

Unknown – “Bringin’ the War to Muncie” – Vol. III No. 2 October 3, 1969

The anti-war movement is beginning to grow and extend itself, reaching even into provincial Muncie and Ball State University. An "ad hoc" committee, the Ball State Vietnam Moratorium Committee, was formed following the recent USNSA conference attended by student government leaders from Ball State. As their first action they have issued a call for support of anti-war activities on Wednesday, October 15th.

Centering primarily around the reading of the war dead, a tactic developed by the Quakers this spring in Washington, the activities planned by the local committee will also include the wearing of black arm bands signifying mourning, the showing of the anti-war film "Vietnam: How We Got In - How to Get Out," speakers, a death march on Wednesday evening, and a vigil outside the administration building until midnight Wednesday.

While the national Vietnam Moratorium Committee has called for a suspension of all "business as usual," the Ball State committee, apparently fearful of the negative connotations of a boycott or strike of classes, has decided not to call for or encourage suspension of all university business on the 15th.

The attempt to educate the community (limited to Ball State due to lack of time, according to local committee members) will center on the moral issues (i.e., "40,000 American boys have been killed fighting in Viet Nam" and "We have no right to impose our system of government on another nation.")

Criticism of this approach, mostly from movement radicals (TOA included), says that the moral approach lacks depth and understanding of the causes of Viet Nam -- causes that will surely result in other Vietnams until resolved. Hence, for the radicals, the anti-war movement must come to grips with the role of the United States in the entire world before it is going to be successful in understanding the present Vietnam as well as preventing future ones. The lesson of Vietnam is that the U.S, even with no immediate or significant economic interests at stake in Vietnam, is trying to tell the rest of the Third World (Asia, Africa, Latin America) not to attempt change that threatens U.S. economic and political interests abroad especially revolutionary change that results in a massive reallocation and control of wealth.

Until this "economic imperialism" on the part of the U.S. is ended, the Movement critics forecast that future Vietnams are inevitable. And until that part of the anti-war movement that fails to deal with the issue of U.S. imperialism begins facing the harder questions of the U.S. role in the entire world, then their protests are futile, limited only to the immediate conflict in Vietnam.

The criticisms of the local committee, both those based on the lack of in-depth understanding of the causes of Vietnam (imperialism), as well as those resulting from the failure to carry-out the objectives of the national committee, are well known and acknowledged by some of the Ball State committee. When Mary Munchel, local chairman of the Moratorium Committee, was questioned about the plans presented at Monday's meeting, she indicated an awareness of and partial agreement with the aforementioned criticisms.

Another local committee member has indicated that because of the growing amount of criticism, the moratorium resolution to be presented at Thursday's (October 2) session of Student Senate, may include a call for "suspension of all University business."

Although the staff of TOA has important fundamental reservations and criticisms of both the National Moratorium Committee and the local Ball State committee, we nevertheless support the moratorium action.

We do, however, call for a moratorium that results in the suspension of all University business (Burris, Central and Southside are also to be encouraged to participate), leads to a fuller discussion of the war and imperialism than the local committee intends, and results in ongoing anti-imperialism movement in the Muncie area.

In the coming months a number of anti-war actions will be taking place – actions that can be used to build an on-going anti-war movement in Muncie around.

In addition to the Chicago Action planned for October 8-11 (see this pages 6-10, this issue) and the moratorium on October 15th, there will be further Moratorium actions in November and December, with present plans for these months to include the escalation of the suspension of all regular business to first two and then three days.

Better yet, the Indiana office of the New Mobilization (Remember the Pentagon March in 1967?) Committee will be organizing to bring 10,000 Hoosiers to Indianapolis on November 8th. They hope to begin a viable Indiana anti-imperialist movement and rededicate those ugly war memorials in Indianapolis to peace.

On November 14th, the Mobe is hoping to mobilize 1,000,000 people in Washington to show Tricky Dick (see page 5) just what they think of the war. Part of that action will include a massive death march beginning at midnight. The action will culminate with what the Mobe says will be the world's largest music festival, surpassing even Woodstock.

All of these actions, of course, add up to an extremely busy fall and winter for all of us. As Mary Munchel pointed out, while some of us worry about plastic cups, others are busy with the difficult work of bringing about an end to the Vietnam War.

If we are to build a future of peace, then we must also do the more difficult work of facing and dealing with the role of the U.S. as an economic (and military) imperialist throughout the entire world.

If we fail to face this role, then we will fail to end future Vietnams.