



YSA

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Vol. 9 No. 8
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30 cents

Young Socialist Alliance

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THE VIETNAMESE WAR IN 1966

By Dick Roberts

Introduction

It is probably accurate to say, along with close analysts of the Vietnamese War like Robert Scheer and Bernard Fall, that the Kennedy Administration had counted on crushing the south Vietnamese National Liberation Front with a relatively small commitment of forces and in a relatively short amount of time.

Kennedy probably hoped that a small number of counter-guerrilla specialists, military advisers to Ngo Dinh Diem - himself American trained - and a program of building small concentration camps in the countryside, would most likely end the immediate threat of revolution in south Vietnam.

This is to say that it seem unlikely on the face of it that Washington would have chosen to **make** Vietnam one of the main battlegrounds of U.S. expansion in Asia, if they could have helped it. George F. Kennan, former head of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, began his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Feb. 10, with the following remarks:

"The first point I should like to make," Kennan stated, "is that, if we were not already involved as we are today in Vietnam, I would know of no reason why we should wish to become involved, and I can think of several reasons why we should wish no to. Vietnam is not a region of major industrial-military importance. It is difficult to believe that any decisive development of the world situation is going to be determined in normal times by what happens on that territory." (New York Times, Feb. 11)

Other top policy advisers have been chiding the Johnson Administration for making this mistake. Lt. Gen. James Gavin, Army chief of plans during the Korean War, suggested among other things, that Manchuria would probably have been a wiser place to start the war against China.

However, what is of the utmost importance, the National Liberation Front did not let Kennedy get away with Operation Sunrise. This small revolutionary army dealt mighty U.S. imperialism a resounding defeat, and by the time of Diem's assassination, had all but thrown imperialist forces out of south Vietnam once and for all. At that point, as Kennan continued to explain, Washington felt that withdrawal from Vietnam had to be measured against "considerations of prestige."

The decision was made to make Vietnam one of the showdown battlegrounds with the advancing tide of world revolution. This decision involved escalating the war: first, by launching a major ground and air war in south Vietnam, in which the U.S.

would attempt to crush the revolution by destroying every village and farm which supported it, and by imprisoning the masses of peasants who were able to escape the bombs in huge refugee concentration camps; and second, by escalating the war to north Vietnam, where at the very least, Washington hoped to inflict heavy air damage, possibly even setting back the gains of that country's ten years of progress as a workers state.

In point of time, the bombing of north Vietnam began before the first waves of new troops were sent into south Vietnam. - and this, for obvious propaganda reasons.

What is crucial to remember is that this decision was made sometime in 1964 - we can't know exactly when - but certainly by the time of the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August of that year, and clearly before the presidential elections in November.

A major function of those elections was to obscure Washington's real intentions in Vietnam, and to free the hands of the war makers to carry out the escalation of the war which had already been planned. In this respect, Johnson's 1964 "peace campaign" was no accident. It was designed to bind the American voter in a coalition with the Democratic Party, which would render him helpless to influence the carrying out of the war plans.

But the 1964 coalition, however fantastic its achievement at the polls may have seemed at the time, is already undergoing severe internal strains. Not only did the Vietnamese escalation come as a major shock to many who had been fooled by the peace talk, but history did not allow Washington to focus attention solely on Vietnam.

Three weeks after the election, the Washington gang found it necessary to throw its support behind a brutal massacre of black African revolutionaries in the Congo; and not much later than that, a popular democratic revolution in the city of Santo Domingo forced Johnson to send 30,000 U.S. troops to the Dominican Republic.

By November of 1965, just one year after the "landslide" victory of the Johnson coalition, the American ruling class found it imperative to undertake a new and even more extensive propaganda drive to maintain its grip on the American vote. This is the central meaning of the 1966 "peace offensive."

The "peace offensive" marks a turning point in the development of American politics, as well as a significant conjuncture of the development of the war in Vietnam. It is not by any means over, and much that needs to be said about it comes properly under the separate category of "third partyism" which we are taking up elsewhere in the pre-convention discussion.

Here, I would like to limit the discussion to three other categories as they relate to the "peace offensive": the military situation in Vietnam; the workers' states; particularly the Soviet Union's attitude towards the war; and the effects of the opposition

to the war outside of Vietnam and the workers states, particularly in America.

The Military Front

In two articles which are well worth reading in the December 1965 issue of Ramparts magazine, Bernard Fall and Robert Scheer describe the nature of the new war in Vietnam when the change-over to the genocidal plan was in full force. This had begun by mid-July, and was perhaps in the fourth month when these two articles were written, although neither are dated.

