

Source: “I Oppose the War in Vietnam”

Author: excerpts from a speech by MLK, published in a newspaper

Web Address: <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/another-opinion-i-oppose-war-vietnam#>

Rationale for why this is a worthwhile source: This is a primary source in which Martin Luther King explains why he opposes the Vietnam War. A lot of the ideas that he explains are exactly how people feel about the Vietnam War today and they’re also the same arguments people use today to explain why they’re opposed to wars now. His ideas are still really relevant today.

Notes:

- I. Impact of Vietnam at Home
 - a. Money is being spent on the war and far less at home on welfare programs
 - b. Poor people are getting hurt at home by this war, both white and black
 - c. Bombs in Vietnam are actually felt at home
- II. Welfare Program vs. the War
 - a. Welfare program is very cautious and has a lot of supervision
 - b. Welfare program constantly looks for results
 - c. Billions are spent on the war with little oversight
 - d. 5 times more spent on the war than on welfare programs
 - e. If budgets were reversed, generals would quit
 - f. \$322,000 per kill in the war, \$53 per person in welfare programs
- III. Vietnam and Morality
 - a. America is rich and powerful
 - b. Built computers and telescopes
 - c. Amazing engineering feats
 - d. GNP of \$780 billion
 - e. Power has made the US arrogant
 - f. Arrogant to think we can teach other nations but can’t learn from them
 - g. “divine, messianic mission to police the whole world”—arrogant idea
- IV. Black soldiers vs. Blacks in the south
 - a. Arm soldiers in Vietnam but don’t protect their relatives at home
 - b. African Americans are 100% soldiers but only 50% citizens at home
 - c. Black men have only half of what white people do at home—housing, income, etc.
 - d. Twice as many black men in combat in Vietnam, twice as many black men have died in combat (by proportion)
- V. Another way to use our power
 - a. Country has not yet used all its power to end poverty or racism
 - b. More power leads to more danger if the soul isn’t also growing
 - c. Must use our strength responsibly

- d. Power and arrogance will corrupt us
- e. "Great nation" must be a "compassionate nation"
- VI. Why oppose Vietnam?
 - a. Loves America
 - b. Speaks out against America with sadness
 - c. Desire to see the country as a "moral example" for the world
 - d. Disappointed with the current America
- VII. Next steps
 - a. Must organize as "effectively as the war hawks"
 - b. Must "spread the propaganda of peace"
 - c. Combine civil rights issues with the peace movement
 - d. Shake the foundations of the nation

Method: It makes sense to take notes on this source using an Outline since MLK's ideas are really neatly organized and move from topic-to-topic. I also don't want to lose any of his core ideas so it's good to outline everything.