

the earth. . . . Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

(2) Let peacemaking be the priority of our Christian witness so that we may be truly children of God in these difficult times.

(3) Support the efforts of the N.C.C. in an approach to the W.C.C. and Pope Paul VI in a common attempt to mobilize the worldwide Christian community in support of a just alternative to war.

The General Board of the N.C.C. adopts the above message and directs that it be made widely available to the members of all of our constituent churches. . . .

correspondence

"VIETNAM: CONTINUING CONFLICTS"

Forty Fort, Pa.

Dear Sir: Mr. Brownfeld's attempt to answer the critics (of whom I am one) seems to me to be sheer sophistry (*worldview*, December 1965). He assures us that the war in Vietnam is not a civil war. Yet a civil war is one in which citizens of the same state or nation are pitted against each other, and that is exactly the state of affairs in South Vietnam, where the war is being fought and where the Viet Cong and the Saigon Government (both South Vietnamese) are engaged in mortal combat.

The fact that both sides are receiving aid from the outside does not change the character of the struggle. Nor does the fact that Mao calls it a "People's War." It is quite natural that Mao should gloat over the fact that neighboring states (like North Vietnam) have adopted or (like the Viet Cong) are trying to establish a Communist way of life, but his approval does not prove that communism was not indigenous to those areas but was foisted upon them from the outside. Certainly communism was not forced on North Vietnam by Red China. Apparently Mr. Brownfeld has accepted as gospel truth the State Department's cliché that "no nation chooses communism of its own free will," which has been proven false on more than one occasion.

Mr. Brownfeld's view of civil wars (and that of our State Department as well) might also be put

in the form of a conundrum: "When is a civil war not a civil war? When there are Communists on one side." Then it becomes "international Communist aggression." But an ideology cannot commit aggression unless it is forced on a nation from the outside. This was not the case in Cuba or Yugoslavia, nor is it the case in Vietnam, for the Hanoi regime is just as much Vietnamese as the Saigon regime, and the Geneva Agreements intended Vietnam to be one country, not two. The fact that one segment of the population within a country uses force to impose its way of life on the rest of the population does not make it "international aggression." We had to fight a civil war ourselves to insure that the North's view of our Constitution would prevail and would be respected and observed in the South.

Mr. Brownfeld accuses us critics of naively accepting many myths. But he himself apparently accepts without question what Senator Fulbright has called "the master myth of the cold war," namely, that "the Communist bloc is a monolith," a myth which the Senator completely demolished in his brilliant speech in the Senate on March 25, 1964.

If space permitted, I should like to undertake to refute the other charges which Mr. Brownfeld has made against us critics. I shall have to be content, however, with what has been said thus far.

HAROLD W. THATCHER

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