Scheer recounts a conversation with an admiral who is Assistant Secretary of Defense in charge of the Far East: "Vietnam was, he felt, at last defined as basically a military problem of using sufficient American firepower to destroy the enemy. The admiral suggested that if civilians chose to live in areas controlled by the Viet Cong, then they became the enemy. Such areas make up about 70 per cent of the countryside."

"The tactic," Scheer states later in the article, "is one of devastation, demoralization and mopping up...There are already a million refugees and the policy makes good military sense since a refugee is by definition so completely disoriented and demoralized that he is incapable of any course of action other than desperately searching for food and shelter."

"A truly staggering amount of civilians are getting killed or maimed in this war," Fall wrote in the other article after taking a ride in one of the fighter-bombers. At that time there were already over 300 missions a day. "The Vietnam conflict has become an impersonal, an American war...Most knowledgeable people will say that a ten-year 'stabilization' period is not beyond the realm of imagination, with the number of American troops in Vietnam reaching upwards of one million."

The mood of these two articles as well as their contents is worth noting. Both betrayed a feeling of hopelessness in the face of the Pentagon's euphoria. But, the Vietnamese blood brothers were not given to this kind of pessimism, and today the mood that Vietnam is a "winner's war" has all but disappeared from the Pentagon.

Six months of genocidal warfare, the killing of uncountable thousands of peasants, the destruction of their homes and lands, did not produce the results desired in the Pentagon. Instead of being terrorized into surrender, the National Liberation Front heightened its revolutionary opposition to the U.S. aggressors, and in the process, built a closer and greater unity with the masses of Vietnamese people, enabling the NLF to strike anywhere and everywhere it wanted. The bombing of north Vietnam had similar effects, if the account of the British journalist James Cameron, in the New York Times, Dec. 7-11, is to be believed.

"From the moment the United States dropped its first bomb," Cameron reported, "it welded the nation together unshakably. Every bomb since has been a bonus for Ho Chi Minh."

Furthermore, as Malcolm X predicted, and as a Vietnamese colonel explained to Cameron, the American GI's would not take well to guerrilla warfare - and by that they meant the hand-to-hand combat which would necessarily be involved in large-scale battles.

According to the Pentagon blueprint, the enemy was supposed to attack and retreat, and once having been found, would be bombed out. Instead, the guerrillas attacked and stayed attacking, inviting the U.S. to bomb its own men - which it apparently did in the Iadrang River Valley ambush, a fact which also did not prove helpful to GI morale.

"It is fair to say that in this sort of thing," the colonel told Cameron, "the Americans can always be defeated - they dislike it, and they are untrained for it. It is intensely disagreeable, and you have to have a particularly good reason to be able to do it at all."

Furthermore, the Pentagon plans ran into some purely logistical snags. It is possible, and undoubtedly McNamara counted on it, that if the 400,000 troops which he had set as a first step could have been gotten quickly into the battlefield, Washington would have been over the hump of opposition, and could have proceeded to build up the forces to a million men with relatively less trouble.

It turned out, however, that the air-strips and port facilities which were needed to accommodate such a large number of reinforcements had not been built fast enough. At one time, for example, some 90 ships were waiting to get into the Saigon harbor, taking up to 30 days for a landing. Besides men, of course, it was necessary to land food, gasoline, guns, trucks, helicopters and other supplies.

Not only was landing a problem, but getting from the ports to the designated NLF bases could not be done in small numbers because of the NLF's ability to ambush most highways; it required major troop movements.

What all this meant was that the escalation "plateaued off" at about 200,000 troops for an indefinite period of time, giving mass feelings of opposition to the war time to gain tremendous momentum on a world scale. There is no question but that going to the million level now, which will also have to be done step-by-step, will have quite a different psychological effect than it would have had six months ago.

The Mansfield Report

It is this set of military contingencies and their probable

influence on the masses of opponents to the war on a world scale that produced the Mansfield Report and the subsequent tactical controversy which followed its release.

In many respects the Mansfield Report is an unusual document: It is an unusually detailed and accurate analysis coming from the channels it does, and strikes one as more probably like the white papers which Senator Morse likes to refer to, and which usually never meet the public eye. This is quite different from the patriotic and mythological renditions of events which are concocted for public consumption.

Mansfield's basic theme is that conquering the NLF will be nowhere near as easy as it sounds in official pronouncements. He discovered that the NLF was not attacking nearly as often and in as many places as he discovered they could; and that they were attacking everywhere from the mountain jungles, to the farms in the countryside, to Saigon, and even right inside the U.S. military base at Danang.

Mansfield made the interesting observation that the NLF holds Saigon in hostage in much the same way the U.S. holds Hanoi in hostage. If we bomb Hanoi, he implied, we would lose Saigon.

