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Letters to The Times

Protest Urged on Vietnam

Americans' Duty to Speak Out Against Atrocities Stressed

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

It seems now, from your correspondent (issue Sept. 9) that the "special forces" which have been arresting, beating and killing Buddhists, school children, and others in South Vietnam have been doing so with money, arms and training given them by our own C.I.A.

Yet it also seems, according to the same correspondent, that the "regular monthly payment" to these forces is to continue. Indeed, our whole military and economic program in South Vietnam must apparently go on because, in the words of our President, "it would not be helpful at this time" to reduce it.

The recent events in the major cities of South Vietnam are horrible enough. They are scarcely more so, however, than the less publicized but more extensive brutalities and atrocities which for several years the Government of South Vietnam, in the name of anti-Communism, has been committing against its people in the countryside.

To an American what is particularly disturbing is the silence of most rank-and-file Americans. We seem oblivious to the extent of our own responsibility for what is happening. Apparently we scarcely realize that in a very real sense the Government of South Vietnam is our government, inasmuch as we were its primary creators, and without our massive support it could not possibly do what it has done; indeed, it would long since have collapsed.

The excuse of Germans under Hitler was that they did not know what was happening, and could not have prevented it if they did. We as responsible citizens living in a democracy cannot use this excuse. When will we raise the voice of humanity and justice to say: "This is immoral. It must stop?"

DERK BOBBE

Philadelphia, Sept. 11, 1963.

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