in
history, against Barry Goldwater. He came in preaching consensus.
He goes out amid disunity, his personal popularity at a low ebb, the
nation divided by the most unpopular war in its history, half a
million men under arms in Vietnam. 28,000 dead and 180,000 wounded.
He is troubled by the fact that the pendulum is swinging to the right
—the liberal programs of the Johnson epoch may only have paved the
way for a new conservatism, for retrenchment and even repression."

—David Wise, "The Twilight of a President"
New York Times Magazine, Nov. 3, 1968

"Any examination of the problems facing President-elect Richard
M. Nixon yields at first, the obvious: Vietnam, the racial crisis,
the disengagement of youth from the traditional political process,
the budget, the arms race. Yet at the heart of the matter is some-
thing else.

"It is now clear to him and to those who are watching his de-
liberate, circumspect approach to this terribly delicate business of
transition that his chief problem—now, and for the next few years—
is to achieve for himself what the election denied him: the consent
of the governed; to fashion by force of personality and depth of
conviction what the people on Nov. 5 did not: a mandate to lead."

—Robert B Semple, Jr. "The Challenge
for Nixon....", New York Times,
Nov. 17, 1968

SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

In recent months, the World Council of Churches
(at its assembly in Sweden), the United Church of
Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ) have been among those religious bodies which
have affirmed not only their support of those believers who object
to participation in or support of all war, but their support of
those believers who object to participation in particular wars.

Vatican Council II issued Schema XIII on "The Church and the Modern World." This document urges military men to follow their consciences in wartime situations and to refuse to carry out any orders that they consider to be violations of natural law. "The spirit of those who do not fear to oppose those who order such things is worthy of the highest praise."

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops which met in Washington during the second week of November joined several Protestant groups in urging revision of the Selective Service Law to provide for the principle of selective conscientious objection under which an individual would have the right to refrain from participating in some, though not necessarily in all wars, on grounds of conscience.

Lieut. Gen. Lewis R. Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, challenged that part of the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter. He said,

"It's no longer a religious question, but a political one. If you say you object to all wars, I can't object to that. Religion is an individual thing.

"But what kind of religious belief have you got that causes you to reject some wars and not others? That doesn't seem to me to be a religious question but a political one."

Apparently Mr. Hershey, like others who have objected to pleas for legal recognition of Conscientious Objection, are not well acquainted with ecclesiastical history. There are basically three approaches which Christendom has followed with respect to war.

First, there has been the glorification of war, with war seen as a Crusade for righteousness. However, the church, which briefly adopted this view in the middle ages, early recognized the pervasiveness of sin and the dangers of self-righteousness. The mainstream of Christendom has traditionally rejected the notion that war is ever a Crusade.

Second, some segments of the church have been Pacifist. Indeed, perhaps for the first three hundred years, the bulk of Christians were pacifist. Pacifism has to be taken seriously in the church because of the teachings of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament.

Third, while the church in the main has abandoned Pacifism, it has not adopted the opposite notion that wars are positive goods. Rather, it has followed the concept of the Just War, of

which Selective Conscientious Objection is the modern version. Traditionally, Just War theory has given believers certain criteria by which to evaluate particular circumstances in which he is called to act by his government.

Edward LeRoy Long, Jr. writes: "No particular way of stating these conditions has been officially codified, but the same criteria appear among different theologians with sufficient regularity to provide the following principles.

- "a. All other means to the morally just solution of a conflict must be exhausted before resort to arms can be regarded as legitimate.
- "b. War can be just only if employed to defend a stable order or morally preferable cause against threats of destruction or the rise of injustice.
- "c. A third criterion of the just war specifies that such a war must be carried out with the right attitudes, "e.g. "the intention to attain or restore a just and durable peace."
- "d. A just war must be explicitly declared by a legitimate authority.
- "e. A just war may be conducted only by military means that promise a reasonable attainment of the moral and political objectives being sought.
- "f. The just war theory has also entailed selective immunity for certain parts of the population, particularly for noncombatants."

(See Long's War and Conscience in America, Phila., Westminster Press, 1968, pp. 22-33.)

The selective Objector to War faces a difficult task, for he must give careful study to the issues at stake in every particular conflict. His objection, writes Alan Geyer, "should be the result of a serious intellectual exercise in seeking out, analysing, and interpreting the available data on the war in question...it involves... judging the competence and wisdom of the policy-makers themselves."

"The Just War and the Selective Objector," Social Action, April 1966, p. 17.

WHO WILL Americans were under the impression that the halt in
NEGOTIATE the bombing of North Vietnam was predicated upon an
WHAT? agreement among the powers concerned as to who would
sit at the negotiating table and under what circumstances.
Apparently this agreement broke down, at least insofar as the United
States and its ally, South Vietnam is concerned.

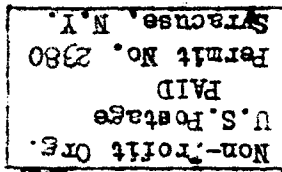
Obviously there are four parties involved in the conflict:
those already named, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation
Front. But who is to be the senior negotiator on each side?

Arnold P. Lav of the New York University School of Law notes:

"The South Vietnamese desire exclusive control of the
negotiations because they are well aware of the fact that the
nature of the struggle has always been and remains an internal
conflict of the people of Vietnam. If it be an internal
conflict and not international in scope, the United States
must realize that we have no right to be negotiating for the
South Vietnamese nor should we be fighting their internal
conflict for them." (N.Y. Times, Nov. 17, 1968)

But where would the South Vietnamese government be but for
the military power of the United States? Thus should the most
powerful partner call the plays for "our" side, or should the
partner which is allegedly sovereign in that part of Vietnam
south of the 17th parallel?

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