The best that could be said for U.S. accomplishments to date, he went on, is that we occupy five large bases, and even these, he said, would have to be steadily reinforced. The U.S. had made no headway whatsoever since 1966 in displacing NLF control of the countryside, Mansfield indicated, and probably couldn't even begin to change this situation until the end of 1965, possibly never completely changing it.

The Mansfield report laid the basis for Gavin's proposal (supported by Gen. Matthew Ridgway, the Army Chief of Staff during the Korean War) known as the "enclave plan." According to this tactic, the U.S. would not try to conquer the NLF by direct attack, but would settle for indefinite occupation of the main bases, and possibly conquer the NLF in the long run by a "war of attrition."

Here, it is significant that even according to this plan of limited war, these generals felt that continued bombing would be necessary and hinted that the U.S. would still need an eventual troop strength of 500,000 men.

James Reston explained why Johnson rejected this plan in the Jan. 21 New York Times: "The President," Reston stated, "is reported to be scoffing at this defensive strategy as 'slow surrender.'" And he continued, "what the President has said in effect is that the objective of the American force in Vietnam is to break the fighting will and power of the enemy, and even the most conservative general officers here think the United States forces will have to go well above half a million if the strategy of searching out and destroying the enemy is even to have a chance, let alone succeed."

A final point is worth making about this dispute over tactics. This is that both positions make it absolutely clear that the main focus of military attention in south Vietnam is on the NLF, with Mansfield estimating the total north Vietnamese infiltration at 14,000. The question naturally arises, why did the U.S. go back to bombing north Vietnam?

In the same article, Reston offered one possible explanation: "To accelerate the bombing of the Vietcong strongholds in South Vietnam - and it will be doubled or trebled this year under present plans - would be hard to explain if the air strikes against Communist North Vietnam were stopped indefinitely." (Bombing missions in south Vietnam, already escalated during the "peace offensive" appear to average about 400 a day as compared to the level of about 300 at the time of Fall's article.)

The Mansfield Report, reflecting a concrete stage of impasse in Vietnam, was one of the factors which produced the "peace offensive." Whether Johnson would have settled for something like the "enclave plan" if this could have been based on a successful blackmail of Hanoi (leading to negotiations in which Hanoi "admitted" its "aggression") seems to me doubtful, but is something we have no way of knowing.

What we do know, however, is that the Mansfield Report warned Johnson that significant moves to allay world pressure would have to be taken before a continued escalation of the war. We also know that Johnson realized the short-term advantages of temporarily appearing to de-escalate the war and having at least some of his debate with the limited-war "doves" out in public.

In this sense, Johnson knew that Mansfield and his supporters would serve as a useful cover, and that is why the Mansfield Report was not released until the "peace offensive" was well underway.

The Sino-Soviet Front

One point which Joseph Hansen stresses in "Vietnam and World Politics" (International Socialist Review, Winter 1966) is the crucial determining role the Soviet Union has played in allowing the escalation of the Vietnamese war to this point. Probably more than any other one single factor on the world scene, it has been the Soviet Union's attempt to placate the United States through non-intervention in Vietnam that has allowed Washington to raise the level of conflict to the point of genocidal aggression.

This does not mean, however, as Hansen points out, that Washington can ever at any one single point of the escalation be absolutely certain that Moscow will not intervene in the next phase. This is one of the reasons for the step-by-step method of escalation, which allows Washington to test the Soviet response at each level.

The "peace offensive" was directed in part at the Soviet Union, and it illustrates how clearly Washington understands the international policy of Stalinism, particularly the Moscow variety. There is no question but that Johnson hoped to lure Moscow into pressuring Hanoi to accept the "peace" proposal, thereby gaining Moscow's official stamp of approval of a blatant blackmail attempt - even if Washington had no intention of following it through.

It was interesting that in the course of pursuing this end, Washington did not expect Moscow to respond publicly in any other way than it did - a point that Johnson and Goldberg stressed on several occasions. The apparent implications are first, that Washington knows that Moscow can't sell out revolutions in broad daylight, and second that there is significant secret diplomacy between the two nations.

The lure to Moscow consisted primarily in building up the "peace-keeping" role of the Soviet Union in the diplomatic arena, and possibly, secondarily, in several other foreign policy "concessions" to Moscow, nearly coincident with the "peace offensive:" These were, the reopening of the Geneva disarmament sessions; Johnson's assurance that he would press for better trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; and McNamara's dropping of the five-year old attempt to include West Germany in a multi-lateral nuclear force (meaning, one assumes, that the next time the imperialists bomb Russia, the bombs will be made in U.S.A.).

