

# VIETNAM SOLIDARITY BULLETIN

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## BIG RESPONSE TO OUR EASTER ACTIVITY

Supporters of the campaign carried out a variety of activities on the Easter March: nearly 10,000 copies of Lord Russell's appeal were distributed; several hundred National Liberation Front flags were sold or distributed; our banner was carried throughout the March, we held a meeting on Hyde Park and our banner led the first demonstration against the American Embassy. All this had the effect of getting us into the national and international press (The Guardian described our contingent as being, after the Anarchists and along with the Young Communist League, as the best organised) But most important of all our campaign was brought to the attention of people from all over the country.

The clearest indication of this is the amount of correspondence we have received from all over the country and from many organisations.

Among the organisations which have requested speakers are: Dulwich Young Socialists, Hendon C.A.T. Socialist Society, Tottenham C.N.D., Bromley C.N.D., Croydon Y.C.N.D., and Beckenham C.N.D.

Quite a number of organisations have requested further information about our campaign among them: Manor Park A.E.U., West Ealing N.U.R. No. 2., Sheffield University Socialist Society, Horley Council for Peace in Vietnam, Redhill & Reigate Council for Peace in Vietnam, Lambeth C.N.D. and several youth groups.

Messages of support were received from:

Union of Cypriot Students (U.K.): which sent us its resolution passed by annual conference. This resolution takes the same political line as our campaign.

The Printers' Movement for Peace (Vietnam): "It is clear that we are working very much on the same lines. Please send delegates credentials..."

Loughborough C.N.D.: "On reading your leaflet this Easter the Loughborough C.N.D. were greatly impressed." (Please send) ...further information."

Arab Revolution: ".....We feel in deep sympathy and international brotherhood with the Vietnamese people and comrades....We feel that we should be on your sponsors list...if there is anything that we can do please do tell us..."

Finally, we can give only a small selection of extracts from a few of the letters we have received (which are still coming in in surprising numbers)

From a Taunton Young Socialist:

"I am writing to ask if you could provide me with propaganda....I would happily distribute literature in this area...."

From a Lancaster University student:

"I...have organised several demonstrations, film shows, etc.,... against the American war in Vietnam and in support of the National Liberation Front. I support the aims of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign completely...."

continued over/



From an Edinburgh lecturer:

"If your organisation were considering holding a public meeting in Edinburgh, I would be happy to assist in organising such a venture...."

From Dunfermline: (the writer is a candidate in the forthcoming elections)

"On Wednesday night a motion that I proposed was carried with one dissident at Dunfermline Burgh Labour Party. This was (1) to congratulate our M.P., Adam Hunter, on opposing the resumption of American bombing; and (2) calling on the Government to renounce completely the support of American policy in Vietnam. This motion was sent to Harold Wilson. If every Labour Party in Britain kept hammering in resolutions of this type I feel that we would get some place...."

From two Cambridge students:

"....One of us will be attending the conference in London in June, and subsequently we hope to establish, with your co-operation, a branch of the campaign in Cambridge...."

From Saffron Walden:

"We give your Campaign our very full support and enclose subscription... Please put us in touch with any local supporters....."

From a Cheshire student:

"I would be most grateful if you would forward me further information about your...campaign, which is a cause dear to my own heart....I argue my case at college but usually receive stiff opposition because I do not have the relevant information - I hope you can help me with this...."

From Tenterden (Kent):

"...I should much appreciate 150 copies of this leaflet" (the Bertrand Russell appeal) "....I hope to be at the conference...."

From Romford:

"I have become increasingly involved in arguments over the Vietnam issue with my friends, relations and schoolmates... although most of these are politically aligned to the Parliamentary Labour Party they are having their doubts...I would be grateful if you could send me any leaflets about the Campaign...."

From Cheltenham:

"I read the duplicated paper concerning the Easter Monday demonstration, the leaflet bearing Earl Russell's picture, the booklet Minority of One and the Solidarity Bulletin recently and fully support the line taken therein Please would you let me know if you could supply further copies...."

In addition letters enquiring for information about the conference have been received from all over the country. Dozens have come from all parts of London and the Home counties.



SWEDISH STUDENTS CALL FOR VIETNAMESE SOLIDARITY FUND from a Swedish reader

The Swedish Social Democratic student movement has submitted the following resolution to the International Union of Socialist Youth, which is meeting in Vienna June 2-5:

"The National Liberation Front (NLF) in Vietnam is fighting for the right to peace, self-determination and social justice for the Vietnamese people.

"The United States of America considers this to be a threat to its economic and military positions in Southeast Asia. In the name of democracy, the U.S.A. daily bombs and destroys villages, rice fields, roads, bridges, factories and human beings in south and north Vietnam.

