

the American government, any more than we were able to be morally "neutral" 12 years ago in the struggle between the people of Hungary and the Soviet Union. We do not support the violent *means* used by the NLF (National Liberation Front) and Hanoi, but we do support their *objective* in seeking the liberation of Vietnam from foreign domination.

We particularly emphasize our support for our friends in the Buddhist movement, who at great risk, and with little support from world opinion, have sought to achieve self-determination without using violence. It is particularly important for pacifists to maintain close contact with these elements in the revolutionary movements which quietly hold to nonviolence.

We do not romanticize nonviolence and know better than anyone else its setbacks. But we ask our friends who feel they have no choice but to use violent means for liberation not to overlook the problems they face. The violence of revolution destroys the innocent just as surely as does the violence of the oppressor. The American soldier in Vietnam is not the cause of American imperialism but only its agent.

For he, no less than the people of Vietnam he is oppressing, is a victim of American imperialism. And there are those who are innocent in a more obvious sense, such as civilians who are inevitably killed in the course of the struggle. Clearly one has to distinguish between the violence of the Americans—which is criminal—and that of the people of Vietnam—which, by contrast, is tragic.

Pacifist failures?

We have to consider the argument of those who criticize pacifists because they do not have an answer to the problem, for example, of South Africa. We know this and are haunted by our own limitations. But just as every

nonviolent movement in South Africa has so far failed, so has every violent movement. There are moments in history when we find situations that cannot be immediately resolved either by violence or by nonviolence.

In Spain, for example, there have been organized appeals for violent action against Franco for the past 20 years—and yet Franco still holds power. The murder of Martin Luther King is often cited as evidence of a final defeat of nonviolence. Surely it is no more or less so than the murder of Che Guevara is evidence of a final defeat for violence in Bolivia?

We remind all pacifists and all sections of the WRI that the greatest single contribution we can make to the liberation movements is not by becoming entangled in the debate over whether or not such movements should use violence, but by actively working to bring an end to colonialism and imperialism by attacking its centers of power in the West. For *these* are the factors which drive peoples towards the tragedy of violence and, for too many of the oppressed, seem to exclude the options they might otherwise have of more gradual and non-violent methods of social revolution.

One of the basic reasons why we hold to nonviolence, even when it seems to have failed or when it cannot offer a ready answer, is because the nonviolent revolution does not seek the liberation simply of a class or race or nation. It seeks the liberation of mankind. It is our experience that violence shifts the burden of suffering and injustice from one group to another, that it liberates one group but imprisons another, that it destroys one authoritarian structure but creates another.

We salute those people who are using non-violent action in their struggle despite the current trends and pressures toward violence. We also salute our brothers and sisters in the various liberation movements. We will work with them when it is possible—but without