All of these don't amount to much, however, and there is no immediate sign that Moscow is cooking up a further betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution. The danger signs, if there are any, consist in the manner in which the "peace offensive" was used to play the Sino-Soviet dispute off in Moscow's, and therefore Washington's favor. The consequences of a secret deal between the Kremlin and Washington in relation to China, however unlikely, would be horrendous indeed for the future of the Asian continent, if not the whole world.

The major task Johnson set for himself in relation to the workers states, however, was in shifting the blame for lack of willingness to negotiate onto Hanoi's and Peking's shoulders. It seems unlikely that Washington would have risked any secret diplomacy with either in the process, since their discovery would have seriously jeopardized the blackmail attempt.

The important question here, of course, is whether Hanoi is ready to negotiate, and if so, under what terms. The obvious point might be made in passing that if Hanoi was willing to negotiate, they certainly would be interested in making this known to Johnson, and would never have relied on Staughton Lynd for such a purpose.

Bernard Fall piles up a lot of evidence that Hanoi has been willing to negotiate since mid-1964 in an article entitled "The

Year of the Hawks," in the Dec. 12 Times magazine section. In this article, Fall points out that "very few outsiders recall that Hanoi has already sold out the South Vietnamese Communists at least four times at the conference table."

From the standpoint of seeing how the more sophisticated neocolonialists look towards Stalinism as a lease on life for world imperialism, the piece is worth reading. In making the case for the present period, however, Fall's article is somewhat tenuous.

What he suggests is that Hanoi would be willing to negotiate if Washington promised eventual withdrawal from all of Vietnam, and was willing to talk to the NLF. That was also the nature of the leak to Sanford Gottlieb in Algiers, and what Lynd said he heard in Peking.

The big problem for these leak-artists and self-appointed diplomats who want to get Washington and Hanoi to the bargaining table, however, is that there has not so far been one single word in any official statement either from Hanoi or the NLF that supports their leaks. The Jan. 5 answer from the NLF to the "peace offensive" was totally unambiguous:

"The 14 million South Vietnamese people," one paragraph states, "pledge to strike harder at the U.S. aggressors, deal them heavier punishing blows, shatter their illusion of victory and make them soon realize that the most 'honorable' way reserved for them at present is quickly to withdraw from South Vietnam, stop immediately, unconditionally and definitively their bombing raids on North Vietnam and leave the Vietnamese and Indo-Chinese peoples alone. The South Vietnamese people will spare no effort and will certainly fulfill most satisfactorily their sacred duty to the fatherland, that is to 'liberate the South and defend the North.'" (Vietnam News Agency Bulletin, Rangoon Jan. 10)

For the time being, however, Fall, Gottlieb and Lynd do tend to lend support to Moscow's international intentions - namely to popularize the idea of a "negotiated" settlement by "negotiating" the Geneva Accords of 1954. Lynd might change his mind, but so far he has done the American Communist Party a favor in the antiwar movement.

He presents the position of negotiations in the best possible light: as a response to actual demands of the NLF; as tacit recognition by Washington of the NLF's "legitimacy;" and as giving credence to a promise Washington might make of ultimate withdrawal.

If one thing is certain, however, it is that if Hanoi were willing to negotiate, and if Washington were willing to negotiate, it wouldn't do the NLF any good; it wouldn't mean Washington recognition of their right to rule south Vietnam; and it wouldn't mean withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The best it could possibly mean, in line with the Mansfield

Report, is that Washington would not try to exterminate the NLF immediately - only in the long run. Washington would occupy south Vietnam indefinitely, ruling by terror, and rounding up and murdering NLF supporters, the way Ngo Dinh Diem victimized the Viet Minh in 1955-56.

Negotiations which would achieve face-saving for all interested parties, however, could be on a much smaller scale than this. The UN debate, for example, might have been the product of a Washington-Moscow agreement; another possibility that received some attention in diplomatic channels and could flow from the UN debate is that the 1954 Geneva Convention would be reconvened to discuss the Cambodian border trouble - all of which is a far cry from bringing peace to Vietnam.

The Non-Military Front

One of the most effective weapons bourgeois propagandists have used against the antiwar movement in this country is the attempt to equate in the public mind opposition to the war with being in the "organized" antiwar movement. This helps them to isolate the antiwar movement from the masses, and perhaps even more importantly, it helps them to demoralize the antiwar movement.

The epitome of achievement on this score was symbolized in Washington at the November NCC Convention, when one of the leaders of the Students for a Democratic Society took the floor. Addressing probably the biggest organized meeting of antiwar activists in recent history in this country, the SDS leader stated that the antiwar movement should abandon open protest demonstrations and bury itself in the community for the long term job of making contact with the masses.

What Paul Booth had been tricked into thinking was that the job of the antiwar movement is primarily to persuade the masses to oppose the war - and if that actually was the job of the antiwar movement, there would be room for much pessimism. But that is not its job. The task of the antiwar movement is to organize the already widespread opposition to the war into a mass vehicle that can do something about ending the war.

