

# VETERANAM

SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN



bulletin number 14

88 YAM

LIVERPOOL VIETNAM DEMONSTRATION

Demonstrate in Solidarity in Liverpool  
on Saturday 25th May.

The meeting will begin at 2.30 p.m. at St.Georges Plateau, Liverpool  
Opposite Lime Street Station. After the meeting there will be a  
march to the United States Consulate at Pier Head.

We hope that as many of our supporters as possible will come on this  
demonstration which is the first big Vietnam demonstration in the  
North of England in solidarity with the N.L.F.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:- J.SUTTON,  
11a Rowan Avenue  
Manchester 16

One of our members is organising a coach from London, which will leave  
on Friday night. The fare will be about 25/- . There are still a few  
seats left. For details contact .. Scott Reeves, 16, Macleod Rd.,  
London S.E.2.

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Editorial Address. V.S.C. 8, Toynbee St, London E.1. 01-247-9845 to which material for the Bulletin should be sent.

### Editorial

This issue of the Bulletin is concerned largely with the V.S.C. Conference. Members are asked to pay close attention to details of delegates etc.. In view of the growth in support for V.S.C. in recent months, the importance of the conference need hardly be stressed, It is an opportunity to establish more local branches and create stronger and more effective links between them and the national organisation, in order to prepare the ground for future mass mobilisations.

The present situation in Vietnam should not lead us to think that the war might be coming to an end. The Vietnamese appear to be following a policy of fighting and talking at the same time, and the scale of fighting has certainly not diminished. At present the National Liberation Front has just launched what could be a repeat of the Tet offensive, in terms of its effect on the U.S. forces.

It is more important than ever that the scale of our activities in defence of Vietnam be increased. It is not possible to weigh accurately all the factors which may have borne upon the Vietnamese and the Americans to cause them to open talks in Paris, but the talks themselves, are certainly not the end of the matter. We should consider ways and means of effectively expressing our support for the Vietnamese struggle at this most crucial time. Recent demonstrations by French students took place close to the probable site of the talks. Geography is not on our side in this instance but we should actively consider how the efforts of the Vietnam movement here can best focus on the talks as a means of expressing our support for the Vietnamese.

Increasingly the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign is in a strong position to play a major role in activity of this sort. The Conference will set out in greater detail the future perspectives of the Campaign, and for that reason it is important that the Conference is fully representative of the support which has been built up.

Materially as well as politically we are in a strong position. The response to our financial appeal was fairly good, although more needs to be done. New members are registering in a steady flow, and more organisations are lending their support. The principal immediate problem is to find a satisfactory headquarters, and to ensure a regular supply of volunteers at the office to handle the thousand and one jobs which confront us daily.

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## VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE.

On May the 18th and 19th the V.S.C. will be holding its National Conference, at the CONWAY HALL, London ( In Red Lion Square - near Holborn Tube ).

Sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to 5.p.m. on both the Saturday and Sunday, with breaks for lunch. Much of the discussion will centre on papers included in this Bulletin. Decisions will have to be taken regarding the structure of the V.S.C., and membership of Committees.

Supporting organisations (formerly referred to as affiliates) will be entitled to one delegate.

Recognised Branches of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign will be entitled to one delegate to every FIVE members (paid up). In claiming credentials, branches should send in the names of members ( 10/ a year ) so that they can be checked against our records. There will be a credentials committee at the conference, but it would be a help if all this could be sorted out in advance of the conference.

It costs £1 a year for an organisation to affiliate to the V.S.C. or 10/- for a youth organisation, and this should be up to date if credentials are to be issued

Individual members of V.S.C. may attend and speak, without a vote. Admission will cost 2/6.

There will be a delegate fee of 5/- per delegate.

Affiliations and new branches must be ratified by the executive, and the closing date for this prior to conference will be May 16th.

Mid-day Meals; we will contact local pubs etc to ensure that some provision can be made, but the area is noted for having few cafes open on a weekend, and comrades would be well advised to make arrangements of their own.