"It is the obvious duty of the socialist youth of the world to give all the support it can to the NLF in this struggle.

"The Swedish Social Democratic Students Union therefore moves that the IUSY start a solidarity fund for the NLF and that a collection be taken up among the participants of the 3th IUSY congress and that the money thus received be sent to the NLF in the name of the IUSY."

SCOTTISH T.U.C. CONDEMNS AMERICAN AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM from a Scottish reader

By an overwhelming majority the Scottish T.U.C. passed a resolution, on Friday April 22nd, condemning the continuation of military operations in Vietnam by the United States. Of the 450 delegates only eight voted against. The resolution was moved by Lawrence Daly - a speaker - who is general secretary of the Scottish National Union of Mineworkers. He said that the trade union had a moral duty to denounce the brutal inhumanity being inflicted on the people of Vietnam. He continued: "When all the arguments have been put forward, the simple fact remains that the armed forces of the greatest capitalist state on earth are committing the most fiendish and outrageous atrocities since Belsen, Buchenwald and Auschwitz."

Of particular importance is what Lawrence Daly had to say about America's offer of unconditional negotiations. He commented: "How would the people of London, Coventry, Greenock and Glasgow have felt if Hitler had suggested we should go to the conference table while bombs were dropping on their towns and cities?"

Mr. Ben Kelly, of the N.U.R., made a telling point in his speech seconding when he pointed out that the Australian Labour Party was fighting against the war in Vietnam, while the Australian Tories used Mr. Wilson's support of the Americans to justify their position.



Professor John Galbraith, a former US ambassador to India, and an adviser to President Kennedy, addressing the Annual Convention of the Americans for Democratic Action, scathingly attacked the American policy in Vietnam. He said it was assumed that the US faced, in Vietnam, "a unified conspiracy directed, according to changing preference, by Hanoi, Peking or international Communism in general!" With no social issue being involved, it had long been felt that military measures would suffice for solution. "Americans could be counted on to believe what they were told, particularly about the power and integrity of the people on our side and the menace with which we deal."

Any solution demanded that the United States must first "escape the entrapment of our own propaganda." "Vietnam is not important to us, nor is it a bastion of freedom, nor is it a testing ground of democracy. Had it been lost in 1954, no one would now be thinking of it." The U.S., he said, was not going to push back the Viet Cong guerrillas from the large areas they had controlled for the past ten years. The most that could be expected would be a regional settlement, as in Laos.

Professor Galbraith forecast that the American involvement in Vietnam would prove to be the graveyard for the present US foreign policy of fighting Communism without relating the conflict closely to the interests of the United States. "It is worth hoping that the policy is all that gets buried" he added.

#### YOUTH CND DEMONSTRATION

On Saturday, 14th May, the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is holding a public demonstration to demand a British Lead for Peace in the fields of Vietnam, disarmament, the Alliances and the United Nations.

Writing from the organisation's new address, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1., the secretary, Lesley Welfare urges "immediate British dissociation from American policy in Vietnam, and the use of British influence as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference to bring about a peaceful solution to the Vietnam conflict." "In view of recent developments in the move for free elections in South Vietnam, accompanied by an intensification of the American war effort with Hanoi as the possible new target for American bombing, the need for an independent peace initiative coming from Britain is even more acute."

Youth CND calls for "drastic cuts in the British arms expenditure and the diversion of capital into peaceful channels"; for the British Government to "leave the crumbling alliance network of NATO/SEATO/CENTO which only serves to divide the peoples of the world"; and, by giving a lead in the United Nations, to "help UNO to fulfil itself as an agent for peace in a world divided by alliances and crippled by the arms race."

The demonstration will take the form of a March from Marble Arch, beginning at 2.30 pm., down Oxford Street, Bond Street, Piccadilly, The Haymarket to Trafalgar Square, behind a banner "Youth Demands a British Lead for Peace". The rally in Trafalgar Square is timed for 4.00 pm., after which the demonstrators will march to Downing Street for a two minute vigil. Leaflets and posters are available from the Secretary, YCND, on request.



Master Sergeant Donald Duncan left the United States Army in September of 1965 after ten years of service, including six years in the Special Forces and eighteen months on active combat duty in Vietnam. While in Vietnam he received the South Vietnamese Silver Star, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Bronze Star, and the United States Army Air Medal. He was nominated for the American Silver Star and was the first enlisted man in Vietnam to be nominated for the Legion of Merit. Both nominations are still pending. He participated in many missions behind enemy lines in War Zone D, Vung Tao and the An Khe Valley. Last March he turned down the offer of a field commission to the rank of captain. Instead he left Vietnam on September 5, 1965 and received his honorable discharge four days later.

