

L O U I S I A N A

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Persecution Complex

What a paranoid people we are! Why do we fear the Communist threat so desperately? We should have the mental and physical health to treat communism, at worst, as a distraction, and at best as stimulating competition. Why do we cloud our minds with dark Puritan thoughts, and imagine ourselves in a deathlock with the devil?

In a recent editorial *The Washington Post* manifests this persecution complex in several ways. First of all, by pointing out that peaceful coexistence is a Communist weapon for eventual take-over. Within the certainty of their convictions, the Communists who want to use peaceful coexistence in this way are committing no more moral transgression than those who believe, as I do, that a moderately regulated capitalist system will eventually "take over" the troubled countries, given a chance to grow in a peaceful climate.

Secondly, you make a misleading comparison between the relation of North to South Vietnam and that of France to Germany. The former are fraternal twins, arbitrarily divided in 1954, and their kinship is based on ethnic and cultural ties much more valid than the temporary supremacy of Napoleon over the German states.

Third, you whitewash the secret rejection of the peace terms offered by North Vietnam in 1964. Even if it were in our best interests to reject the terms, this should have been done publicly, in the American tradition of an informed, participating public.

I am of a generation that has grown up in the flickering light of the United Nations, the promise of world peace and development through world law. My patriotism includes the belief that American policies should be honorable, and based on the American principles that have established our country's moral influence.

It is devastating to watch today's expedient choices, and to await their inevitable consequences. It is further disheartening that you deprive us of a more carefully critical appraisal.

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