

the G.A.O. found that USAID had still established no specific priority designation for the treatment of war-related casualties. A new USAID recommendation had been made, however, "that the project associated with civilian war-related casualties be placed in the lowest category, and that top priority be accorded longer term assistance projects."

Continuing inadequacies in counting civilian war casualties were again reported, with USAID estimates still based solely on admissions to Ministry of Health and U.S. military hospitals. Although such admissions show no significant decrease from previous years, G.A.O. found cut-backs in resources allocated for the care of civilian war casualties. . . .

Yet little public or professional attention, apart from the Senate Subcommittee, has been paid to the obvious inadequacies of government actions and policy in the medical sector. Although USAID has responded with reluctance to public scrutiny, numerous investigations and hearings have revealed severely censorious data regarding both its activities and policies. . . .

Over the past two decades, disaster research has provided fairly reliable methods for disaster planning. Yet USAID has apparently undertaken no such efforts regarding civilian war casualties; on the contrary, it has repeatedly discounted all casualty estimates as "mere speculation." The attempts by the Senate Subcommittee to determine a reliable casualty projection and a base for rational action are dismissed as "having no valid basis or methodology." Paradoxically, USAID continues to publicize detailed statistics regarding Viet Cong terrorism, without reservations about their accuracy, although such figures are collated from "incidents reported daily to the National Police of South Vietnam, who record assassinations, abductions and wounded." . . .

United States medical assistance efforts were minimal until a National Security Council directive of 1962 urged increased aid as part of the counterinsurgency program of our foreign policy in Indochina. From that time onward, there are repeated exhortations to "the other war," to "winning the hearts and minds of the people." According to USAID's consequent policy principles as described by Humphreys, medical aid would be delivered through the Ministry of Health except in rare instances, and priority would be given to such aid as created the sharpest impact upon the people to win their loyalty. Thus the ethics of medical relief were delivered as hostages to bureaucratic protocol, on one hand, and to psychological strategy aimed at winning support for a specific regime, on the other.

Other military physicians corroborate and defend such policies without questioning the contradictions involved, hailing medical care as the universal language of altruism and, at the same time, as a powerful psychological tool for military purposes. . . . Clearly enunciated, such a policy of ideological triage

has permeated official medical assistance programs; it has also engendered an accepted and officially acceptable policy of neglect. . . .

The agony of Vietnam is the agony of innocents—of noncombatant civilians, mostly women and children. Whether or not we choose to acknowledge such suffering, it is the agony of the American people as well.

## correspondence

### STILL MORE ON "RHETORIC"

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir: Ernest Lefever's analysis of "Reckless Rhetoric and Foreign Policy" (*worldview*, November, 1970) may yet stimulate a meaningful dialogue on the serious issues he raised, but the responses of Richard Neuhaus and James Smylie in the February issue can only be regarded as disappointing. Both accuse Dr. Lefever of employing the type of rhetoric he claims to deplore and suggest he help us all to begin by reforming himself. It takes no particular perspicacity to note that they did not heed their own advice, when Mr. Neuhaus speaks of hoping to rescue "something of Mr. Lefever's reputation as a man of integrity" and Professor Smylie discusses "Lefever's Joe McCarthyism." . . .

In defending Martin Luther King's Riverside Church speech of April, 1967, which Dr. Lefever had singled out for detailed analysis, Mr. Neuhaus lays down several specific challenges to Dr. Lefever. He says that Dr. Lefever is wrong, first of all, in calling it "little-remarked" and suggests, in retrospect, that it was probably one of Dr. King's "three most-remarked speeches." I searched *Time* and *US News and World Report* for that period and found no singular mention of the speech. Both did report on Dr. King's anti-Vietnam policy proclamations at the Chicago rally of 25 March and on his presence at the mass demonstration in New York on 15 April and his sharing the anti-Administration platform with Stokely Carmichael. The Executive Director of the Society for Religion in Higher Education distributed King's speech to members of the Society in May of 1967 partly because it did not receive adequate press coverage. . . .

. . . I was the author of a paper at the CRIA consultation to which Mr. Neuhaus and Dr. Lefever both refer in presenting their assessments of that speech. . . . I pressed my point of view with Mr. Neuhaus following break up of the formal discussion. We were joined by Dr. Lefever, and a discussion of the origin as well as the factual basis of Dr. King's speech ensued. In his letter, Mr. Neuhaus challenged Dr. Lefever "to produce any evidence of his slurring remark" to the effect that the Riverside speech was ghost written. I doubt that it is very important to analysis of the content or even the intent of Dr. King's speech, but it was in that particular encounter that both Dr. Lefever and I first learned from Mr. Neuhaus that he was among the principal authors of

the speech. The "evidence" admittedly is hearsay.