The fact of the matter is that the war is tremendously unpopular in this country, on a scale never before known in American history, and that the unpopularity is increasing, not subsiding. The British weekly magazine, The Economist, made this point in the Feb. 5 issue:

"This war," said an unnamed Senator, emerging from one of the many conferences and hearings that have marked the past month, 'is as popular as a rattlesnake.' It is hard to imagine, let alone remember," the Economist continued, "a nation advancing into a major and certainly bloody military adventure with such resolute step and such total disenchantment of heart." (Emphasis added)

One reason for this that we sometimes have a tendency to take too much for granted, is the momentous fact that America stands alone among her imperialist allies in conducting the fight in Vietnam. This was not the case in Korea, and the Vietnamese war is rapidly developing into a larger war than the Korean.

On Feb. 15, French President de Gaulle wrote a letter to his old pal from popular front days, Ho Chi Minh, and told Ho that he essentially accepted what he thought were Ho's terms for ending the war. In fact, an important part of the diplomatic front of the "peace offensive," was the long stays by U.S. emissaries in countries where there is mass antiwar sympathy in the labor and radical movements, most notably, Japan.

In Belgium and Australia, the organized antiwar movements and sectors of the labor movement expressed solidarity with the American antiwar movement on the October International Days of Protest.

This is not to mention those countries where there are open struggles against American imperialism besides in Vietnam. There the identification of these movements of a single common enemy, further undermines American confidence in what Washington is doing. One of the chants of the students in Santo Domingo, for example, who were gunned down by local police in front of American TV cameras was "Dominicana y Vietnam, Unidos Venceran," - "The Dominican Republic and Vietnam, United will Win."

In America; opposition to the war has not yet taken the form of a mass organization against the war. What has been happening however is the steady erosion of mass confidence in the government. An interesting poll was taken only a few weeks before the launching of the "peace offensive" by the Opinion Research Corporation in Princeton, which was released on CBS News, Dec. 14. Among other things, the poll confirmed the fact that a sizeable minority of Americans (they said 9 per cent) favor immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. (That is larger than the total college population.)

But the poll asked a question which is not usually asked and which sheds a good deal of light on the real problems confronting the Johnson coalition. The question was, do you believe the government? Even the asking of the question takes note of a significant undercurrent of American political development.

Yet the fact is, 67 per cent of those polled checked the answer that the government only gives them the truth some of the time and 13 per cent checked the answer that they almost never get the truth. A bourgeois democratic government is defaulting on its major obligation to the ruling class when it is only fooling 20 per cent of the people all of the time.

The "credibility gap" cost George Reedy his job, and it is

unquestionably the main factor underlying Washington's "peace offensive." This is to say that even if the categories I discussed in the previous sections carried absolutely no weight whatsoever in the White House - and it is very difficult to determine what weight they do carry - there still would have been a "peace offensive."

It is not at all insignificant that precisely at this time the most prominent bourgeois journalists, who are the oldest and most experienced intermediaries between the ruling class, the government and the masses, unanimously criticized the Administration precisely on this point. They included the conservative Republican viewpoint of the New York Herald Tribune, Newsweek's Walter Lippman, and the New York Times, and their message was loud and clear: Close the credibility gap before you continue escalating the war.

And not only the Administration. James Reston warned Congress Jan. 21, "No capital ever talked so much about 'great debates' or had so few of them...The American people are entitled at such a time to a candid and searching discussion of the issues in the Congress assembled, but this is precisely the one thing they have not had." That is the point of the Congressional Debate - namely to restore some confidence in the elected legislators, not to end the war.

Senator Young of Ohio, who opened the so-called debate Jan. 14, explained more precisely why Democrats should debate: "If our President moves decisively for such peace our people will support him. If, instead, he approves steadily expanding military involvement, he will please our militarists, and warhawks in Congress. Then in the 1966 congressional elections and in 1968, as casualty lists mount, some Republican politicians...will be the first to denounce this as 'Lyndon's war.'"

Senator Aiken from Vermont, the senior signer of the Mansfield Report, ended the so-called debate, Jan 31, the day of the renewed bombings of north Vietnam: "It is my purpose," stated this aged spokesman of the ruling class, "to support (Johnson's) request for higher taxes and for such controls over the American economy as may seem necessary to hold our losses to a minimum and enhance the prospects for ultimate victory. To divide our Nation in this time of crisis would court certain disaster."

