

By Bronson P. Clark

There is a truly astonishing projection of 1984 about the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. Orwell warned us that the dreadful day would come when war would be called peace and peace, war. The Nobel Peace Prize committee's homage to the "talents and goodwill" of Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger for their skillful negotiations lasting more than three years led us at the American Friends Service Committee to wonder if it should be called the "Nobel Negotiating Prize." But Peace Prize?

The mind goes back to former recipients. Ralph Bunche, Albert Schweitzer, Philip Noel-Baker, Chief Luthuli, Dag Hammarskjold, Linus Pauling, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The names lift our hearts. These were people of high principle and persistent idealism, dedicated to peaceful resolution of conflict. The organizations that have won the prize—the International Red Cross, the Friends Service Council of Britain and the American Friends Service Committee, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF—are deeply devoted to the value of human life and the critical human need for a world at peace.

The 1973 recipients themselves saw the difference from the past. Le Duc Tho said he would not accept because there is no peace in Vietnam. Henry Kissinger, almost as if peace had come, stated that the award represents "a recognition of the central purpose of the President's foreign policy." He gave thanks to the President for the conditions which made it possible to bring the negotiations to a "successful conclusion."

What were those conditions? They included the myth that the President was seeking peace with honor. They included the unleashing of one of the most savage bombing raids in the bloody history of war, only last Christmas. They included the relentless bombing, secretly and then brazenly, of Laos and Cambodia. They included the hidden intent, after the negotiations, to recognize the Thieu Government as the sole legitimate government in South Vietnam, even though the accords, which Henry Kissinger helped write and the United States signed, were to recognize two governments in South Vietnam.

What was the "successful conclusion" of the negotiations? Even today, although United States soldiers and airmen are out of Vietnam, American technicians, working for American corporations, planes, bombs, guns and dollars are still there, fueling a war that President Thieu won't stop and cannot wage without United States weapons and money. I.T.T. and Lear-Siegler are performing training and operational functions for Thieu's air force. The accords called for freeing the civilian prisoners, but in Thieu's jails and prisons—and in exile—are the thousands of Buddhists, Catholics and neutralists who would help to restore peace to Vietnam. The accords called for democratic liberties in South Vietnam and the repression has never been so harsh as now. United States dollars and advisers help to maintain the odious national police and prison system that has imprisoned democratic hopes. The Quaker center that treats civilian war victims in South Vietnam is as crowded as ever with newly maimed peasants. No end to the tragedy is in sight.

Ironically, peace can come to Vietnam. Henry Kissinger can help bring it. He can work for implementation of article 4, chapter II of the accords, which reads, "The United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam." He can oppose the flow of United States dollars that finance President Thieu's war budget. He can demand that the Vietnamese stop sluicing local funds, generated by the sale of United States Food for Peace, to Thieu's military. He can urge that our Government stop paying for Thieu's police and prisons. He can call for even-handed recognition of the two South Vietnamese governments that were party to the accords that the United States signed. If the United States honors the accords, he can press President Thieu to honor them and initiate democratic liberties in South Vietnam.

If these things are left undone, how can peace come to Vietnam? How can the Nobel Peace Prize, which will be presented today, be given and accepted in good conscience unless they are done?

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