

# CHALLENGE

*The Revolutionary Newspaper*

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY monthly

## GI's Are Fighting....

## AGAINST The US Army

"IF IT HAD BEEN ME OUT THERE I WOULD HAVE SWUNG MY RIFLE AROUND AND SHOT CALLEY (the Company Commander) RIGHT BETWEEN THE GOD DAMN EYES."

Said by the father of Paul Meadlo, one of the GI's involved in the My Lai massacre.

Many of us are here in Ft. Lewis waiting to be shipped to Nam. We've all been to the Character Guidance classes and VietNam orientation sessions where everybody from the CO to the chaplain try to tell us why we have to fight in Nam. The chaplain says it's because we're protecting freedom and democracy, the CO may say to stop communist aggression, and the DI will say it's because you're told to.

Except for what the DI says, most of the reasons that we're given are lies to cover up the real reason we're going to Nam. The fact is that big businesses are making huge profits from investments in Vietnam. US businesses that had investments in Vietnam made over 3 billion dollars in profit in 1967. This isn't particularly surprising since the Maximum daily wage in Saigon is \$1.4 a day. The US Army is in Vietnam to protect Vietnam for the rich, and workers and students like us who get drafted are supposed to do their dirty work. We are supposed to fight other workers, students, and farmers who are trying to kick out their US and local bosses.

The US Army is used in other ways to hold down Asian workers. When the Saigon longshoremen went on strike in 1968, US troops were ordered to scab on them; and when 14,000 Okinawan workers at a US base went on strike, MPs were used to break up their picket lines, and GI's were also ordered to scab. This was only 2 months ago, on January 19. The Army has been used in similar ways in this country, like in 1968, when the Army was used to suppress striking sanitation workers in Memphis.

But more of us are seeing that the war and the Army are not in our interest, but that anti-war actions are. For instance, one day when I was in basic training, we were sitting around the barracks. When we heard the news on the radio that students at the University of Washington had kicked out ROTC recruiters, everyone in the barracks began to cheer. We are seeing that our real enemy is not the Viet Cong, but the US ruling class (the handful of rich corporation owners and bankers who run this country for their own profit) and the brass who run their Army for them.

In Nam, guys not only seeing through the brass's bullshit, but they're fighting back more and more militantly. Even the ruling class newspapers reported an incident in October, 1969 - that GI's in the 9th Div. attacked an officers barracks with handgrenades, and killed a lieutenant. Guys in the 1st Airborne were taking potshots at the battalion CO as he flew overhead in a helicopter. A company that a buddy of mine was in was ordered to massacre a village - the whole company just sat down and refused to fight. Co A of the 196th Infantry Brigade was well publicized in the papers for refusing direct orders to assault a hill. Hundreds of officers have been shot and killed by GI's out in the boonies and are reported "killed in action." GI's have attacked officers clubs. In 1968, 6,000 GI's deserted; 23,000 are still at large. In the same year, 10% of the Army, or 1,000,000 GI's went AWOL. In one month alone, May 1968, over 700 GI's went over to the other side. Even the vast majority of GI's who haven't openly defied the Army, hardly any want to fight. They go out on missions, and try like hell to avoid contact with the VC. They shoot artillery 500 meters short, so they can warn the VC and avoid contact, instead of aiming at their position and trying to kill them.

## RACISM

Because we are beginning to see that this war is not in our interest and resistance to it is growing, the bosses and brass are scared and they are trying to weaken our resistance by dividing us. The main tactic that they always use is racism. Black workers in the US are superexploited, and this is carried over into the Army. While black people make up 11% of the population, they account for 41% of the combat troops, and over 20% of the deaths. Because of this, Black GI's are usually more militant and are quicker to fight against the brass. 150 Black GI's at Fort Hood refused to go to Chicago in August, 1968 to put down anti-war demonstrators at the Democratic Convention. Also in August, 1968, GI's in Long Binh Jail (LBJ Stockade) burned it down. Most of the prisoners were Black GI's who had refused orders or gone AWOL.