Conclusion

A key to organizing the antiwar movement is to teach it its own strength. We should keep in mind that one of the biggest problems in the antiwar movement is not so much the opportunism of the Stalinists as the pessimism of the students which makes room for Stalinist maneuvers. The Stalinists play on the petty-bourgeois short-sightedness of antiwar activists. The attractiveness of the multi-issue peace-candidate maneuver to these students is that it looks a lot easier than winning a face to face confrontation with the ruling parties on the question of

"immediate withdrawal."

The problem is, of course, that coalitionism of this species not only isn't an easier solution to the war, it isn't a solution at all. It paves the way to greater war.

On the other side of the coin, we shouldn't impute to the people we are trying to bring into an organized antiwar force more than is actually on their minds. There is an obvious lesson in the "peace offensive" for our propaganda tasks, and that is to widen the credibility gap. We have to bombard Johnson and the Democratic Party with the concrete facts, and rub it in deep.

Above everything else, the "peace offensive" was a fraud. Right in the middle of it, the Administration's plan to wage a war of extermination against the Vietnamese people was stepped up to new heights of atrocity. Gas warfare was used (or admitted to being used) on the largest scale so far of the war. The largest ground combats were undertaken, involving thousands of GI's in each one. Bombing was stepped up in south Vietnam, it was stepped up in Laos, and it was extended to Cambodia for the first time, where, Washington stated, it would now "permit" U.S. troops to "follow the enemy."

These are the facts about the Vietnam war, and if anything is clear, it is that the Americans we are trying to reach are hungry for the facts. Absolute top priority in our antiwar work has to be given towards getting the Newsletter into each and every hand which is raised in the struggle against the war. That is what a "propaganda" period is all about, and we're right smack in the center of one.

February 16, 1966

DETROIT AREA REPORT

In the past period, we have sent three comrades to Cleveland and three to Ann Arbor to form a local there. Recruitment in general is slow and we are in the situation of trying to build periphery. We have two potential recruits.

Antiwar Work: The Detroit CEWV is the viable antiwar committee in the city. The leadership is in the hands of SDS which set up a structure which makes it almost impossible to raise political questions. As it is currently set up, anyone can decide to initiate a project, try to get a committee to work on it; project heads then are on the steering committee. Most of the active membership are people we've known for awhile and are political opponents. Our main orientation is to meet new people and involve them in the work. YSA's Vietnam pamphlet and the Newsletter are sold on a literature table in the Committee office.

The Wayne CEWV is now the active group on the W.S.U. campus. It holds speaker meetings, shows films, and plays tapes. It functions as a subsidiary of the Detroit CEWV. We have the same orientation towards it as toward the DCEWV.

The Supporters of the Newsletter is small, but attracting a handful of independents, some of whom have already joined. We are mainly trying to get the BTHN Newsletter around; sales have been very good, especially on campus. We've placed them on CEWV and YSA literature tables.

Campus: This is of course the biggest focus of our local work. YSA is recognized on the W.S.U. campus. It holds biweekly speaker (or film) meetings with literature tables on alternate weeks. We have had a weekly column in the Wayne Daily Collegian in a YSA member's name for the past two terms. Most of the articles have been on the antiwar movement, the Vietnam war itself, and topics relating to the Negro history petition. We have been the spark for heated discussion in the paper on the Vietnam war itself.

Classes: We are running a series of three contact classes now: Vietnam, Basic Socialism, and the Ideas of Malcolm X. In the past year two series of internal classes have been conducted on The Development of Bolshevism 1903-17 and Lenin's State and Revolution. In the summer we conducted intensive educationals on American labor and Negro history and Marxist economics.

Negro History Petition: Pushed on the W.S.U. campus, the petition for Negro-African history course(s) has received some 1000 signatures. Now we're trying to get endorsement from other groups, and we've gotten it from campus SNCC, SDS, and Americans for Democratic Action. We have discussed it in our Collegian columns and in two campus meetings, one last quarter and one this. We are turning the petitions into the Board of Governors

now, having stirred discussion with them for four months or so. We found the campaign, which we conducted on a low key, to be worthwhile in improving our relations with Afro-American students. If the administration grants the course(s) (they say "Far Eastern" history has priority now - I wonder why), we will get part credit.

Misc: Detroit YSA has assisted in the publication of the Marxist Essays in American History...We are now cooperating with the SWP in an outstate Michigan campaign to get our ideas and the BTHN Newsletter to other campuses...We also cooperate with the SWP in holding weekly Friday forums which have been rather large recently; topics include panels on Community Action, Crisis in Detroit Education, and Draft Reclassification (of Ann Arbor students) for Antiwar Activity.

Marilyn L.

THE JOSEPH JOHNSON CASE

After twenty months of defense activity, the Joseph Johnson deportation case is now at a new stage. The initial Immigration Service hearings are over and the government has handed down its decision that Joe is to be deported. Appeals are now necessary and a greatly increased defense effort is necessary.

