

The War and The Movement

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World War Three is already on: most visibly in Vietnam. Vietnam is now *the* theatre of the war going on in the world. Since World War Two, the last inter-imperialist rivalry for cutting up the former colonial world, we have seen national revolutions of different kinds in China, Algeria, Bolivia, Indonesia, Cuba, Egypt, Korea and Vietnam; that is, qualitative changes in the State apparatus of former colonial territories. These struggles for national independence have now taken the form of wars of national liberation from the remaining imperialist powers, and this is now the principal political contradiction that is driving world history onward. The war in Vietnam is the most clear cut and ferocious of these struggles. It is essentially between a united and revolutionary people who have fought ceaselessly for twenty years to expel Japan, France, and now the U.S. from their homeland, and an imperialism, a systematic and crucially profitable exploitation of raw materials, markets, and labor in the former colonial areas, which

is now entering its historical phase of defeats, domestic crises, and a fight for its own life.

WHAT THE WAR IS ALL ABOUT

Both sides in the Vietnam war have certain goals, just as both armies represent the interests of certain sections of their peoples. The National Liberation Front, the "Vietcong" of our screaming news headlines, represents the will of the majority of the south Vietnamese people, particularly the landless, rural-based peasantry. It is a mobile people's army with a political and military strategy for national liberation. They are revolutionary because they mean to bring about a qualitative change in their State, and in their liberated areas are doing so. This is why they are winning. They are not only a fighting arm that 'lets the people decide': they are the people who have *decided*.

On the other side, the United States Army represents the interests of major corporate industries

who for some time now have based their profits in the former colonial or slave territories of the world, namely Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Because that base is more and more threatened by wars of national liberation, by pitched battles and guerilla warfare now going on in Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, Angola, Portuguese Guinea and Venezuela, and by starts and stops in the Congo and Dominican Republic, Indonesia and south Korea, the U.S. is fighting for much more than a "pacification" of Vietnam.

The U.S. is in fact fighting to demonstrate to the peoples in the emerging colonial nations that imperialism, and its colonial consequences of hunger, poverty, disease, helplessness, and death, form a dead-end in history, that there can and will be only one ruler, imperialism, and namely, United States imperialism. That is what the wanton napalm bombing of towns and villages in north and south Vietnam is trying to convince those people. That is why that wanton napalm bombing of towns, villages, industrial sites, missile installations, cities, hospitals, agriculture, Haiphong, and then Hanoi, Nanning, Shanghai and north must and will go on—systematically—in the face of continuing defeats *on the ground*, face to face with armed and united *nations*. This is why the U.S.' interests do *not* lie in "negotiations," or other such by now exhausted tricks. This is why productive forces here in America are being mobilized on a mass basis to fight and produce materiel for a very long war, Vietnam and beyond.

NATIONAL LIBERATION...

At the heart of all this is the ideological struggle: capitalism vs. communism, contained in the forms of a losing imperialism vs. the forces of national liberation for political/economic independence. The systematic anti-communism

in American political structure, and in the American mass media and daily press, reflects this government's ideology very well, and at the same time reflects the Achilles Heel of U.S. imperialism: that it is through expanding economically and geopolitically, and that it is on the strategic *defensive*. For China too the ideological struggle is real: the systematic building of an industrial and agricultural base for economic self-sufficiency and the systematic building of a mass-based communist party for the political education not only of its own people, but also the peoples of the emerging colonial nations, on the war now going on in the world, on who the main enemy is, on how to fight him politically and militarily, on how to win liberation and socialism.

...THROUGH REVOLUTION

I think we must take the goal of socialism for granted in the program and fight of the National Liberation Front. Their demand for reunification with north Vietnam makes that fairly clear. In fact, north and south are merely geographic and arbitrary military divisions, forged by foreign intervention, to a nation of more than 30 million people, the vast majority (75 per cent according to Eisenhower as of 1961? Or did he say 80 per cent?) of whom regard Ho Chi Minh as the leader of the post-World War Two Vietnamese nation. But their fight and their resistance have, again, far more shattering implications. For if the unprecedented military technology and might of the United States cannot roll back their revolution, i.e., annihilate millions of Vietnamese and above all annihilate their will to resist, it means definitively the beginning of the end for imperialism. It means the tide is turning and will begin to pound imperialism with the primitive force of a hurricane.

