

Vietnam should be negotiated by the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese do not think so; they have chosen to fight for victory.

ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE NLF !!

The decision in this matter must remain with those who are being bombed and gassed and burned and tortured. Despite the murderous bombing they refuse to be coerced into 'negotiations'. They demand unconditional cessation of the bombing. As long as they choose to continue fighting - and, if the picture of US difficulties is even half-accurate, their choice is not only heroic but entirely logical - it is up to us to give them all the support and solidarity we can.

Like the US negroes we best aid the NLF by stepping up our own struggles to weaken and overthrow capitalism in our own areas. The criminal collusion of Wilson's government in the American Butchery must be denounced. WHERE THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO DO SO, TRADE UNIONISTS SHOULD CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF WORK STOPPAGES, EVEN TOKEN ONES, IN PROTEST AGAINST THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS WAR. Direct working class action of this sort has in the past proved by far the most effective form of pressure: perhaps the best known case was when London dockers' action stopped British arms being sent to Poland for use against Russia in 1920. War material from Britain has gone to help the US war effort.

We must demand not merely an end to bombing and aggression against the North - BUT ALSO IN THE SOUTH. WE MUST DEMAND UNCONDITIONAL US WITHDRAWAL.

Demonstrate under the slogan of genuine solidarity

VICTORY FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT !!

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U.S. GET OUT OF VIETNAM NOW!
INTERNATIONAL PROTEST
TRAFALGAR SQUARE 2.30
October 22nd.

President Johnson has again sent an extra draft of troops to Vietnam, while official US casualty figures rose higher for the first six months of this year than the whole of 1966. Still the workers and peasants of Vietnam resist and repel the massed onslaught of the most powerful army in the world, backed by all the latest science and technology.

A report in the OBSERVER stated that "two out of every three Americans, according to the polls, accept the fact that the war is not going well... The much-heralded American sweep in the Mekong Delta seems bogged down in a waterlogged stalemate; in the Northern provinces a division of Marines has been regularly battered by Communist attacks ever since the beginning of the year; and even the pacification programme in the villages is conceded recently to have shown disappointing results."

The report continues: "...despite all the bombing raids, Communist strength in Vietnam has increased by over 150,000 men in the last 18 months. It is not just that that figure inevitably casts doubt, if not blank disbelief, on the regular American weekly estimates thousands of Communist casualties in the field; it also pointedly raises the question of what exactly has been gained over the past two years by the loss over North Vietnam of more than 600 American planes." (9th July 1967). If the NLF casualty figures have been wildly exaggerated (an American major was quoted as saying, after a press handout: "That's the third time that VC battalion is supposed to have been wiped out") it is reasonable to suppose that the converse is true, and that official figures for 1967 of US dead and wounded must be added to before a realistic estimate emerges.

STRIKES. AID N.L.F.

Coupled with the military activity of the NLF in the rural areas has gone an increase in the industrial activity of the workers in the urban centres of South Vietnam. By means of the mass strike the

was "Reconvene The Geneva Conference". (And it is not entirely discarded even now). Appropriately George Brown himself now hides behind this demand! While the Vietnamese are winning - as in 1954 - or even when they are holding their own, only the imperialists can benefit from this sort of Big-Power manipulation.

One thing is certain. The imperialists would like nothing better than negotiations. This would open up all sorts of possibilities for consolidating their power in the area, with full freedom to get the best out of the situation, either directly or through the UN; the CIA would have a free hand to manipulate the political puppet strings; and a face-saving cover would be found for Moscow. At worst, if the fighting resumed - the strategic military advantage of time to regroup and recoup would have made the exercise worthwhile for the Pentagon.

Advocates of Negotiation - often under the heading of PEACE - range from Johnson, the Pope and Harold Wilson to the honest rank and file member of the CP and IWP who, horrified by the disgusting nature of the war, thinks he is helping the Vietnamese by calling for the re-convention of the Geneva Conference. The Vietnamese know that the original Geneva was responsible for their present predicament. It is perhaps only because of the shocking plight of such fine people, that working class militants in Europe who in a strike would not dream of 'returning to work so that negotiations can begin' (who would regard this as a defeat) fall for the CP line.

But such people are not helping the Vietnamese. This approach confuses the nature of the war and helps Johnson weaken resistance in the US. It helps our own puppet-politicians to dismiss opposition to their support of US imperialism by claiming that the solution "lies in Hand". It is based on the assumption that the Americans' right to be in

In the midst of all the segregationist, 'Afro-American' nationalist confusion, is a budding internationalist identification with the workers and peasants of Vietnam. This is perhaps summed up in the figure of Cassius Clay, in his almost symbolic combination of physical strength, confusion of ideas and solidarity with the Vietnamese because they and the US negroes are ground down by the same oppressors. The hungry of the Great Society are quick to spot the hypocrisy of those horrified by the 'violence' of their attacks on property and cops, when the same voices, actively or passively, support the mass murder in Vietnam. Some must even take pride in the inevitable nuisance it must be to the 'War Effort'.