Accommodation; It should be possible to provide a limited amount of a accommodation. Please notify us well in advance if you are unable to make arrangements, also if you can put anyone up. ... Contact Bay5234.

It is planned to provide certain facilities at the conference for looking after young children, but it is essential that we know exactly who will want to use them. Also Volunteers would be welcome to man it.

The conference will elect 20 members to the new national committee ( in addition, each VSC group and supporting organization will be entitled to a representative ).

Topic for discussion will include: 1) Current stage of the Vietnam War; 2) Future Perspectives and Our Next Mobilization; 3) Local Activities; 4) International Coordination; 5) British Political and Economic Involvement; 6) Scientific Involvement; 7) Our Relationship to Other Movements in Britain.

The last few months has seen an upsurge of V.S.C. groups based on Colleges and localities. It is on their activities that V.S.C. depends if it is to develop into a real campaign- that is ,an organisation with a sustained programme of activities geared to specific aims, and capable of leading a mass movement.

A big stimulus for the development of local groups was provided by the October 22nd and March 17th demonstrations, which have been the high points of the V.S.C.s activity so far. A mass demonstration generates an enthusiasm that is expressed on the day by collective militancy, but also encourages people beforehand to involve themselves in the preparatory work ,from which many local V.S.C. groups develop, and afterwards stimulates the participants to take part in or organise the activity of local groups.

But the gap between the numbers who participate in a mass mobilisation and the numbers who take part in any local Vietnam work, is immense, perhaps as much as 20 to 1. And of the 20,000 demonstrators on March 17 only about 1 in a 100 are regularly and actively engaged in organising and carrying out local activities. It would be utopian to aim at involving everyone who came out on March 17th in local work, but we can attempt to understand why the disparity is so great, and aim at increasing ,4 or 5 times the number of local activists. To have 5000 people who regularly participate in local activities, and 1000 committed to organising such activity , would make our movement into a real campaign.

People participated in the March 17th demonstration because it allowed collective expression of their feelings- of solidarity with the N.L.F. of hatred for the U.S. regime, and of disgust for the British Governments complicity in the U.S. aggression..It is this collective expression that constitutes militancy. This is not to say that militant local activity should be a substitute for mass demonstrations . On the contrary it is a vitally necessary complement to the big mass mobilisations. For (a) the people who are moved to come out on a twice yearly demonstration are not going to be radicalised, to be transformed in any basic respect, by this alone. Only involvement in the sustained activity of a local group can begin to do this. Also (b) only by building strong local groups will a mass movement develop that can mobilise really great numbers for central activities. ( If we want 100,000 people on the streets of London, then we shall need not 30 or 40 coaches from the provinces, but several hundred). And (C) we can only begin to reach the mass of the working class by a sustained programme of local and National activities.

The present problem is to find forms of activity that allow people to express collectively and militantly their their feelings on Vietnam. The difficulty is that our movement still represents only a small minority in Britain, and therefore we are limited on the whole to propaganda work. If the degree of militancy of these, mainly students, who constitute our movement was paralleled by the working class, then the question of direct action against the government and against the U.S. war production in Britain would be raised, but as it is any direct action could only be of a guerrilla and mainly propagandistic character.

But propaganda work of the conventional kind--eg leafleting, public meetings, posterparades -- is at best uninspiring and often demoralising. There will generally be a hard core of people in each group prepared to undertake such work but the majority will feel that the effort involved is not really worth it. These activities are not such in which people can express their militancy -- they scarcely bring people together in a collective activity. There is therefore a great need to work out new forms of propaganda, and experiments have been made that are worth consideration; for example the American 'Street Theatre' group in London and the Bradford pageant of the Russian Revolution. These activities require little professional skill, they can be extremely effective propaganda, and they bring people together into collective work and create the sort of group loyalty that alone can transform the individuals involved, i.e. change them from people who join in Vietnam activities to conscious political activists. It should go without saying that Vietnam group meetings should be enjoyable, so that people come to meet friends, to discuss common problems and plan the sort of activities they want to carry out, unlike the traditional political or T.U. branch meeting, formal and rigid.