On the specific issue of King's charge that "so far we may have killed a million of them [Vietnamese—probably South Vietnamese, although the antecedent of "them" is ambiguous; but it could not be interpreted from the text to refer to Southeast Asians as Mr. Neuhaus now implies]," Mr. Neuhaus disavows Dr. Lefever's ascription to him of the words "We in the Movement make up facts" to suit our needs." The words Mr. Neuhaus used, as I remember them, were essentially as Dr. Lefever has quoted him; but they struck me as words of impatience calculated to dismiss what must have sounded to Mr. Neuhaus like a trivial concern for evidence or authentication. Then, as now, Mr. Neuhaus evidently believes that the subject requires no further examination. . . .

Mr. Neuhaus' defense of Dr. King's rhetoric and figures looks very much like Charles R. Garry's posture in defending the charge that 28 Black Panthers have been murdered by the police. Mr. Garry knows in his heart of hearts that this is a conservative figure just as Mr. Neuhaus knows about Vietnam. Mr. Garry called Edward Jay Epstein a "white racist" on the David Frost Show for daring to ask for the sober, supporting evidence. Mr. Neuhaus believes that Dr. Lefever occupies a position on the "extreme Right" because he has challenged, like Mr. Epstein in the other context, a "reckless" use of data, half truth, and pretension to factual accuracy in behalf of a deeply held conviction. Mr. Garry and Mr. Neuhaus are passionate advocates and preachers; rhetoric is their stock in trade. It is generally not permissible to talk back to them, and to do so is to invite *ad hominem* response.

Professor Smylie's response to Dr. Lefever is more unexpected and therefore all the more disappointing. There can be no doubt that Professor Smylie, like Mr. Neuhaus, holds a different perspective on recent foreign policy from Dr. Lefever. But Professor Smylie is an historian, analyst, and teacher more familiar with the arts of the library and the classroom than of the courtroom or the street demonstration.

Two shocking assertions are contained in Professor Smylie's letter. The first and dominant one is that Dr. Lefever is guilty of "Joe McCarthyism," which, according to Professor Smylie, consists of charging that opponents or critics "have been: (1) duped, (2) used, (3) have given aid and comfort to the enemy, (4) and are therefore in danger of treason" . . . and that their case (5) "cannot stand on its own merit" and (6) makes them "guilty by association." . . . That McCarthy was guilty of this kind of reckless rhetoric is obvious, but his basic abuse was the abuse of procedure and of power not merely of language. To charge Dr. Lefever with "Joe McCarthyism" is not only to commit a contemporaneous abuse of language (or "betrayal" as Paul Ramsey might say) and an unconscionable insult to Dr. Lefever for challenging currently fashionable discourse, it is to commit a deeper historical insult and abuse of memory by forgetting that McCarthy's threat lay in his recklessness with procedure and with power.

In his second shocking assertion, Professor Smylie underscores how much we may have forgotten not only about Joseph McCarthy and the way he embodied a danger to our traditions and institutions, but about the character of those traditions and institutions. This is his assertion that "the burden of proof against charges made in *In the Name of America* rests upon those who have involved us so deeply in Southeast Asia." Certainly, for individuals, Professor Smylie would not endorse such a principle of "guilty until proven innocent" . . .

The divisions we have recently experienced in our body politic and in our foreign policy consensus *will not* be overcome easily or quickly, as Dr. Lefever's, Mr. Neuhaus', and Professor Smylie's differences amply demonstrate. Possibly they *should not*, since the divisions have been deep and fundamental. They *cannot* be overcome unless we all put passion in the service of truth and subordinate to due process in our public policy formulation. This was the essence of Dr. Lefever's plea.

Robert A. Cessert

### "THE BETRAYAL OF LANGUAGE"

Palos Park, Ill.

Dear Sir: Thank you for Paul Ramsey's lesson in semantics ("The Betrayal of Language," *worldview*, February). It is helpful to learn that the terms "mercenary" and "systemic violence" are "category-mistakes" (one wouldn't want to make that sort of mistake in relation to Vietnam). I suppose "the obfuscations of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee" is a phrase used with categorical precision since it is the author's. I wonder if he would regard "Vietnamization" as a category-mistake? It was also enlightening to learn that it is reckless "rhetoric" to link the Vietnam war to domestic issues. The complicated argument advanced for the requirement that they be separated amounts to little more than a preference on Ramsey's part.

However, Paul Ramsey is not a semanticist; he is a moralist. The most interesting sentence in the whole article is this one: "Perhaps the Vietnam war was wrong from the beginning, and became a disproportionate commitment at 'X' point in time." I can recall Ramsey defending the Johnson decision to bomb North Vietnam with arguments about proportionality at a CRIA seminar in 1966. Does he still see it as a just war? Did it become disproportionate at some "X" point in time? If so, what should the Christian's response be? These questions are worth discussing if Ramsey will discuss them.

In the current issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, Howard Moody calls Paul Ramsey an "armchair analyst" (in relation to another problem). I must say this disappointing excursion into the niceties of Vietnam debate seems to support Moody's judgment. Rev. Keith A. Leach

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Sir: In an article in the October, 1969 *worldview* ("Human Rights and the Peace Movement"), I remarked that we had "turned a dangerous corner" when Martin Luther King established the linkage in his mind between