"When I was drafted into the Army, ten years ago, I was a militant anti-Communist. Like most Americans, I couldn't conceive of anybody choosing communism over democracy. The depths of my aversion to this ideology was, I suppose, due in part to my being Roman Catholic, in part to the stories in the news media about communism, and in part to the fact that my stepfather was born in Budapest, Hungary. Although he had come to the United States as a young man, most of his family had stayed in Europe.

"One of the first axioms one learns about unconventional warfare is that no insurgent or guerrilla movement can endure without the support of the people. While doing research in my job as an Area Specialist, I found that, in province after province, the Viet Cong guerrillas had started as small teams. They were now in battalion and regimental strength. Before I left, the Viet Cong could put troops in the field in division strength in almost any province. Such growth is not only impossible without popular support, it actually requires an overwhelming mandate."

"We were still being told, both by our own Government and the Saigon Government, that the vast majority of the people of South Vietnam were opposed to the Viet Cong. When I questioned this contradiction, I was always told that the people only helped the Viet Cong through fear. Supposedly, the Viet Cong held the people in the grip of terror by assassination and torture. This argument was also against doctrine. Special Forces are taught that reliable support can be gained only through friendship and trust. History denied the 'terror' argument. The people feared and hated the French and they rose up against them. It became quite obvious that a minority movement could not keep tabs on a hostile majority. South Vietnam is a relatively

From RAMPARTS, a United States liberal magazine.



small country, dotted with thousands of small villages. In this very restricted area companies and battalions of Viet Cong can maneuver and live under the very noses of government troops; but the people don't betray these movements, even though it is a relatively simple thing to pass the word. On the other hand, government troop movements are always reported. In an action against the Viet Cong, the only hope for surprise is for the government to move the troops by helicopters. Even this is no guarantee."

"To back up the terror theory, the killing of village chiefs and their families were pointed out to me. Those that were quick to point at these murders ignored certain facts. Province, district, village and hamlet chiefs are appointed, not elected. Too often, petty officials are not even people from the area but outsiders being rewarded for political favours. Those that are from the area are thought of as quislings because they have gone against their own by cooperating with Saigon. Guerrillas or partisans who killed quislings in World War II were made heroes in American movies. Those who look on the Viet Cong killings of these people with horror and use them as justification for our having to beat them, don't realise that our own military consider such actions good strategy when the tables are reversed. When teaching Special Forces how to set up guerrilla warfare in an enemy country, killing unpopular officials is pointed out as one method of gaining friends among the populace. It is recommended that special assassination teams be set up for this purpose."

"Little by little, as all these facts made their impact on me, I had to accept the fact that, Communist or not, the vast majority of the people were pro-Viet Cong and anti-Saigon. I had to accept also that the position, "We are in Vietnam because we are in sympathy with the aspirations and desires of the Vietnamese people," was a lie. If this is a lie, how many others are there?"

"The attitude that the uneducated peasant lacked the political maturity to decide between communism and democracy and "we are only doing this for your own good," although it had a familiar colonialistic ring, at first seemed to have merit. Then I remembered that most of the villages would be under Viet Cong control for some of the time, and under government control at other times. How many Americans had such a close look at both sides of the cloth? The more often government troops passed through an area, the more surely it would become sympathetic to the Viet Cong. The whole thing was a lie. We weren't preserving freedom in South Vietnam. There was no freedom to preserve. To voice opposition to the government meant jail or death. Neutralism was forbidden and punished. Newspapers that didn't say the right thing were closed down. People are not even free to leave and Vietnam is one of those rare countries that doesn't fill its American visa quota. It's all there to see once the Red film is removed from our eyes. We aren't the freedom fighters. We are the Russian tanks blasting the hopes of an Asian Hungary."

"When I returned from Vietnam I was asked, "Do you resent young people who have never been in Vietnam, or in any war, protesting it?" On the contrary, I am relieved. I think they should be commended. I had to wait



until I was thirty-five years old, after spending ten years in the Army and eighteen months personally witnessing the stupidity of the war, before I could figure it out. That these young people were able to figure it out so quickly and so accurately is not only a credit to their intelligence but a great personal triumph over a lifetime of conditioning and indoctrination. I only hope that the picture I have tried to create will help other people come to the truth without wasting ten years. Those people protesting the war in Vietnam are not against our boys in Vietnam. On the contrary. What they are against is our boys being in Vietnam. They are not unpatriotic. Again the opposite is true. They are opposed to people, our own and others, dying for a lie, thereby corrupting the very word democracy.

#### NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT FLAGS

We have had many inquiries about these since the March. Unfortunately, we have no more of the small flags - they were all sold or distributed on the March.

However, the British Vietnam Committee has been manufacturing larger ones (approx. 2 feet by 3 feet). They cost 10/6d and are very well worth it.

Write to British Vietnam Committee,  
25, Abbey Gdns.,  
London N.W. 8.

Please enclose cash with order.

#### CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

We can supply:

- Extra copies of this Bulletin 6d each post free;
- The Special Vietnam Voice edition 2d each post free over 6 copies;
- The Bertrand Russell appeal for people to support our conference, free but a donation towards postage would be appreciated.

In addition, the British Vietnam Committee produce The Vietnam Bulletin, which comes out monthly. There is no charge but assistance towards paying the postage is much appreciated. Write to the address as above.

#### A NOTE ON EDITORIAL POLICY

As with most journals we have a policy that only unsigned articles represent the opinions of the campaign. Signed articles are only to be taken as representing the views of the author.

The British Vietnam Committee have asked us to make it clear that the views expressed in the David Horowitz article on matters other than Vietnam are not campaign policy.



## THE MYTH OF CHINA'S MILITARY THREAT TO THE WEST

Professional anti-communists have, in recent months, tried to replace the Soviet bogey with the Chinese one. They painted lurid pictures of Mao's millions and have brought right up to date the arguments of the "yellow peril". American politicians have even used this argument to justify the continued existence of N.A.T.O. However, the facts are very different from these ravings and this is recognised by the more serious of American writers. We have extracted the following quotations from a recent issue of Newsweek. They speak for themselves:

"During the recent Senate hearings on Vietnam, Sen. J. William Fulbright loudly sounded the theme: 'I am fearful that if the war in Vietnam is not handled extremely well, the Chinese Communists will come in.' In a similar vein, the former Ambassador to Moscow, George F. Kennan has warned that 'at some point', Chinese 'volunteers' might enter the war. Retired Lt. Gen. James M. Garvin can foresee a situation in which the Chinese 'surely would open up Korea.' And Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in the Kennedy Administration, has flatly declared: 'To-day, Communist China and the U.S. are on a collision course. The outcome can only be war.'

"All this, of course, reflects an understandable preoccupation with China in the context of the Vietnamese war. But it also reflects a far deeper set of preoccupations, at the heart of which lies the assumption that Communist China is a ferociously aggressive and expansionist nation which, as the greatest active threat to world peace, must be contained by American power. More than once, Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, has publicly insisted that the lesson of Munich must not be forgotten when dealing with Peking. Last month, William Brundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, concluded: 'The appearance of Soviet control in Eastern Europe suggests that this same kind of Communist logic does and would apply to the behaviour of Communist China .... The problem must be considered basically in the same way we did that of the Soviet Union.' And Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, newly returned from his Asian tour, is preparing for a nationwide speaking campaign to alert the country to the Chinese military threat - and perhaps to set the stage for a N.A.T.O. type treaty to include all of non-Communist Asia.

"What is remarkable in all this is the speed with which the necessity for containment of China has become an axiom of U.S. foreign policy, and the almost total absence of opposition to the proposition in official circles. . Within the space of a few years, China has been elevated to the status of chief menace to the security of the U.S., a role once reserved for the Soviet Union. In fact, however, this proposition is open to argument. Bluntly stated, the Chinese threat is not as self-evident as commonly assumed in Washington. Such assumptions about Peking's behaviour in Vietnam raise a legitimate question as to just how aggressive Peking really is."

"In terms of sheer numbers, the combined land, sea and air forces of China are not, as is often thought, the largest in the world. The People's Liberation Army (PLA), which includes all three services, totals an estimated 2.7 million men - as compared with the Soviet Union's 3.2 million and the U.S.'s 2.8 million. In broad terms, moreover, the Chinese military machine is little more than a light infantry force; of the 150 divisions which comprise China's ground forces, only four or five are armored, one or two are airborne - and three are horse cavalry."



"Essentially a defensive force, the Chinese land army has not significantly shifted its strategic deployment for nearly a decade. This, according to Western military sources, reflects Peking's unaltered view of the major external threats to Red China's security. Thus, 1 million Chinese soldiers stand guard in the southeast, facing the Nationalist forces on Taiwan; somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 are stationed in the areas bordering Vietnam, Laos and Burma; another 75,000 patrol the Tibetan border with India; 500,000 are garrisoned around Peking and Inner Mongolia; and the remaining 450,000 are deployed along the Russian border from Sinkiang to Manchuria."