What can local groups do besides direct propaganda activity? As stated we cannot take on the state machine in any direct confrontation, but in the "guerilla" form of struggle that is the alternative, it may be possible to win victories by attacking the enemy in those places where our forces are strongest, and his weakest. Since our forces are strongest in the colleges and universities, the obvious focus for attack is U.S. DoD research at British Universities. A campaign that had the objective of forcing the closure of one particularly hideous research project such as that at the micro-biological research centre at Sheffield, would have an immense propaganda potential, and would be a potentially realizable objective, which could materially help the Vietnamese. Smaller but real successes can be won in preventing war material producers from recruiting at colleges and universities, as happened recently at Imperial College. Further merits of such a campaign are that it can be carried on conjointly at many centres up and down the country, and propaganda can be national, that there is the possibility of getting local C.N.D. B.C.P.V. sections to participate, and it opens the question of U.S. war material production in British factories, which cannot be done by directly going to factories and telling workers to leave their jobs, as the Committee of 100 found to their cost.

Here are some headings under which problems of local V.S.C. work could be discussed;

- 1) How to build a local V.S.C. group that will function as a working collective and develop a creative militancy.
- 2) How to develop new forms of local propaganda.
- 3) How to bring up the Vietnam issues in trade union work or how to create links at the local level between the Vietnam movement and the working class.
- 4) How can student group organise against U.S. DoD. Research

## SCIENTIFIC INVOLVEMENT.

1) Direct involvement of British science in the Vietnam war is slight. Known examples are the fact that the so-called "non-lethal gas CS (orthochlorobenzal-malononitrile), which has in fact caused several hundred well documented deaths, was discovered at Porton in the early 50s and under an exchange agreement that exists for the sharing of all CB knowhow between Britain the U.S. and Canada, is now manufactured in the U.S. for use in Vietnam, apparently under licence from Porton. So far as is known the gas is not manufactured on any large scale in Britain.

Other examples of the impact of British Technology include the routine use of hovercraft, produced by government funds by way of the National Research Development Corporation; pictures of the hovercraft in action have been released.

Increased exports of chemicals such as herbicides, partly by Albright and Wilson, the chemical manufacturers, and production of material in Britain by U.S. firms such as Dow (Albeit as Dow International) are other examples, but best considered under economic involvement.

2) Indirect Involvement. This primarily concerns scientific research at Universities which is supported by U.S. or British Defence funds. In general defence research contracts come to the universities in two forms, classified and unclassified. The latter are typically for research which is not immediately or obviously relevant to military need. Thus, the linguist Chomsky, likely to be charged along with Spock as one of the leaders of Resist, receives a substantial U.S. Dept. of Defence (unclassified) grant. They believe his work useful for code-cracking; Chomsky thinks otherwise. But that this difference of opinion is possible suggests that even unclassified research should not be regarded as totally without implication. But the classified ones are undoubtedly the most important ones to investigate- like the cracking of Project Spicerack in Pennsylvania- which resulted in the discovery of war research.

There are a limited number of facts concerning defence money spent on university research in Britain, given in Hansard, 7th Feb 1968.

a) US Grants U.S. DoD currently sponsors 130 to 140 research contracts at British universities, value £395,000 per ann. at 27 universities. None of these is classified;

b) Ministry of Technology grants. The Ministry has some 525 aerospace contracts worth £900,000 annually, with potential defence application at 49 universities and colleges. 37 Of these contracts placed between April and December 1967 were classified. We do not know at which universities these were. Presumably they are mainly concerned with aerospace technology.

c) Ministry of Defence grants. There are 261 such grants currently let; their annual value has increased from £265,000 in 1962/3 to £574,000 in 1967/8. 41 universities are involved; no university has ever declined a contract. Only two of these contracts are nominally classified but "universities undertake to consult the Department ( of defence ) before publication." Some sort of security screening of staff occurs. Some of the unclassified contracts are known to be of direct relevance to C.B.W.