It means the years ahead will unfold the relentless forces of popular revolution throughout the colonial world. It means men and women with a spirit and an ideology can defeat materiel, serviced more and more by forced labor, and by soldiers only for cash hire. This is what the example of Vietnam means. This is what their fist will mean to the rest of the colonial peoples of the world.

THE MOVEMENT

In partial recognition of the primarily colonial status of the majority of American black people, particularly in the South, students throughout this country formed the organizational base of the Civil Rights Movement. It has been largely a bourgeois response, with bourgeois goals (this, even though the right to vote, the right to use public accommodations, the right to equal education, etc. seem like, and in the long run *are*, revolutionary demands to the

ruling class oligarchs of the American South) and strategies that tend to become confused between the Federal Government as "the headstrong porter of justice" on one hand, and its "ineffectuality" (unwillingness) to even *locate* let alone lend support or protection to the actual struggles, on the other.

We had better note, and note *hard* because it's going to tell, that the so-called historic Civil Rights Law of 1964, while purporting to be the guarantee of racial and religious equality, mindfully left out the word "creed," i.e., your political beliefs. Depending on which racist state of the south you are in, this effectively means no rights for controversial, radicals, left-wingers, or communists. Free University of Florida (Gainseville) was prevented from finding a site on the basis of "creed" recently: controversial.

More appropriate political measures for black liberation in the



South, such as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, the Deacons for Defense, coalitions of these with SNCC, now merit more continuing attention than does the earlier and present work of white students there.

THE MOVEMENT... ...MOVING LEFT

Thus, the Civil Rights Movement was and is just that, and not a movement for fundamental black liberation. It did however, above all else, begin to reflect one important political aspect of a losing imperialism. Complementing it, with hemispheric rather than immediate national implications, was the most stunning single event of the Cold War period: the Cuban Revolution. Aside from its sheer heroics and fabulous leadership, it flew in the face of and shattered the belief that Latin America was permanently in the bag for concentrated and protracted exploitation by the U.S.

The Cuban Revolution, for the whole American hemisphere, pointed the way from national liberation to socialism, a mass triumph for the Cuban people which nearly 150 American students in the summers of 1963 and 1964 were privileged to see. ("For to see Cuba is to have your eyes peeled.") This was an important interlude of sorts in the student movement here, because the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution after 1961-62, and the avowed Marxist-Leninist character of its leadership, were rather strong pills for the "new left" to swallow. The romance of 1959-62 with the *barbudos*, Fidel, Che, Raul, Almeida, Cienfuegos, etc., was over.

When I say I had my eyes peeled in Cuba in 1963 I mean more than my own entry and activity in political work since then,

and more than a basic understanding that revolution is the road for Latin America from now on. I mean my own country and the nature of its system. Speaking to representatives of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam in Havana about their war was a start: I had only the most fragmentary information about it at that time; there was a virtual press blackout of the war until the fall of Diem late in 1963; there were no mass public demonstrations against it here until nearly a year later; and so forth. Now, more than two years later, with 150,000 U.S. troops carrying out a land, air, and sea assault on Vietnam, and a mass-based student movement protesting that war, we can begin to define the problems and perspectives for the radical social change of America itself, the last bastion of imperialism.

THE 'NEW LEFT'— HOW 'NEW'?

A year ago Che Guevara said "I can't help it if reality is Marxist," and in a flash disposed of the notion that any accurate bourgeois description or analysis of an historic process could be written.