"Another major consideration in any assessment of China's military capability is the country's absence of a modern highway system and the inadequacy of the rail lines between the industrial areas of East China and the hinterlands. As a result, Chinese military leaders face immense problems in logistics. These probably would not prove insurmountable in a relatively restricted war. 'It is difficult', says one China watcher, 'to appreciate how much China can move by oxcart and coolies.' But such methods of transport, however effective over short distances, clearly restrict China's ability to project its power."

"Both in numbers and prestige, moreover, the Chinese Army completely overshadows its sister services. By far the weakest branch of the armed forces is the 125,000 man navy, whose surface fleet consists of four pre-World War II Soviet Gordy-class destroyers, four Riga-class destroyer escorts and about 700 patrol craft. In addition, the Chinese are believed to have 30 submarines, including two Soviet G-class subs which are capable of firing ballistic missiles. Says one naval expert: 'The Chinese have absolutely no deep-water submarine experience and their subs are confined mostly to coastal waters. They are not much of a threat and they won't be able to threaten us until they develop some seamanship and some technology in the field.'"

"10, million men: In the meantime, however, China's over-all military posture is likely to remain defensive and its strategic doctrine heavily dependent on Mao Tse-tung's concept of 'people's war.' At the heart of this concept is the Chinese militia which numbers more than 10 million. In the past year, as the war in Vietnam has escalated, an estimated 500,000 regular army personnel have been reassigned as instructors to militia units. Whereas in the past many of these units had no rifles and their members often failed to attend exercises, today they are reportedly undergoing intensive training in such skills as laying land mines, throwing grenades and manning anti-aircraft guns."

"All this highlights an immensely significant fact - which is that, so far as Western analysts can detect, an American invasion of China is the only kind of direct military confrontation with the U.S. which Peking is currently prepared to contemplate."



Some arguments on negotiations: a Reply to Questions Raised During our Participation on the Easter March.

Probably the idea most subject to misunderstanding, and I might say distortion, is our attitude to the concept of "negotiations" in the Vietnamese war. As we walked along from High Wycombe at Easter this was raised continually. People find it easy to understand the idea of "solidarity", the term has certain emotive values on the left, but they fail to see that once you start talking in terms of "solidarity" against an American aggressor, you have crossed the barrier of neutrality in the conflict, that you can no longer think in terms of demanding United Nations intervention and "big power settlement" to the war, along the lines of Geneva of 1954. The whole axis of protest against the Americans has to change. As far as we are concerned, the matter is yet to be argued in a serious way in Britain as it has already in America - and we hope to make that one of the achievements of our "solidarity" campaign.

But first it is necessary to state an outline of the background to our position. We accept the idea that the drive for self-determination on the part of all oppressed nations is one of the greatest movements for social progress in our time. Self-determination is an elementary democratic right which has been fought for by all oppressed people. This places us alongside the great bulk of humanity which at this very moment is battling for freedom. In Britain the idea sounds a little hackneyed, mainly because it is the one question around which there has been more hypocrisy than anything else, a congenital weakness almost, especially inside the left and the labour movement. Such an attitude we say partially explains why there has yet to develop in this country a mass movement of opposition to the Vietnan war. It is true that there is less of a sense of urgency in a country which is not directly engaged in the war and hence it is more difficult to rally opposition. Nevertheless, Britain is a country with a long tradition of social consciousness in the general population and is therefore worthy of a much greater Vietnan protest movement than has existed to date. We believe that living in a country which openly boasts of its "possessions" around the world, almost daily in the mass media, an imperialist country, with a relatively high standard of living because of this, has had its effect and to a certain extent blinds the British people to understanding the importance of solidarity with a national people who are struggling against an oppressor.

The central feature of the war in Vietnam we consider is that it is a war against a foreign aggressor and is for national sovereignty and self-determination. It is not a question of the Americans entering Vietnam to "protect" South Vietnam from the North - Vietnam is one country which has been struggling for independence for over 25 years, which through a compromise in 1954 allowed the country to be divided. It is not necessary to argue everything here. Everyone recognises it as one country, except the American government and its puppets in Saigon. The only foreign troops in Vietnam are Americans. There are no Russians or Chinese.

A corrolary idea to our position is that we believe the Americans are in Vietnam to win. American troops are not occupying Vietnam - millions of tons of high explosive bombs are not being rained down on a civilian population because



of an accident of history, or because the Americans have made a mistake and do not know how to extricate themselves. And even though it may sound far too charitable, I should state that we do not believe they are insane (although one would be justified in having this view-point on the basis of the evidence) but we believe that what is happening in Vietnam is a carefully calculated policy, laid down during the course of several administrations, to roll back a genuine social revolution which threatened the Western hold on the riches and resources of South East Asia.