The nature of these contracts needs looking at more closely. As Ritchie Calder said:-

If the M.R.E. at Porton is no more than a means of protecting us against threatened diseases why is it not under the Ministry of Health? If we pursue this further, we shall find, as the Americans found, that there are whole ganglia of relationships between Porton and the universities and the research institutions: contracts and grants ostensibly for academic research, with the right to publish - but not if defence chooses to classify it

There are some obvious implications of the shopping list of universities involved in defence contracts for action by VSC groups or supporters, as if we could locate any one of the contracts, ideally one with a clear cut relationship to the War, this would involve many more people in understanding the setup, and learning to act politically.

N.B. Incidentally I should perhaps add that all Ministry of Defence arrangements for research are made by CONTRACT, so are all D.O.D. The point here is that we must go for the classified ones otherwise we shall find ourselves pursuing some non-starters and thus wasting time. An example of a Department of Defence (U.S.) contract is for £15,000 for making computer models of the brain.

We feel this to be important as this points to a different course of action to Dave Slaney's in detail though not in principle.

Ministry of Defence Contracts

TO UNCLASSIFIED RESEARCH? BUT THESE WOULD SEFM GOOD PLACES TO START LOOKING. Two we do not know which, are classified

Aberdeen	Glasgow	
Bath	Heriot Watt	Portsmouth CAT
Queens College, Belfast	Hull	Reading
Birmingham	Keele	St. Andrews
Brighton College of Tech.	Kent	Salford
Bristol	Leeds	Sheffield
Cambridge	Liverpool	Southampton
Sir John Cass	London	Strathclyde
Chelsea	Manchester	Surrey
City	Newcastle	Sussex
Dundee	North Wales	South Wales
Durham	Nottingham	Warwick
Edinburgh	Oxford	York
Essex	Oxford CAT	
Exeter		



Ministry of Technology Additional

Again these are unclassified BUT there are 37 CLASSIFIED.

Aberystwyth  
Aston  
Bradford  
Brunel  
Cardiff  
East Anglia  
Lancaster

Leicester  
Loughborough  
Manchester College of Science and Technol.  
North Staffs. C.A.T.  
Swansea  
Welsh College of Technology

The above notes on British Scientific involvement were compiled by a V.S.C. supporter as additional background information.

British Complicity

From Dave Slaney

Until now, the anti-war movement in this country has been restricted to semi-annual mass demonstrations. It is desirable however, to initiate new kinds of activities, which can go forward on a continuous basis and can be conducted independently in different localities. It is desirable also to move from idealist to practical issues. That is we must move beyond humanitarian, and even solidarity, slogans, to focus on aspects of the war which have an actual effect on the lives of the British people, especially the working class. The best way of accomplishing both of these objectives is to concentrate upon questions of British complicity in the American war effort.

Some research on this question has already been done\*. The evidence is conclusive that Britain is deeply involved in the war in Vietnam. Britain gives large amounts of aid to the Thieu-Ky government, and provides the Americans with various kinds of military aid. The Wilson Government is the most important, and the most subservient, foreign supporter of Johnson's policies. British universities do a great deal of research for the U.S. defence department.

Actions against the war can physically prevent the shipment of non-monetary aid to South Vietnam; constant harassment of Wilson and Co. whenever they appear in public (this is already being done to a certain extent, but such activity could be intensified); exposure picketing and boycotting of British firms heavily involved in War production, as well as agitation and education among the employees of such firms, and the Trade Unions represented in those firms; exposure of University research projects for the defence department., and campaigns to force the universities to halt these projects. These are only a few of the possibilities for action on the issue of British complicity.. In addition investigation into specific details and other aspects of British complicity, should be carried out on a continuous basis. It would be very good if such investigation could become widespread and spontaneous; that is if workers in factories, research assistants in universities, and others, would undertake to expose any example of complicity which came to their attention. Every case of complicity should be widely publicised, so as to show the British people that Britain is not neutral with regard to Vietnam, but instead is actively aiding the Americans. In this way the general but vague dislike of the war could be channeled into constructive action..