Up to the time of this decision, the defense has been centered mainly in the Twin Cities, and this has been a major area of work for the Twin Cities Local. It will now be necessary to expand. The needs of the defense committee can no longer be handled entirely in the Twin Cities. Since the YSA nationally will now be called upon to aid in this effort, this report will be directed at giving YSA'ers an understanding of the Joe Johnson case and its importance to us.

Background

The Joe Johnson case really started when Joe was a young man growing up in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Like most of us he grew up believing in the "American dream." He learned in school that America was free, that it was rich because it was free, and because of this that all Americans had an equal chance in life. He learned about the American Revolution and its ideals.

But as he grew up he saw other things. He saw racial discrimination at first hand. He saw the Korean War going on. He began to think for himself. But this was during the McCarthy period, and he lived in a small town in Wisconsin. He had never met a socialist in his life. And at that time there were no antiwar movement or civil rights movement to look to.

So Joe began to look around. Seeing little of value in American society he decided in 1953 to visit Canada. He was then a twenty-two year old student at the University of Wisconsin. He travelled for a while in Canada, and finally ended up in Toronto. There in a plant he worked in he came into contact with members of the Socialist Education League, at that time the organization of the Canadian Trotskyist movement and soon came to agree with their general ideas.

Then in 1959 he found that he was wanted in the U.S. on the charge of draft evasion. He didn't want to be a "wanted" man all his life, and he realized by then that Canada and the U.S. both had the same problem, capitalism, so he decided to return to the U.S. to give himself up. He was arrested as soon as he crossed the border, interrogated for some time, and then "jail-hopped" back to Wisconsin for trial. He pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to two years in Springfield Federal Penitentiary.

After his sentence and parole were completed, he joined the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis and since then has devoted his total energies to the fight for socialism. In 1962 and 1963 he was the SWP candidate for public office in Minneapolis, and is currently the Twin Cities organizer for the SWP.

It wasn't until May 1964, that the Immigration Service initiated its charges against him. The exact nature of these charges will be covered in the defense committee fact sheet, but I'll mention a few of the highlights, because they indicate a little about the fantastic nature of the case itself. The government contends that Joe lost his American citizenship by running for public office in Canada in 1958. They hold him deportable because he overstayed the 48 hour entrance permit he used when he returned to the U.S. in 1959. The Immigration Service doesn't consider the fact that in 1960 he served a sentence that only a citizen need serve. Nor do they consider the fact that he couldn't have returned to Canada during the 48 hour period even if he wanted to. He was not only in federal custody for most of that 48 hour period, but for more than two years later as well.

There are several things that stand out in this case that indicate its importance to our movement. First, Joe is being persecuted because of his politics. Second, the very right of youth to experiment with ideas and to dissent is being attacked directly. Both of these are attacks not only on us but on all the youth who are beginning in larger and larger numbers to question this society and look for radical answers.

In addition to these factors, of course, there are the constitutional aspects to the case and the effect it can have on the general civil liberties in this country. This, in fact, is the basis upon which the defense effort will draw much of its support. This will be detailed further below.

THE LEGAL SITUATION

The legal aspects of the case are complicated. Comrades should read the defense committee fact sheet to get a full understanding of the charges and the laws involved. Ultimately the defense rests upon the claim that native-born citizenship is inviolable, and that the 1951 Immigration and Nationalities Act, which provides several ways in which citizenship can be taken away, is unconstitutional. However, the defense is also taking the position of forcing the government to prove Joe's guilt even under the law. It was felt that this would provide further reason for the constitutional appeals to be heard later.

It was this approach to the case that held it so long in the hearing stage. Defense cross-examination of two key government witnesses turned up contradictions in their stories that led to the recess and reconvening of four different hearings. The contradictions never were cleared up, and as a result the defense will have further ammunition in the next appeals stages.

On January 11, 1966, the first decision came down, and as expected it was unfavorable. Joe was ordered deported. Not only that, he was ordered to find a country that would accept him! An immediate appeal was filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington, D.C. It is expected that the board will

hear the case sometime this spring.

It is expected that this decision, too, will be unfavorable. The Board of Immigration Appeals will probably decide that it has no authority to rule on constitutional issues. The next step will probably be the federal courts. Ultimately, since there are various Supreme Court precedents involved, it is anticipated that the case will have to go before that court.

THE DEFENSE EFFORT

In the summer of 1964, when it became apparent that the Immigration Service charges were serious and that the defense against them would be expensive and require a great amount of public support, the Committee to Oppose the Deportation of Joseph Johnson was formed.

