

their Father would arrive (wearing a stovepipe hat and a Prince Albert coat) and alight from his fancy carriage, which was driven by a chauffeur. After dinner the family would gather together and have a “home night” together. All of the children were expected to contribute to the program by using such talent as they possessed, and President Cannon would always read or teach them from the scriptures.

Espey said that his brother Collins used to enjoy telling a probably exaggerated anecdote about the time when he was walking down the street in Salt Lake City and met his father and said “hello.” President Cannon said “hello” in return and then stopped and asked the little boy what his name was. Collins replied, “I’m your son, Collins.”

Espey said that he considered his childhood a very happy time and one that seemed then and seems to him now not abnormal in any respect.



A VOICE AGAINST THE WAR

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Playing with my three-year-old son the other evening, I heard the broadcast announcing new record American deaths and casualties in Viet Nam. For the first time I realized with a chill that should the world stand so long, this bouncy, playful, and loving little boy might someday be asked, no commanded, to take up tools of destruction and kill or be killed in some distant country.

Our people have been accused (and rightly so) of the “blasphemy of indifference” with respect to race relations and general problems of social justice. While these issues are of grave importance and demand commitment and attention, it appears to me that the over-riding issue in this century is the prospect of war and peace. Although I don’t want to fall into the “trap” of interpreting statements of the Church, I believe you will find the statement by the First Presidency against Universal Compulsory Military Training very relevant to the problems we are faced with today. Quoting in part:

We shall give opportunity to teach our sons not only the way to kill but also, in too many cases, the desire to kill, thereby increasing lawlessness and disorder to the consequent upsetting of the stability of our national society. God said at Sinai, Thou shalt not kill.

We shall put them where they may be indoctrinated with a wholly un-American view of the aims and purposes of their individual lives, and of the life of the whole people and nation, which are founded on the ways of peace, whereas they will be taught to believe in the ways of war.

We shall make possible their building into a military caste which from all human experience bodes ill for that equality and unity which must always characterize the citizenry of a republic.

By creating an immense standing army, we shall create to our liberties and free institutions a threat foreseen and condemned by the founders of the republic, and by the people of this country from that time till now. Great standing armies have always been the tools of ambitious dictators to the destruction of freedom.

By the creation of a great war machine, we shall invite and tempt the waging of war against foreign countries, upon little or no provocation; for the possession of great military power always breeds thirst for domination, for empire, and for a rule by might not right.

By building a huge armed establishment, we shall belie our protestations of peace and peaceful intent and force other nations to a like course of militarism, so placing upon the peoples of the earth crushing burdens of taxation that with their present tax load will hardly be bearable, and that will gravely threaten our social, economic, and governmental systems.

We shall make of the whole earth one great military camp whose separate armies, headed by war-minded officers, will never rest till they are at one another's throats in what will be the most terrible contest the world has ever seen.

Should it be urged that our complete armament is necessary for our safety, it may confidently be replied that a proper foreign policy, implemented by an effective diplomacy can avert the dangers that are feared. What this country needs and what the world needs, is a will for peace, not war.

While I quoted only in part, the entire statement may be found in the *Improvement Era*, Vol. 49 (1946), page 76.

It would appear to me that the conscientious Latter-day Saint is faced with a very sensitive and perplexing question in the issue of peace and war. On the one hand we are told to "turn the other cheek," and "love our enemies" (and it's kind of hard to see how anyone can love his enemy and then kill him), and on the other hand we have the "glorification" of Moroni and other ancient military leaders who raised and defended the standard of liberty. In attempting to solve this paradox, I have come to the conclusion that the Lord under special circumstances condones bloodletting, but our cause had better be righteous.

This brings us to the question of the war in Viet Nam, which in the opinion of this writer is great miscarriage of justice on the part of the United States, on a par with Hitler's invasion of Poland.

Permit me to substantiate this somewhat blunt statement, but I believe that

the facts which are available paint a dismal picture as to Uncle Sam's commitment to even the vaguest image of a righteous cause in Viet Nam. Without entering into great detail, here is a short primer regarding the history of Viet Nam during the last twenty-five years.

From about 1940-45 North Viet Nam was occupied by China, down to the 16th parallel. South Viet Nam was occupied by Japan. At the Potsdam Conference the allies agreed that Viet Nam belonged to France and Bao Dai was returned to rule without consultation of the Viet Minh, who had led the struggle of liberation against the Japanese. However, Bao Dai lacked popular support and abdicated in favor of Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Viet Minh. The Viet Minh declared the country the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. On the whole, their declaration of independence was modeled after ours. After the French started to reoccupy the country in 1946, the guerilla war began, which in a sense has never really stopped since. In 1954, however, the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, thus ending the French-Indonesian war, at which point the French troops numbered over 250,000 well-equipped men. The Viet Minh controlled at least three-fourths of Viet Nam at that time. The Geneva Conference provided for the following accord: 1) a military truce, 2) withdrawal of all foreign troops, except a maximum of 684 military advisors, 3) temporary separation of North from South Viet Nam at the 17th parallel, with the latest date for reunification set for 1956, 4) free elections supervised by an International Supervisory Board (India, Canada, and Poland), continued civil liberties to be assured after the elections. Although the United States did not sign the accord, it did in fact sign an official endorsement and thus promised to act in accordance with them. Well, to make a long story short, despite repeated North Vietnamese requests for discussions of free elections, these were in fact not permitted. It is of interest to note that President Eisenhower and others have indicated that had Ho Chi Minh been a candidate, 80% of the population would have voted for him. (See Eisenhower's memoirs.) Instead a phony referendum (on par with the recent "free elections") was held where the only candidates were Bao Dai and Diem. Fifteen percent of the population voted and the dictatorship was installed; Ngo Dimh Nhu, the brother of Diem, was appointed head of the secret police. The rest of the sad tale of Viet Nam is a repetition of this basic betrayal of the Geneva accords. Although coup has succeeded coup (the tenth one in June 1963) and strategic hamlets (concentration camps) and other forms of police state methods were applied to stem the revolutionary tide and despite some 450,000 military "advisors" this basic fact of war has not changed; we have sided with cruel tyranny.

This issue then is a question of deepest pertinence to all individuals who believe in intellectual honesty. We as Mormons cannot afford to let it die on the heap of indifference. While most of us may not agree with a pacifist stand, we certainly must agree that unjust causes shall not get our support but our active opposition. The Nuremberg decisions created some firm guide lines with respect to individuals commanded to commit crimes against humanity. We as a people shall stand condemned by history if we refuse to act the better part of our conscience. That false notion of patriotism (chauvinism) will inevitably cloud the correct picture, but should not mislead us from assessing the problem