It would be an act of treachery to the Vietnamese fighters to take these facts complacently and sit back in rosy satisfaction declaring that the war is as good as won. IT IS BY NO MEANS WON. The power of the US should not be underestimated. The strain, the sustained pressure on the Vietnamese, is tremendous. Though Vietnam receives pitifully little help from Russia and China, there might well be room for some treacherous horse-trading, if either of them gets the chance. Some capitalist journals suggest that Johnson's policy has aimed at a deal whereby Russia would use its position to pressurise the Vietnamese into accepting the status quo (i.e. a continuation of the slavery of the people of South Vietnam) in South-East Asia, in return for the US persuading Germany to accept the present status quo in Europe. The longer the war continues, the more vulnerable the Vietnamese become to such pressure. This would be in the infamous tradition of Geneva 1954 - where the actual victory of the Vietnamese was frittered away and the US given time to step into the old French position in Vietnam.

NO MORE GENEVAS !

Until recently, the main plank in the policy of the "Communist" Party and the Irish Workers Party

working class has given concrete aid to the NLF. Such is the level of industrial militancy that at times severe damage had been done to the imperialist war effort. For example, a strike at the RMK construction company involved 15,000 workers and held up work in airfields, ports and depots totaling 1 billion dollars. Even scab labour often fails, as happened at Cam Ranh, where Philippino & Korean workers imported to sabotage a strike of Vietnamese workers, actually downed tools in support of the strikers. Vietnamese dockers have also been noted for their militancy, and strikes have seriously held up US war supplies.

US 'mastery' of the situation does not look like improving in the near future. A Congressional Report recently stated that "... it is beyond question that the effectiveness of the American military presence in South-East Asia .. depends on the security of the American bases in the Philippines." Not only does the above example of the solidarity of the Philippino workers bode ill for that security. The HUKS (= Army of National Liberation, with a policy of large scale agrarian reform and industrialisation) have recently been regaining some of their past strength. The NEW YORK TIMES commented not long ago that the guerillas "have been able to become the most powerful political force in the country." TIME MAGAZINE recently stated that they already control in varying degrees 1,400 square miles and 500,000 people, but their political power is growing even faster than their geographical boundaries.

REINFORCED BICYCLES !

In North Vietnam itself morale is high despite the incessant bombing. Expert planning and co-operation keep the country moving, and could probably continue to do so indefinitely - though any bombing of the dykes would have far more serious effects. An eye-witness report published in the OBSERVER last January described "HOW N. VIETNAM SURVIVES": "Burnt trucks, destroyed locomotives, twisted bridges -

and yet things still move. For every bridge that stands the Vietnamese have one or two in reserve made of bamboo, wood or boats, ready to be thrown up. Detour routes are prepared in advance. Everywhere there are mounds of earth and stones, sleepers and rails, waiting to be used." If fuel or roads failed, bicycles would still be used, pushed on dark paths through the night: "They are often in groups of ten. Each re-inforced bicycle can carry up to 6cwt: bricks, rice, everything that can be loaded on such a machine ... 10 cycles with 6cwt. each replace one small lorry."

To outwit the bombers "The decentralisation of the economy and the administration ... has robbed the planes of big targets. ... The big factories evacuate to the country part of their equipment, staff and management... Some surgical wings of Hanoi's hospitals have been dispersed to the provinces, where they continue to function." The report concludes: "The thousand-and-one inventions of the Vietnamese have been applied in such a way that the air raids could last years before resistance broke. The authorities do what they can to enable the people to live 'as before'. The cinemas are full, the circus is open (except that the large animals have been 'decentralised' into the countryside) and the artists sing and dance in the music hall." (1.1.67).

Another report from Hanoi describes the various uses made of downed American war materials: "Parachute shrouds from flares dropped by the Americans are turned into hammocks for children. Parachutes become pillow-slips, bed-spreads, camouflage covers and scarves."

"Each of the supplementary fuel tanks jettisoned by American pilots can be cut in half to make two small boats capable of carrying a man, his weapons and his equipment. Bomb casings, napalm canisters and the girders from wings and tails are turned into shovels and picks. Containers from

ball-bearing bombs are made into plates, saucepans, bowls, surgical instruments, sterilisation trays and splints for broken limbs. The North Vietnamese make tankards, flutes and one-stringed musical instruments from flare and rocket tubes. Mudguards and chain-guards for bicycles come from small pieces of wing..."

'BOMBS INTO PLOUGHSHARES'

"The story is told of one bridge in the Ky Anh district, some 200 miles south of Hanoi, which was so heavily bombed that the surroundings produced 30 tons of bomb fragments. A forge run by the neighbouring farm co-operative used them to turn out 60,000 ploughshares." (B.-J. Cabanes. TIMES Oct.6)

Back in the United States, opposition to the war is growing daily, and, with the prevailing demand that imperialism should get out, is on the whole on a far higher level than the innocuous Peace in Vietnam committees here, with their tame plea for 'negotiation'. Out of the growing number of young war veterans, groups throughout the country are forming to oppose the war, and are rapidly linking up nationally. With elections coming up next year - the only time when the politicians bother about what the people think - these pressures from within could be a real help to the liberation fighters in Vietnam.

U.S. NEGROES AND VIETNAM

With cannon and mortar the Vietnamese peasants are holding down sufficient troops and equipment to bring the US economy into serious trouble. Inflation has added dynamite to the smouldering anger of the unskilled negro workers who, despite the key-ed-up war economy, have no hope of a job in the foreseeable capitalist future. Housing and living conditions are impossible in the ghettos - yet the total budget of Johnson's so-called 'anti-poverty' programme is less than the cost of planes lost over North Vietnam. Capitalism, of course, has its own priorities.