The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee also decided at that time to take the case as a test case and provide the services of Leonard Boudin, the eminent constitutional attorney, as general counsel for the defense. Douglas Hall, a Minneapolis attorney with a long background in civil liberties and labor law agreed to act as local counsel.

By the fall of 1964, the defense effort began to get off the ground. A University of Minnesota Committee was formed, and a general civil liberties group at Carleton College began work on the case. A sponsor drive was begun and several public meetings were held very successfully. Also at that time a publicity breakthrough was scored. The local press, which had so far ignored the case, began to take notice. The Minneapolis Tribune, the major newspaper in the area, assigned its labor editor, Sam Romer, to write an article on the case. It appeared as a major front page article, favorable enough to be later reprinted as part of the Committee's literature. The first hearing in November, 1964, also received a good round of local publicity in the press, radio, and on television.

During the school year the U. of M. committee and the Carleton group kept up the steady work of building the committee and its sponsor base. Large numbers of professors at Carleton have become sponsors. In addition, a number of groups in Minneapolis passed statements of support for the case (including SDS, the Young Democrats, and the DuBois Club).

Because the legal pace of the case was slow and the immediate financial needs of the defense were well within the local capabilities at that time, the committee worked mostly around the Twin Cities area. It was apparent, though, that this would eventually have to become a national defense effort. So in the spring of 1965, a limited national tour was planned. The YSA participated in building this tour and making it a success.

In addition, in the fall of 1965, the committee began to expand its base of nationally known sponsors. Warren Miller,

Nat Hentoff, James Aronson, Paul Krassner, and a number of other prominent liberal and radical intellectuals became sponsors of the defense committee.

A pamphlet on the case was printed, consisting of Joe's story of his reasons for leaving the U.S., his life in Canada, and his prison experiences, as well as telling about the case against him. Warren Miller has written the introduction for the pamphlet.

THE CURRENT NATIONAL TOUR

When the Immigration Service finally made its decision and handed down the deportation order, it became apparent that the needs of the defense would quickly grow beyond those that could be handled in the Twin Cities. A national tour was begun almost immediately. This tour, which will cover almost all of the areas where we have locals or contacts, and which will include a southern swing, will extend over 17,000 miles. At the time of the convention, the West Coast leg will have been completed and Joe will be somewhere in the vicinity of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

THE NEEDS OF THE DEFENSE AND ITS PROSPECTS

The defense has three main needs at this time:

(1) Funds. The Twin Cities Committee to Oppose the Deportation of Joseph Johnson has raised over \$1600 in the period between its formation in the summer of 1964 and the handing down of the decision in January 1966. This has been sufficient to handle the legal expenses and the expenses incurred in the defense effort so far, but now the need exists for a greatly expanded effort. The next hearing will cost somewhere between \$500 and \$1000, and since we don't expect a favorable decision, we will then have to prepare to go into the federal courts, probably sometime in the fall of this year. If further federal court stages are necessary these will be even more expensive.

(2) Sponsors. Since a long and hard defense effort will be necessary, it is necessary for us at this time to build a strong sponsor base for the defense committee. This is the key to future success in our efforts.

(3) Publicity. It is necessary that we rally the greatest possible public support for Joe in this case. It is only by this means that we can expect the next stages to give him a fair and favorable hearing, and it is only by building a public knowledge of the case that we can expect the higher stages of the federal courts to hear the case. We have found so far that because of the unusual nature of this case it isn't hard to publicize. This will be especially true as national publicity is gained and as the defense committee is sponsored by more and more prominent people. Joe's pamphlet will be a major tool in this effort and all YSAers should familiarize themselves with the story it tells.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this report, some of the practical experiences with the case in the Twin Cities should be related.

In general, the reception to the Joe Johnson case and the interest in it has been very good. This has been true both in the Twin Cities and on the tour stops so far. Its uniqueness is always a point of interest. We were at one point afraid that because Joe is not a student it would be difficult to win support on campus. This, however, has not proven to be the case. We have been able to build two committees for him on campuses in the Twin Cities area.

The biggest asset we have in building the defense is the nature of the case itself. The contradictions inherent in it and the obvious aspect of political persecution make our work easy. The frank and clear way that Joe tells his story never fails to attract support. Students, in particular, can usually identify easily with him. He had the same problems that many of them are having and he has become a "man without a country" because of it. The new pamphlet will have the same effect.

Potential sponsors and other civil libertarians, also find the case attractive. The fact that Joe's case raises questions about the nature of citizenship, is often enough to draw their interest and support.

Attention in building the case should be paid to individuals in the antiwar movement. Joe left the U.S. in part out of opposition to the Korean War and is presently an activist in the Minnesota Committee to End the War in Vietnam. This makes Joe's case attractive to many individuals in the antiwar movement.

Paul Eidsvik
February 16, 1966