Vietnam has been chosen as the main battlefield against a freedom movement that extends from Saigon through Africa to the tip of Latin America. The technique of so-called "counter insurgency" is being perfected for eventual use against all freedom movements. Napalm is already being used in Peru against the insurgent peasants of the Andes. The same methods are being applied in Angola and the Congo.

We believe that everyone who is concerned has a special responsibility in Britain to try and explain the nature of the Vietnam war and attempt to end our Government's complicity in it and, at the same time, bring as much pressure to bear as is possible to get the American troops out of Vietnam and to ensure that the Vietnamese people be allowed to settle their own affairs in peace.

"But don't you want to end the fighting?" our friends in the anti-war movement have asked us. "Wouldn't it be better if both sides came to the bargaining table and talked rather than the daily killings and destruction continue?" "Isn't this how the war will end anyway?" "Don't all wars end by negotiations?" They point to Algeria and the Evian agreements.

Of course the implication here is that we favour a continuation of the war, a continuation of the bombing and killing. For anyone to want such a thing is difficult to imagine, but before getting down to the points at dispute, it is necessary to enter an objection: we are opposed to placing equal value judgements on the death of an American marine who is being used by his government to annihilate a people, who dies at the hands of a freedom fighter to that of a guerilla who has been killed by the aggressor. There is something wrong with those who fail to see the difference.

We recognise that the desire to end the war in Vietnam is basically an honest one, but we think the belief in "negotiations" being the focal point to the resistance to the war starts from a basically wrong premise and by implication suggests that the National Liberation Front wants a continuation of the war, a prolongation of the killing. Don't you see the connection? Are they not insisting that the Americans take their troops home? We too believe that the greatest contribution to ending the killing and destruction in Vietnam would be made if the Americans went home. Here our positions are in solidarity with those people who are bearing the brunt of the barbarism, the NLF. We are not ashamed of that, but it is not because we are agents of the NLF in this country, but because we are both fighting on one common principle: the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination. And the only way that can be realised is by the Americans getting out.

"Ah, the interjection may be made", but even the NLF does not insist upon Americans getting out immediately; they are prepared to negotiate a settlement



that would see the eventual withdrawal of American forces over a certain agreed upon period of time, so therefore you have a difference with the NLF, you are more hard than they are." We would be the last to object if the NLF entered into negotiations and attempted an honourable settlement, even if they are forced to accept less than they are entitled to. That's the business of the NLF and none of ours. In such a situation we would see our job as being that of getting the best possible settlement - and that could be arrived at only by us redoubling our efforts to get the Americans out. Again we are firm on our principle of self-determination - the responsibility for negotiations, for determining when that demand should be raised, rests with those who are bearing the brunt of aggression. We repeat there is no neutrality in Vietnam.

To start from the premise that both sides should stop fighting is to compromise the idea of self-determination. You are suggesting that the question of liberty and freedom can be arrived at without struggle, and much worse, the struggle for freedom and liberty is placed on the same moral plane as the criminal actions of an oppressor. As Raymond Williams stated at one of our meetings: when the fighting is prolonged, when the Johnsons and Wilsons keep talking about "negotiations", phoney though they may be, inevitably all those who started from the best sentiments of wishing an end to the fighting, of believing that the main job was to get both sides to the bargaining table, imperceptibly begin to think that a partial responsibility for the war rests with those who are fighting against the Americans in Vietnam, the guerillas. They have travelled a full circle along the road of trickery and deception. You are now in the ridiculous position of calling upon the Americans to conduct "sincere negotiations"

Now, one may cleverly say, yes, but such negotiations should take place on the basis of the Geneva Accords and this the Americans will not accept and thereby expose themselves to all and sundry as frauds. As far as we are concerned, it is one thing to expose the hypocrisy of the Americans, but it is an entirely different thing to suggest that the Geneva Accords be the basis of a settlement. It is wrong to confuse the two. The Accords should be examined and they will show that they have great limitations and were agreed upon by the big powers with the Vietnamese taking a back seat. When you start with the Accords you are asking the people in Vietnam to compromise on a compromise. As far as the Vietnamese are concerned, they made major concessions in principle in 1954 - some of them now think unwisely - when they in essence agreed to give up some of their hard won gains in the south. In light of the history since 1954, one can clearly see that the oppressor wanted breathing space to try to reconquer: the negotiating table became a means to that end.

