

ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

We last discussed the war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement at a resident NC meeting April 6, immediately following the March 25-26 Days of Protest. There has since been a major escalation of the war.

Vietnam

The White House has officially announced that another 100,000 men will be added to the forces in Vietnam by the end of the year, and it is unofficially admitted that 500,000 more is a likely figure. Bombings in the north and south reached a new tonnage intensity on May 13 and again later in June. The official admission of U.S. troop actions in Cambodia and Laos, and unofficial admissions of action in Thailand have raised the specter of a massive Asian land war. The Johnson administration attempts to give the impression of being more solidly behind Ky than ever, as more and more Vietnamese turn against him.

This escalation has paralleled the refusal of the Vietnamese in the cities to lend even the appearance of stability to the Ky dictatorship. The Buddhists and students keep demonstrating, Danang and Hué have had to be virtually occupied by Ky's troops, a series of strike actions by the workers were effective enough for the first time to significantly slow down American supplies, and the army of south Vietnam was rendered totally incapable of spending any of its time fighting the army of the National Liberation Front.

As this has been occurring over the last ten weeks, and as the objective threat of an eventual extension of the conflict with China has increased, Brezhnev and Kosygin, the international coalitionists, continued to ignore China's fears and berate LBJ's "advisors" for leading him into such errors. This was the focal point of the United Secretariat statement.

The Antiwar Movement

One of the marks of the anti-Vietnam-war movement has been its capacity to respond in one form or another, rather than retreat, at each new stage of the imperialist escalation. The last ten weeks have been no exception.

Demonstrations have continued around the world, especially in Japan, Belgium, Germany, and in this country. A new layer of protesters have been brought in through a wave of teach-ins, read-ins, and a series of anti-napalm demonstrations ranging from Redwood, California, to Brooklyn. The large anti-draft rallies at Madison, Chicago and City College of New York in late May were aimed at the antiworking-class anti-Negro bias of the draft system, and in many cases against the war.

"Quickie" demonstrations, often organized on a few hours notice, in opposition to the visits of administration figures

to the major cities and campuses, have become standard. It has become next to impossible for a high-ranking cabinet member to speak anywhere without being met by a picket line or a walkout of the antiwarriors in the audience.

Because of this, it now is White House policy to announce these visits only a few hours in advance. The walkouts at university commencements have been marked by a large element of spontaneity. Students have decided to join the action once several of their friends began. For instance, the walkout of over 150 in opposition to McNamara at the New York University commencement was begun by only six students and faculty members organized beforehand.

The Harris and Gallop polls have continued shifting against Johnson's policies and have indicated a growth in the number of citizens who favor an immediate pullout. This general attitude has been reflected in the friendly response to public sales of the Newsletter, petitions for withdrawal collected on the streets or in shopping centers, and leaflets passed out by marchers as they go through shopping areas.

In April Southern Christian Leadership Conference [SCLC] and Southern Conference Educational Fund [SCEF] made official statements of opposition to administration policies, and Congress of Racial Equality [CORE] demanded immediate withdrawal. SNCC's [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] May 23 letter rejecting the invitation to the White House conference on civil rights described U.S. policy as racist intervention against colored people. Adam Clayton Powell described as Hitler-like the racially biased draft apparatus. And the new national chairman of SNCC, Stokely Carmichael, stated on a national television interview that while he of course would not advise Negro GI's to stop fighting, if he were in Vietnam he would recognize that he was fighting the wrong war, that the real war is at home, and that he would act on his conscience.

The political theme of withdrawal is the dominant theme at a growing number of actions.

The Struggle in the Movement

The antiwar movement has continued to divide between right and left around the question of how to mobilize this ever-increasing sentiment against the war, and for what purpose.

The coalitionists drag their feet in every way to oppose regular and deepening extraparliamentary mobilizations that have become the periodic focus of the entire international antiwar movement. In this they are trying to stand against the tide. The large mobilizations with a tone of sharp opposition, conflict and compete more and more with the time needed for work to elect "peace" candidates. Unlike revolutionists, the coalitionists do not see the antiwar movement, and espe-

cially its militant wing, as an ally and a complement to socialist electoral campaigns. Rather, they see the militant wing and its continual call for action as a competitor for the allegiance of those opposed to the war and a growing embarrassment to peace candidates.

This can be seen in the evolution of the National Coordinating Committee [NCC] since March 26 and the unfolding of the fight that originated in the New York Parade Committee to have another International Days of Protest.

At its May 4 meeting the New York Parade Committee, over the opposition of the Communist Party and SANE, voted to call an International Days of Protest from August 6-9. The Parade Committee staff immediately put out a mailing and by the next meeting, May 18, favorable responses were already arriving. On May 23, at a public meeting for Isaac Deutscher and A.J. Muste, Dave Dellinger announced the August 6-9 International Days of Protest.

The NCC had been strongly opposed to calling a day of protest during the summer. The May 19 issue of "Peace and Freedom News" went so far as to inform its readers that the New York Parade Committee had reversed its decision. A naive young leader of a mid-western antiwar committee, which follows the lead of the NCC, wrote a plaintive letter to the Parade Committee pointing out that a summer International Days of Protest would interfere with work for "peace" candidates, and that it would be impossible not to participate in the protest actions as the rank-and-file members of the committees would want to do so, and would the New York Parade Committee please reconsider.

Meanwhile, at a June 4 press conference in New York, with no consultation or polling of its membership, Frank Emspak announced that the NCC was endorsing Robert Scheer, Ted Weiss, and Herbert Aptheker for Congress. This is the NCC which cannot call for withdrawal because it is "a loose coordinating body which does not take a policy position on issues in dispute in the peace movement."

Finally, at a June 18 conference of 175 of the activists and leaders of the antiwar and radical organizations in New York, the August 6-9 International Days of Protest were reconfirmed. The coalitionists who saw this conference as their best chance to reverse the call for the International Days of Protest could not stand up to the general sentiment of the New York activists or the large favorable response from around the country and world. There was no opposition expressed to holding the action, and a representative from the NCC office in Madison suddenly appeared and announced they had decided to endorse and "coordinate" the action. It was decided that the New York action would feature several feeder marches (some organized by the Bread and Puppet Theater) into Times

Square, where a massive rally would be held. Immediate withdrawal will be the major political theme and none of the other slogans will contradict it or cut across the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination.

Now our central task around the country is to make the International Days of Protest as large and united and militant as possible.

To a large degree the position in which the militant wing of the antiwar movement finds itself is the reverse of that at the Washington convention. It is the coalitionists who are opposed to the action and direction and themes that have been decided by the majority of the activists and committees around the country. The militants are trying to maintain a united front and build actions while the coalitionists forced into verbal support are dragging their feet. Under these circumstances the fight of the left is for unity and to build the International Days of Protest.

As part of this fight we must continue to educate and consolidate a left wing fighting for withdrawal in the antiwar movement. The imperialists have made crystal clear these last ten weeks that in spite of the current level of opposition in Vietnam and the U.S. they are prepared for a long and massive ground war in Southeast Asia. The antiwar movement must be built with this in mind. Not only does the eventual national organization of a left wing remain our central perspective, but the consolidation and growth of the left fighting for united actions is the best obstacle to the coalitionists' desire to split the movement, the best challenge to the peace-candidate orientation of the CP, and the best lever to influence and even win over some of the young followers of the coalitionists who do not yet see any contradiction between building the antiwar movement and supporting "peace alternatives" in the Democratic party.

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NOTE: The results of the June 18 Parade Committee conference were added in the editing of the report.