This type of activity would obviously be of great value in mobilising and activating people who oppose the war. In the U.S. for example the issue of university research has been successfully used to create militant anti-war movements on most campuses. People can only be mobilised for sustained militant action if there is a concrete issue around which they can mobilise. The different aspects of British complicity provide these kinds of issues.

The principal need now is for more specific information about the various ways in which Britain is helping the U.S.. Once the information is available local groups should use it to mount campaigns to expose and if possible disrupt this help. Thus campaigns in Universities to force the administration to force the administration to refuse defence department contracts; campaigns in factories and trade union branches to put pressure on the company to cease war production, and so on.

Finally, in exposing British support, stress should always be put upon the fact that British support has a detrimental effect on the wages and living conditions of the British working class. This effect is seldom direct and immediately visible, but it can always be shown if a serious attempt is made to do so. The main body of Trade Unionists will remain outside the anti-war movement unless they can be made aware that Vietnam Directly concerns them. The issue of British complicity provides a good opportunity to create that awareness.

\* See "Vietnam, United States and Britain" .. The Facts of entanglement," a pamphlet from the V.S.C. 2/6 per copy.

#### ON DEMONSTRATIONS

by Geoff. Richman.

There are two philosophies underlying demonstrations, not always necessarily clearly understood by participants to be separate.

They relate to the difference between revolution and reform. If the existing structure and relations of political power are accepted, but a particular grievance or government stance is thought to require change, the demonstration is a traditional plea and/or pressure on the government. As governments do not like force which they see as a threat to their general position, and as a grievance is usually shared by a broad range of people including liberal and respectable elements, who are felt to give weight to the plea of public opinion, such demonstrations try to be orderly, reasoned, and to go through due process.

If it is felt that the existing structure of politics does not allow for the remedying of the grievance, or that it cannot respond to pressure (by virtue of other political necessity) the demonstration is then an expression of anger, disgust, rejection of existing politics, etc. Such a demonstration is likely to be consciously militant. It may also bring pressure on the Government - and is in fact much more likely to do so in the long run over a serious issue, where the violent (i.e. based on power) nature of politics is made apparent - this pressure being the result of awakening widespread popular feelings and causing the Government to fear developing militancy, threatening the structure of society (hence the relation to revolution). There is then a concession by the Government.

Militancy over Vietnam demands the second kind of demonstration, because  
a) participants are now fed up with consensus, parliamentary politics, and  
b) the government cannot change its policy on Vietnam without many radical changes in its policies as a whole (due to the relation of the war to the U.S. and U.K. balance of payments problems etc..)  
c) the inspiration of the Vietnam war has been to demonstrate that the successful way to deal with problems is to take action to change the situation, i.e. the NLF fight the U.S., rather than appeal to world opinion, they call for victory, rather than dwell on suffering, rather than denounce U.S. atrocities they analyse the weakness of the U.S. position. This inspires the British people to face up to their problems, to want an active outgoing movement, instead of a passive, liberal-humanitarian stance. Hence the impetus of the success of the Tet offensive.

Thus the purpose of the demonstration must be not to just call out the largest number of people, but also play a part in a) expressing this militancy, b) carrying forward the unity and sense of solidarity of the movement c) relating the need to take part in the demonstration with the need to express an attitude to our society (rejecting its dishonesty, injustice and manipulation of ordinary people).

Therefore the demonstration should consciously change the participants, raise their political level, and not allow them to return to daily life and continue as before (and come or not to the next demonstration). The way this change in people occurs is to enable people to achieve an objective which they see as purposeful, to be able to discuss before and after what this means, and to tackle the problems of acting collectively which may impede.

Thus to take the last point, the inability of the British to touch each other (which is part of a deep-seated attitude to life - repressive and alienated, expressing emotions with difficulty, and socially isolated). This comes out very clearly to get people to link arms and act physically together in resisting police provocation, and in being in crowded places. It also prevents them from 'making fools of themselves' by being dramatic, theatrical, standing out from other people, in the propaganda for the march and in very local pre-demonstration work. These factors impede success and are examples of problems to be overcome.

