

Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead

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In 1964, shortly after becoming the world heavyweight boxing champion, the boxer Cassius Marcellus Clay (named after a white abolitionist by that name) took the name Muhammad Ali, renouncing what he called his slave name. Two years later, the outspoken fighter caused outrage in the media when he petitioned for

exemption from military service in Vietnam and then, when denied, refused to be drafted. As a result of his protest against the war, Ali's title was revoked and he was sentenced to a five-year prison term. Ali's battle against the sentence went to the U.S. Supreme Court and was not reversed until 1971. In 1966, Ali spoke in Louisville, Kentucky, his home town, about the reasons for not fighting in Vietnam.

Muhammad Ali Speaks Out Against the Vietnam War (1966)⁵

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No, I am not going ten thousand miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would put my prestige in jeopardy and could cause me to lose millions of dollars which should accrue to me as the champion. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is right here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality. . . .

If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to twenty-two million of my people, they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. But I either have to obey the laws of the land or the laws of Allah. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail. We've been in jail for four hundred years.

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The journalist Jonathan Schell was one of the first journalists to expose the reality of the war in Vietnam. *The Village of Ben Suc*, his first book, began as a series of articles for *The New Yorker* magazine. Unlike so much reporting of the time, Schell gave voice to the people of Vietnam, in whose name the war was allegedly being fought.

Jonathan Schell, *The Village of Ben Suc* (1967)⁶

During the Phu Loi camp's first week, I spent several afternoons there interviewing villagers from Ben Suc through an interpreter. Before I asked them any questions,