Thus, a lot of horseshit has been written about the "new left": from the scandal sheets of the hysterical anti-communist daily press (in New York, the *Daily News*, the *Journal American*, the *World-Telegram*) to the cynical, less and less mildly amused jargoniers of the big ruling-class weeklies (*Time*, *Newsweek*); from the gagging editorials of the old *New York Times* to some sort of pro-labor faker named Thomas Brooks who wrote an article, "Voice of the New Campus 'Underclass,'" in their Sunday edition of Nov. 7, 1965; from well paid government agents like Phil Luce, a terrified junky who fell apart under pressure and sold one ball to the *Saturday Evening Post*,

the other to the *National Review*, his ass to the F.B.I., and who now appears as a screaming faggot "spying" on public demonstrations in New York, to panders like his friend Jack Newfield of the *Village Voice*; from "honest" opportunists of the left like Irving Howe, Bob Scheer, S.M. Lipset, etc., to the pacifists who call arms, killing, and war, not their causes, the ultimate evil. They all piss through the same quill, and reflect the same long-range fear: revolution.

There is really nothing "new" about the American left at this point. Potentially, if it can unite around revolutionary theory and program, i.e., developmental and protracted struggles that will make it new, or qualitatively different, then we will truly deserve the name. Otherwise the definition will wear a bit thin: we came from somewhere and are going somewhere.

Thus, we are new only insofar as we are visible and vocal to a base, just as our Cold War historical parents were not. We could trace the reasons for this back from the so-called democratic principles of the anti-Leninist Socialist Party of the twenties, or the lack of ideology and strategy in the mass-based Communist Party of the thirties, periods of boom and bust in a growing corporate capitalism, to the "non-exclusionism" and "non-ideological radicalism" (which is only a new way to put an old humanist, pacifist, or left ideology) of the present movement in a period of losing imperialism. But that is not the main purpose here.

THE 'NEW LEFT'— HOW 'LEFT'?

The bourgeois press, as indicated, has of course seized on the war in Vietnam and the protest against it to point out that students now have a new "bit," or phase to go through, or hook to hang their commitment on, or are moving

THE MOVEMENT

left, etc., as if it were still 1910 in a growing and unhampered America, and given some reasonable measure of alienation as a consequence of bourgeois society, have a measurable number of rocks to get off. But in so far as this press reflects the government's line, and succeeds in its most important particular task of splitting the movement around the fear of being called communist, it is a real danger to the movement. It is, moreover, a mask for government attack, i.e., federal prosecution against leaders of the movement, attacks specifically designed to cut off the head and thus kill the body. For this reason, which involves a fundamental understanding of the State *not* as some neutral mediator over and above particular struggles, able to go either way or any number of ways,

with its courts, legislatures, law and order, etc., but as a pivot in the struggle itself, and more, as *the* conscious political arm of the enemy, the enemy of the whole movement, the problems of red-baiting and ideology are more than skin deep.

These problems involve conscious and fundamental choices of political perspective: reformist or radical, bourgeois or revolutionary, anti-communist or communist. In the long run there is no middle ground. The slogan in the coming long haul is not the fantastic and religious "We Shall Overcome" (with what we got?!), but rather "Which Side Are You On."

The unwillingness of SDS to red-bait is, in its positive aspect, the need and demand for an ideology, from which flows programs and

concrete organizing. On the other hand, the need for education is not static: it is either acted on or it is not. If it is not, over the course of time in which we become politically conscious and active, then "non-ideology" will really represent bourgeois or reformist ideology. Take, for example, the concept imperialism. It is being used more and more to describe the system or the establishment or the government's foreign policy. If, among the leadership, membership, and base of the movement, there are no adequate educational programs involving students in reading Marx, and Lenin's "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism," and "State and Revolution," as well as works of Mao Tse-Tung, Che Guevara, Engels, Paul Baran, Philip Foner, J.P. Morray, Caudwell, and William Appleman Williams, John Gerassi, Frantz Fanon, Truman Nelson, Malcolm X, etc., with not only no adequate educational programs or study groups for reading these works but also no discussion of them in the context of our own political work, then all the talk about a need for ideology is a lot of gassing.