Headings under which one might discuss the problems of a march or demo. are

- 1) the aim - it must be reasonable, ie likely to be obtained with the forces available.
- 2) demonstrate power, eg. stop a draft (in the U.S.) take over a building for a specified time, or control streets and crossings for a specified time.
- 3) raise the political issue clearly - with banners, posters and slogans literature and press statements.
- 4) engage as many as possible of the participants before and after in discussing the objectives.
- 5) be able to win for the movement, ie. not to lose touch with new participants, not already in groups or new to politics.
- 6) the relation of the leadership, the platform and speeches, and the head of the march in controlling it or setting the tone
- 7) problems of internal communication - keeping in line, preventing gaps stopping provocation preventing arrests.

- 8) the way the demonstration ends should be clear cut and related to the demonstration as a whole. People should not be dispersed in a way that allows them to be arrested.
- 9) setting themes and discussions for groups, and relating their experience to the organising (central) body.
- 10) leafleting the march - information, follow up, etc..
- 11) care of the marchers - preventing arrests, what to do if arrested.
- 12) tactics on the march, cohesion, linking arms, contingencies, changing speed, slogans.
- 13) the possibility of training demonstrations, small preparatory demonstrations so the problems can be examined in practice.
- 14) the relation of propaganda for the demonstration to its militant spirit - maximum participation in the preparation (leafleting, fly-posting, stickers, parades) and the use of various media for doing so - not just traditional meetings but perhaps film, mixed media presentations. Guerilla theatre -
- 15) the more extensive use of dramatic forms of propaganda in which an attempt is made to engage the audience of an incident (illustrating some theme of the war) in discussion or the theatrical event.

If not just the odd professional group but many groups were able to do this, the training and other problems brought up would be of direct relevance to the psychology of the militancy in a march. The point is to enable maximum creativity to be expressed, and thus avoid the pointless, individual violence which arises from frustration and confusion.

#### PRESENT SITUATION IN THE VIETNAM WAR

by GEOFFREY CROSSICK

Until the later months of last year, Westmoreland's major military tactic in Vietnam was to disperse his troops widely in thinly populated areas, in order to wear down the enemy with firepower. This tactic is changing, but it is changing slowly, and it is through locating the internal rationality of this tactic within the context of US ideology that an understanding of the relative positions of the NLF and the US at the present time can be most clearly reached. An American war correspondent wrote that "on those rare instances when our main force units find their main force units, our power is decisive." It is in the absence of these clashes that the strategic, not just the tactical, differences of the war are reflected. To the Americans, as Johnson himself declared, there are two wars in Vietnam, the military and that for 'hearts and minds'. The latter is called 'the other war'. And to bourgeois thought, whose fragmentation separates power as a separate function within a society, this is logical. But a true analysis of the Vietnam conflict, that upon which the NLF strategy rests, denies this in its actions. There are not two wars, but one. It was only the increasing US involvement in major armed clashes over the last year that distracted much attention from the fundamental strategic issues of the war - security, popular loyalty and confidence. And the South Vietnamese government, a government of army officers, is even less sophisticated than the US - for them there is only one war, and it is a purely military one. So the US 'hearts and minds' strategy, negated as it already is by their military actions, never gets off the ground. Thus, the essential difference between the two sides is located by the fact that their two strategies are determined by the fact that they are fighting at different levels, one which can, indeed must, rest on force alone, and another, which if it is to survive at all, let alone prosper, must see the

purpose of military force as to offer a challenge to the accepted authority of the Saigon government and the US, and, more important, to use that force to construct an awareness of an alternative social, economic and political framework. As Regis Debray wrote, "a guerilla force cannot develop on the military level if it does not become a political vanguard".