The brass tries to make white soldiers afraid of Black soldiers because they are afraid of what will happen if Black and white soldiers begin to fight back together. For example, the papers played up this fight they had at Camp Pendleton, saying it was Black and white GI's fighting each other, and trying to push racism among the white GI's. But a Marine I talked to said it was "everybody fighting against the NCO's"





The brass also tries to use racism against the Vietnamese people - to make them sound like animals or subhumans, encouraging us to look on them as "gooks." They are afraid that we will see that the Vietnamese are workers and farmers and students just like ourselves who see that the only way that they can improve their living conditions is to kick out the US and Vietnamese bosses that oppress them now. Racism only serves the bosses. Only the bosses profit from the war in Vietnam, and will keep profitin' over our dead bodies, until all working people, Black, white, brown, yellow, unite to get rid of these bloodsuckers.

### ANTI-COMMUNISM

Another tactic used by the brass to defeat the GIs' growing resistance is anti-communism. Our CC claimed that the Communists terrorize Vietnamese farmers and workers into supporting them. The fact is that Viet Cong terror is usually directed against village chiefs and landlords that have been oppressing farmers for many years, landlords who take 10-75% of the farmers' crops in "rent" - and that most Vietnamese support the Viet Cong because of this.

The brass also tell us that communists are cruel and inhuman. To bring this point home, when I took infantry AIT, they set up a simulated Viet Cong prison camp. If we were captured on the Survival, Escape, and Evasion problem, we had to go to this compound. At this camp, the prisoners were really harassed and those who ran the compound tried to get the prisoners to sign this sheet of paper but they wouldn't let them read it. Most of the guys in the compound said that it wasn't much different from the first two weeks of basic. All this was to prepare in case we got captured by the VC, and make us afraid of the VC. The funny thing about all this is that we stole a copy of the paper they were trying to get us to sign, and it said something like, "I am an American soldier and was drafted against my will, and don't want to fight this imperialist war." Most of us didn't see anything wrong with signing this paper because we pretty much agreed with what it said.

Communists in Vietnam and communists here say that war, racism, bad living and working conditions are caused by capitalism. We also say that the only way to end war, racism, and bad living and working conditions is to smash the bosses government thru revolution and set up a workers government. We as communists - members of Progressive Labor Party - say that all working people must unite and overcome the divisions which have been created between them, between black and white, between men and women, in order to smash the bosses. This is why the rich ruling class are afraid of communists and try to get working people to regard communists as their enemy.

## VIET-NAM

What kind of "democratic" government are we fighting for in South Vietnam? Ky, the vice-President of the phony Saigon government made a statement saying that his only hero was Hitler. He's also one of the top dogs in Saigon's gambling syndicate.

One of the main reasons they give for US being in Nam is "agression by North Vietnam." But the Geneva Agreements in 1954, after the Vietnamese threw out the French, said that the country would be divided temporarily for 2 years, and then there would be reunification of North and South and free elections through the whole country. The United States refused to let these elections take place, because they knew that Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the war of resistance against the French, would win. The United States set up Diem as a dictator in the South in 1954. The US government paid his bribes, his secret police, and his Army to keep him in power. Many farmers had won land reform in the fight against the French. When Diem came to power, he tried to restore the oppressive landlord system. The people fought back, and a guerrilla war gradually began. In 1960, the people in the South formed the National Liberation Front (Viet-Con) to organize the rebellion. In 1965, the United States started bombing North Vietnam. It wasn't till after this that NVA units started fighting. So even if you considered North and South Vietnam as separate countries, the agression still hasn't come from North Vietnam. It's come from the US government.

## WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE LABOR?

Progressive Labor Party is a Marxist-Leninist (communist) Party. Its members are workers, student and soldiers who join with their fellow workers, students, and soldiers to fight for better wages and working conditions, improved social services and an end to the War in Viet Nam.

We believe that the gains we win will be taken from us by the bosses as long as they control the government, and that workers and their friends must make a revolution, set up their own government that is responsive to their needs --- Socialism.

For More Information About The  
Progressive Labor Party read  
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