

The Denver Post devotes this space each Saturday to editorials submitted by readers. They reflect the opinions of the authors rather than those of this newspaper.

Our Vietnam Policy On Peace Anniversary

To The Denver Post:

NO, THE WAR IN Vietnam is not over. There is neither "peace" nor "honor." Fifty thousand Vietnamese soldiers have died since we signed the Paris peace agreement with three Vietnamese governments one year ago tomorrow. This is about the number of young Americans lost in combat in the entire war, yet Vietnam has only one-sixth the population of the United States, half of them children and teen-agers. How many civilians have been maimed, bereaved, newly orphaned?

The peace agreement provides the framework to establish peace in Vietnam. If our government would adhere to it, the Vietnamese could move from a military to a political struggle.

Article 9 states that the United States shall "not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people." Yet 80 per cent of Gen. Thieu's budget is appropriated by our Congress from our tax dollars. The Thieu government cannot stay in power without these funds. It can stay in power only with tight military control of its people and by continuing the war.

Thieu violates the peace agreement in many ways. Article 3 provides that the Vietnamese shall "stop all offensive (military) actions." Yet Thieu boasts of "capturing" 400 Provisional Revolutionary Government villages in the past year. Article 8 provides for the release of political prisoners, yet Thieu holds 200,000 political prisoners, six times the number estimated by Amnesty International for 11 countries combined including the Soviet Union. Among the prisoners are the neutral leaders who could establish the National Council of Reconciliation called for by the agreement. Without formation of this council there can be no free elections in Vietnam.

Article 11 provides for "freedom of the press, freedom of political activities, freedom of movement." But Thieu holds a million refugees who fled the bombing in 1972 behind barbed wire at gun-point or "resettled" in "secure" areas.

All this is done with our tax dollars and with the help of thousands of American "advisors." You and I are the ultimate authority in this democracy of ours. If our President will not carry out the terms of the peace agreement, then we must insist that our Congress do so by withholding funds from the Thieu government. Congress has the further responsibility under the agreement of granting funds for effective humanitarian reconstruction in Vietnam and "all of Indochina." (Article 21.)

Will you write to your senators and representatives? A leaflet explaining the agreement and suggesting how it may be saved in 1974 is available from the American Friends Service Committee, 2801 E. Colfax Ave., Denver 80206.

HELEN HENRY

Denver

Tears of Outrage

To The Denver Post:

I READ the story dealing with 1½ year old Roy Lee Aragon. At intervals I had to stop reading since the tears of outrage

Impact of Littleton Strike Decision

To The Denver Post:

OBVIOUSLY the teacher strike in Littleton caused District Judge Richard Greene some agonizing hours. His recent decision declaring this strike to be unlawful cited powerful evidence that public education was undergoing great stresses in Littleton. Unhappily, the purpose of a strike is to create just such pressures, pressures to force an accommodation with the Littleton School Board.

Certainly the judge was correct in finding that the rights of the students to a public education were being undermined. But where do the rights of the teachers begin? Suppose the Littleton School Board had decided to halve the salaries of the teachers. Would a strike subsequent to this arbitrary action, no different really than what the board has done, be unlawful?

This decision will initiate a rash of actions from other Colorado school boards that will attempt to re-establish these boards as benign (or not so benign) dictators over their respective teacher groups.

The concept of "board paternalism" is an anachronism that has slowly been eliminated in the last decade. Public education has vastly improved in direct proportion to the diminished paternalism of the school boards. Collective bargaining, which among other things, produced the index system, has reduced teacher turnover to, literally, retirement, pregnancy, firing or death. Encouraged by the judge's decision, conservative school boards will attempt to alter the power structure in the present arrangements with teachers. Now that teachers have no recourse with arbitrary edicts, we will see bitter and debilitating conflicts in most of our state's school districts. Judge Greene's decision, in effect, put the judiciary on the side of the school board.

Unlike working in the business world, a career teacher is trapped by school district hiring practices and is unable to transfer to another school system (as the judge indicated) without tremendous cuts in pay. A 25-year career teacher who switches from one Colorado district to another is reduced to 5 years on the pay scale. So, when an individual board unfairly changes the method of remunerating their teachers, the above described financial "entrapment" prevents the teacher from changing districts. The judge's decision thus deprives a teacher of the same rights of protest guaranteed other citizens. The teachers are once again second-class citizens.

I do not believe that Judge Greene's purpose was to destroy the progress that has been made in teacher-board relationships, or that he wants to see strikes and foment develop in other districts. Therefore I ask that he do whatever he can to "reissue" to teachers the privileges of other citizens.

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