It is here that the Tet offensive can be placed in perspective. For the US it was a military setback, that is all. But in reality, it has narrowed these alternatives down to two. The choice for the US now is to pull out or to destroy Vietnam totally. The entire rationale behind the balanced war they were pretending to fight has been destroyed: the US can no longer even talk of building South Vietnam into a stable democracy able to look after itself. For what has happened is a twofold destruction. The destruction of the Vietnamese cities by US and S.Vietnamese army rockets and bombs - and every Vietnamese is fully aware that anything that comes from the sky cannot be from the NLF. But with it, the type of war that the US were trying to fight was destroyed. The NLF now, everywhere, have the initiative. The "Guardian" reported that "few people in Britain have grasped even now just how completely the government forces and the Americans have lost control of the Vietnamese countryside." In the cities of the Highlands and the Delta, whole sectors were destroyed by the allies. The Northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien have been entirely lost by the US. And everywhere, their influence is practically nil outside the cities. The entire 'pacification' programme has been wrecked. Saigon placards shrieked "Who burnt homes? Who killed the people? The Viet Cong!", but the people know better. Any claims to support, any pretence of 'the other war' being a separate one, which the US might have put forward, were destroyed by the Tet offensive, which revealed that what is now at stake is not a particular military objective but the ultimate question of power and its roots. And since Tet the NLF have increased their control in the newly liberated areas of the countryside, have been pursuing the administrative and economic policies which demonstrate just how military activity and economic and social change can not be separated, but are part of one total strategy.

If the prospects in Vietnam have become so much more encouraging since Tet, there are reasons to believe that on two other major fronts we can see factors crucial to the development of the American war. The first lies in the break-up of the fragile US-dominated stability of South East Asia. The North Koreans are tying down large numbers of US troops by threatening noises alone; the extent to which the Americans will be forced to become involved if they do anything more can only be guessed at. In Laos, activity by the Pathet Lao and the Neo Lao Haksat has been increasing since January - and the Royal Lao Army would be incapable of coping with them should they commence major operations. Since February, US planes have been undertaking bombing raids in Laos. And Thai premier, Kittikachorn, is now shouting with alarm about guerilla activities in the northern provinces of Thailand. If US imperialism rests on a necessary strategy, the US will have to involve themselves in these countries. And that would stretch them well beyond breaking point.

The second front is that in the US itself. One thing which the Vietnam war has done is to redefine the international contradictions between socialism and capitalism, after the mystifications of the Cold War era. As Göran Therborn has argued, "the socialist revolution in a poor Asian country has liberated the dialectic in its oppressor". It is in the appalling economic and financial crisis faced by the US, and the prospects of a massive insurrection by urban Negroes this summer, both fundamental contradictions released by the Vietnam war, that the immediate hopes for US withdrawal lie. The result is the contortions within the American ruling class, projecting themselves into the selection of Presidential candidates. These issues

could make a discussion of present intentions meaningless. But there is still a firm basis of alternatives within which the Americans must move. They can destroy Vietnam - the classic contradiction of a colonial power having to face the problem of protecting its economic interests by destroying the indigenous economy and labour force upon which those interests rest, is not found by the US in Vietnam, where they have few direct economic interests. In this case the only answer to a guerilla war with large popular support, is the destruction of the people - and this is an option which is open to the US.

The alternative is withdrawal. It would be humiliating, and it could be dangerous, for the Americans to negotiate a withdrawal; but it is a possibility. As Debray has argued: "The revolution revolutionises the counter-revolution". The US have learnt much from the Vietnam experience. They are already applying much of what they learned, in Latin America. That is, to abandon the war they have lost, and tackle, with the help of the lessons learned in Vietnam, the ones that are only just beginning. In this way, the present move towards talks could be genuine on the American side. They might have chosen to get out, in which case the increased level of US aggression since Johnson's speech can perhaps be seen more as a response to internam US political conditions, than as a sign of pure duplicity.