In concrete terms, the protest activities, programs, and organizing of the movement, against the war in Vietnam, around ghetto and student oppression, for political perspective and the right to demand it, for political resistance and the right to organize it, now begin to slam into government opposition at all levels. This is what mobilization for war means. In the face of it, we have no "right" to organize resistance to the draft for the Vietnam War.

Do we then, as SDS President Carl Oglesby has proposed, try to "build, not burn," inside the government's Peace Corps? Do we become part of the government's literal "pacification" wing, and thus work in colonial countries such as Vietnam to undercut the forces of national liberation



with "construction for peace" while our fellows under conscription and the discipline of war continue to maim, bomb and murder an entire colonial people? Isn't such a formulation in contradiction to our understanding of the war? Or, what *is* our present understanding of the war?

Are we clear on the nature, the strategies and goals of national liberation in countries that have suffered the thoroughgoing ravages of colonialism and imperialism? If so, how clear, regards our own outlook? If not, why not? Do we continue to build an opposition to the Vietnam draft based on the understanding that the war is imperialist, and therefore not in the interests of the vast majority of young men who are its materiel? If so, what are the appropriate political forms, for further education about the war and further building, yes, of the movement?

These are some of the questions what are now large numbers of people in the whole movement must answer. Real unity of the various left groups in the movement must be based on certain answers to these and other questions. Pragmatic unity for the time

being is good because growing and intensifying public protest against the war is our main weapon. But it may play out unless we arrive at agreements on programs, and unify on the basis of an ongoing analysis and correct line.

The forms of struggle, far from being exhausted, are just opening up. The government attack, investigations and prosecutions, is also opening up. The federal prosecution against nine of us who opposed U.S. foreign policy by traveling to Cuba and organizing the two student trips there, is only the first in what will be a series of these trials and convictions. We are not going to prevent these attacks, except if we suddenly vanish, which is not in the cards. How, then, do we respond to them and further isolate the government and its oppressive policies—foreign and domestic? How do we turn a bad thing into a good thing— qualitatively and quantitatively? in consciousness and in numbers? Where do we go from here?

PROGRAM MEANS STRUGGLE...

Regards the anti-draft part of our opposition to the war, we continue to agitate among and win numbers of a primary government base: young men, college students, and high school students now clearly earmarked for the war in Vietnam. Regards the campus part of our opposition to the war, we continue to expose the university's ties to the war, its research programs and its cooperation with the draft. Regards the ghetto communities, we continue to educate, organize independent action programs, lose elections for local offices but win the people. Regards demonstrations and teach-ins, we step up the pace, character, and relationship of them to ghetto people and workers, and begin to seek, win, and consolidate these as yet untapped bases of popular support. Re-

gards students, we organize strikes to defend our fellows against the draft and the war, and *for* our right to oppose government policy:

Finally, most of us could be doing something else: writing, teaching, staying in school, the sciences, industry, art, law, liberal politics, business, etc. That is what was expected of us. Much of that is still with us. We must leave most of it behind, for its values are coercive and useless, and will become more so as we grow in the new direction.

THE LONG HAUL

Love and self-respect are not magical qualities in a deranged society; they are the minimal requirements to fight for its change. Neither should we confuse the peaceful nature of the movement today with pacifism as our guiding ideology. Pacifists seem to have fallen into that confusion, and more and more boldly advocate non-violence to the victims of violence, to the Vietnamese people, to black Americans, to the rest of us in the fight for liberation and peace. Here is the impossible madness of the middle ground: if only our government were not murderers, if only the bourgeois illusion of freedom and democracy and one guy being as nice as the next in a bizarre American fantasy that never existed, really did exist! But it doesn't, the war goes on, the Viet Cong shoot back. The logical consequence of the pacifist position is to burn a draft card, a bold but limited act which clears or absolves the individual conscience from the horror of war, but does little to help organize against it.

We have a long and dangerous way to go, if indeed we go it. We will need to temper and steel ourselves, together, not in isolation. We have perhaps the hardest task in the world ahead of us now. We better be good if we mean to go all the way.