But never mind Geneva of 1954! What about Christmas of 1965? First we had the fraudulent "peace offensive" of Johnson when he launched a phoney publicity campaign about his desire for peace. His ambassadors flew all over the world. Remember? You probably recall too that when on Christmas day a number of American university professors made a trip to the LBJ ranch in Texas to present a petition asking him to work for peace and enter into "negotiations"; he sent them a message congratulating them on their sincere desire for peace! He told them that he wanted peace too but that those scoundrels in Vietnam had refused to come to the bargaining table. You'll probably recall too that just around that time very carefully leaked reports appeared in the press to suggest a coming together of the NLF's position with that of Washington, and that there was a notable lull in anti-war activity in the United States because some of the people thought it was for real. And here in Britain too. I remember at that time attending a meeting organised by Caravan Workshops. Cannon Collins

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was on the platform together Bob Morse of the U.S. Organisation, S.N.C.G. James Cameron reported on his recent trips to Hanoi. There was quite a feeling of elation on the platform about a possible ending of the war and George Clarke openly stated that perhaps the end was in sight. I ask you: can a meaningful opposition movement to the war in Vietnam be built in this country if it cannot see the difference between illusion and reality, between lies and the truth? We would make a serious mistake if we did not take into consideration the little men in the various war ministries and establishments around the world. Because you can be sure that they take us into their calculations and they understand well the importance of programme; and the potential for manipulation that exists where there is confusion.

Do you remember the great hopes that were aroused at the time of the Korean war? When the Americans agreed to enter into negotiations? And how those negotiations had absolutely no effect on the war but served to give cover to the American aggression. Those on the North Korean and Chinese side of the table were commonly pictured as being obdurate and opposed to settlement. They too were carefully misrepresented to world opinion, to blind us in the west as to what was really happening. To pin one's hopes on negotiations is to still remain tied to the apron strings of those people who decided a war policy.

How else can the utter capitulation of left M.P.s on Vietnam in the last Parliament be explained? Where did it begin? When they let Wilson at every step endorse American actions, how did it come about? One does not have to enter into the argument of whether or not they should have voted against the Government bringing it down. But how can it be explained that not one of these M.P.s, many of whom have a long tradition of working class action in their personal histories, did not move an inch outside Parliament to rally a movement of protest on Vietnam, to initiate one single demonstration? It is not that they lack energy or drive, but we are convinced that it flowed from a lack of clearness on programme, lack of awareness of the potential for damage by that chief manipulator, Wilson, when he took up the demand for "negotiations".

Remember how he conned everyone in the beginning by giving the appearance that he was sincerely interested in a settlement and an end to the fighting? I must add that he was helped immensely by the press at that time, which had a conscious policy of playing down Vietnam - just as it did during the recent General Election campaign. Do you remember how he sent Harold Davies on his mission to Hanoi? All along endorsing American action and at the same time playing on the hopes for a negotiated settlement. And this is where the left became emasculated. There was no difference in principle between them and the right wing of the Labour Party - the logic of their position led them to positions that the Americans had certain rights in Vietnam - because that's what it means too to argue "negotiations" from this distance. The difference was one of degree, with Wilson agreeing to a total occupation by the Americans at one extreme. There was not <sup>one</sup> M.P. in the House who understood the importance of the concept of self-determination. They either based the focal point of their opposition on the implementation of the Geneva Accords or on the intervention of a United Nations peace-keeping force. And that is why their capitulation was so complete. We believe that if we are going to achieve anything in this country we must be absolutely clear: our central emphasis must be on the getting out of all American troops from Vietnam and the ending of British complicity in Vietnam.

"Well", you may say, "but so far Wilson's support has been only verbal." We see that and understand it. But to publicly endorse the massacring of a people



is morally reprehensible and degenerate and serves the purpose of putting the stamp of approval of the British Labour movement on American actions. Moreover, it sabotages the struggle of all those Americans who have risen in opposition to their government's policy. And this is done in the name of socialism! We believe that a Labour Government should be among the first to protest against American action. It should stand for the right of all people to self-determination, and should be exposing the hypocrisy of the U.S. State Department.

For us the greatest thing that could be achieved would be for the building of one large movement of opposition to the American's aggression in Vietnam. We think that if a serious movement were to take the stage it would be capable of rallying a lot more people than there are already in the peace movement. Let's face reality. Wasn't the CND march this Easter a little disturbing to anyone who felt strongly about the Vietnam war? Even though it was supposed to be one of the themes of the march, it was only <sup>because of the</sup> // exceptionally hard work by a minority that it took on any colouration of concern for the war in Vietnam.

Vietnam is an issue of particular importance. What is being decided there will determine the future of the globe. If the Americans win, then we will be one step nearer to world war because China will be next on the list. We believe that it will be impossible to talk about progress in Britain if people fail to understand and act about the growing brutality of the Americans. Our hope is that we will be able to bring together all those people who are opposed to the war. We are discussing with them. We would like this discussion to permeate the whole movement. We hope that we can have unity in the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, with many tendencies working together, on our basic propositions:

No illusions about negotiations!