The response of the DRV was a correctly ambiguous one; it has served two purposes. It called the Americans' bluff. And, also, it made it possible for a talked US withdrawal to be considered. The DRV are rightly suspicious of any negotiated settlement - three times they have been robbed by the duplicity of the big powers. And the position of the NLF, the DRV, and the solidarity movements throughout the world, is rightly one of principle - no negotiations, the USA have no right to any say in the political future of Vietnam. It is a position of principle which VSC has always maintained. But on another level from the principled position, is a clear awareness that once the US have decided on a withdrawal policy, in political terms talks will be needed to allow that to take place. This in no way detracts from the principle that the political future of Vietnam must be settled on the basis of the programmes of the NLF and DRV. Things are still very unclear; but it is possible that withdrawal has been decided upon. In any case Hanoi's offer to talk will raise peace hopes in the USA, and thereby make it more likely that the next US president will not be one committed to unattainable success in the war. If these conjectures are correct, the immediate role of solidarity movements is even stronger: it is to argue the case of the NLF and DRV, to demand their terms, and to support them in the cities of Europe if negotiations take place.

Whether or not this hypothesis is correct, the war in Vietnam has reached an irreversible situation. The US can only choose between total destruction and withdrawal. The rationale of the third path, the reconstruction of South Vietnam, that has mystified the issue for many years, has been eliminated. Only the coming Summer, in Chicago, Detroit and Washington as much as in Saigon and Hue, will decide clearly which of the two paths the American government chooses.

by Jim Clough

As a result of the intensification of the Vietnamese revolution, a most significant development has been taking place among young people in all major capitalist countries of the world. From the SDS in Germany to the Zengakuren in Japan and the anti-war movement in the USA and the VSC here in England, a growing force of Youth have broken away either from a political inertia or from a negative and frustrating pacifism, towards an ~~active~~ identification with a living struggle.

The basis of our movement is one of solidarity with a far-away struggle, and for this reason internationalism is fundamental to all of us. But the mechanism for a defense of the Vietnamese revolution in its present phase demands a more positive coordination and a strategy among the existing movements in Europe and elsewhere. Also the apparatus of international capitalism, working on behalf of the imperialists in Vietnam (through NATO, Wilson and other agencies), demands this.

The organisational resources of the VSC and of the movements on the continent are facing a common problem of being restricted by lack of money, but this should not stop us from taking a determined position towards a better liason of all the international movements. International organisation and cooperation is both necessary and possible. A glimpse of the value of such internationally planned action was shown on the October 21st and 22nd demonstrations last year; and indeed one of the reasons why the demonstration we pulled off on October 22nd was such a success was because of the fact that demonstrations were going on all over the world that weekend. The Mobilisation committee in the USA put out the international call and the VSC played an important part in popularising that time for actions all over Europe. The International demonstration in Berlin on February 18th this year also had an international effect because it was planned internationally.

The international reaction to express solidarity with Dutschke after he was shot recently, was spontaneous as anything could be, and a high expression of our solidarity. Such solidarity can only be strengthened by developing closer links with the foreign movements.

As a practical step towards this, the French Comite Vietnam (a movement which has mobilised thousands all over France to support the Vietnamese revolution) has put forward initial plans for the possibility of holding an international conference of movements in Europe similar to our own. They expect to hold the conference before the summer. Their proposals are basically the following:-

- That a discussion should be held at the conference on
  - (a) the role of US imperialism and its links with European imperialist forces.
  - (b) the nature and importance of the Vietnamese Peoples Struggle.
  - (c) The experiences and perspectives of the movements present.
  - (d) prospects for action in Western Europe - effective methods of weakening imperialism and strengthening solidarity with Vietnam.
- That a permanent committee be set up for coordination on a European scale (as a centre for information and to put into practice courses already approved).

The Comite Vietnam has asked for our reaction to these proposals and for our support for the proposed conference. Their proposals should be discussed at our own National Conference and a policy should be formulated

THE INTERNATIONAL (by popular request)

Arise! ye starvelings from your slumbers;

Arise! ye criminals of want,

For reason in revolt now thunders,

And at last ends the age of cant.

Now away with all superstitions,

Servile masses arise! arise!

We'll change forthwith the old conditions,

And spurn the dust to win the prize.

CHORUS

Then, comrades, come rally,

And the last fight let us face,

The Internationale

Unites the human race,

Then, comrades, come rally,

And the last fight let us face,

The International

Unites the human race.

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