Get the Americans out of Vietnam!

End British complicity in the war!

For solidarity action in Britain against America's war in Vietnam!

Ernie Tate.

#### ALL OUT FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

Our conference will have the job of formalising our organisation and working out our programmatic position. These tasks are by no means easy. We are doing a pioneering job and will inevitably have growing pains. On the other hand the response to our activities has shown that there is a huge potential once we can establish the campaign with a firm political line and viable organisation. In addition we must work out exactly how we are to set about the immense task we have set ourselves.

Attendance at the conference will be open to all but participation in the discussions and work of the conference will, naturally, be the prerogative of delegates. Delegates can represent organisations (either supporting ones, local groups or from organisations which are interested), or come in an individual capacity. It is very important that people fill in the slips as early as possible we will be sending out material for discussion purposes to all intending delegates each week. Overleaf is the first of these statements. You are invited to make any comment or amendment.



## DRAFT STATEMENT OF AIMS OF THE VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign has been created to help to bring a just and lasting peace to Vietnam. It, therefore, has three aims: first to support, by all possible means, the Vietnamese struggle for national liberation; secondly, to develop a broad movement in Britain for this purpose; and thirdly, to provide information and analysis of the reasons for American involvement in Vietnam.

The campaign will struggle for an immediate end to U.S. aggression in Vietnam; the withdrawal from Vietnam of all forces, weapons and bases of the U.S. and its satellites; an end to British complicity in the war; and solidarity with those leading the struggle in Vietnam - the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. We will campaign in Britain against those policies which lead to a compromise of the Vietnamese people's right to national self determination. In particular, the Campaign will reject the concept of settlement by "Negotiations" as is suggested by Washington and Whitehall, when they deliberately use it to de-rail the anti-war movement, thereby showing the folly of making that the focal point of resistance to the war in Vietnam.

### Draft of proposed structure

Support for the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign is of two kinds:

1. Individual membership, organised into local committees, wherever possible, with the greatest local autonomy, and with full democratic rights, based upon the acceptance of the aims of the Campaign.
2. Organisational affiliation, whereby supporting organisations will be entitled to representation upon all committees. This will likewise be determined by acceptance of the aims of the Campaign.

Individual membership will be subject to:

1. Working for the aims of the Campaign, both in organisations of which the member belongs to, and in general campaigns initiated by our movement;
2. The payment of subscriptions, which will be determined by the founding conference and thereafter by national conference.

Affiliated membership will be subject to:

1. Publicly supporting the aims of the Campaign and assisting the Campaign in its activities;
2. Payment of an affiliation fee, determined by the founding conference and thereafter by national conference.

At the conference, a Council will be set up representing all local groups and affiliated organisations, which will be the governing body between conferences. This Council will appoint such officers and sub-committees as are necessary to run the Campaign. The Council will be accountable to the National Conference.

### AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY CHRIS FARLEY

In second para, line 6, delete everything from "we will campaign....." to the end of the para, and substitute:

"In particular, it will campaign in Britain against suggestions from Washington and Whitehall that Vietnam's right to self determination is negotiable."



VIETNAM

Call to a

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

London, June 4 & 5, 1966.

The wholesale slaughter of the Vietnamese people, both in the south and the north of their country, is intolerable. The United States is systematically destroying a whole people by the use of napalm, chemicals, fragmentation bombs, gas, the destruction of their crops, the poisoning of their water, the levelling of their hamlets, the torture of their patriots and the bombing of their hospitals. All this is done with the "understanding and support" of the British Government. By any conventional standards of international conduct, President Johnson and his associates are guilty of war crimes.

In the face of this barbarism, the response of the British public has been utterly inadequate. The people of Vietnam, struggling for their independence, deserve a movement of solidarity and support in the West. This movement must make known the full circumstances and horror of the U.S. war of aggression, support the legitimate demands of the Vietnamese people and demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South-East Asia. A National Solidarity Conference to formalise the creation of such a movement in Britain will be held in London on June 4 and 5. Attendance will be both by individuals and by delegates of organisations. Please complete the form below.

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To: Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, 8, Roland Gardens, London S.W. 7.

/ / I wish to attend the conference on June 4-5.

/ / Please send me further information about the conference.

Name.....

Address.....  
.....

Organisation (if any).....

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS THROUGHOUT

A last note: Have you subscribed to the Vietnam Solidarity Bulletin? If not do so now. It costs 9/- for 12 issues. Fill in this slip:

I enclose .....for.....issues of the V.S.B. Name.....

Address.....