

Report on Third World Antiwar Work in New York by Derrick Morrison,
December 16, 1969

The New York Third World Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam arose out of the specific conditions in New York City. The following report may provide some guidelines for Third World antiwar work, but should not be taken as a panacea. This report should be shown to all Third World comrades.

The initiation of the Third World Committee took place in the middle of September 1969. We projected the TWC as a united front formation. By meeting out of the uptown headquarters of the Third World Revelationists (a Black and Puerto Rican guerrilla theater group), we were able to involve some of them, who are mainly students. The TWC also attracted Phil Hutchings of SNCC. The base was broadened by the fact that a Third World Coalition, of which the Revelationists were a part, was elected as the student government of Manhattan Community College. Over 50% of the student body at MCC is Third World, i.e., Black, Puerto Rican, and Asian. The TWC also had some participation from the African-American Students Association, a group rooted in several Brooklyn high schools. Through building the various actions of the TWC, we came in contact with the various Black, Puerto Rican, and Asian-American groups on the campuses in the city, and to some extent in the high schools.

The way we sought to build the TWC was through the involvement of Third World Vietnam veterans in the organization. We achieved this to some extent. One of our biggest meetings, about 40 people, took place where a Black comrade who is a Vietnam vet spoke.

However, it was the October 15 Moratorium and November 15 March on Washington that provided the best avenues for the growth and activity of the TWC.

On October 15, we had a rally at the State Office Building site in Harlem. About 300 people attended, listening to a variety of speakers, including the actor Ossie Davis.

On November 13, we sponsored a Third World Conference on Vietnam, which was attended by about 85 people. This poor attendance was due in part to the belatedness of the publicity. And on November 15, we sent down two and a half buses of Third World people to Washington.

In terms of an assessment, while the TWC was able to pull off these actions, it met some resistance among Black militants concerning the war issue. Because the high school movement hasn't as yet gotten itself organized on a city-wide basis, and is at the same time dealing with struggles in some of the schools, the organized high schoolers couldn't see moving on the war. However, we were able to strike up a dialogue with some of the groups. Our efforts went across much better on the campus, but didn't go deep enough, due to attempts which were being made to set up a city-wide organization. However, given the limited forces we

had, we were able to make some headway.

Just the depth of antiwar sentiment manifested around October 15 forced a lot of Third World militants to begin to think about moving against the war. At the same time, there are some militants, like Hutchings, who feel that Third World people should make a conscious effort toward manifesting opposition to the war. It was the convergence of these two tendencies that got the Third World Committee off the ground. In our discussions with some of the militants, they could see antiwar actions in the community, but not with white folks. For example, at an ASA meeting of about 50 high schoolers that we addressed, they could relate to the Third World Conference on Vietnam, but not to marching with white folks in Washington. (We should interject here that this is what happened in New York, and it should not be generalized to the rest of the country.)

On the campus, some of the groups that had emerged in struggles for Third World Studies were much more receptive than those groups that had everything given to them, and thus were still caught up in just a purely cultural outlook. For example, at New York University, the Black student group didn't want to have anything to do with the antiwar movement. Everything they asked for, NYU granted. But at MCC and other colleges in the City University system where struggles took place last spring, we were very well received.

In respect to the future, we hope to continue the TWC, moving around the cases of victimized Third World GIs, providing a forum and setting up meetings for Vietnam vets, and keeping up a constant agitational and educational barrage aimed at the organized Third World student movement. As the antiwar sentiment deepens, we expect to hook up with those individuals and organizations that want to manifest the opposition in the community to the war. We also expect a continued sharpening of the contradictions between Third World GIs and the imperialist army.

As we said before, this is our analysis that arises out of the specific conditions in New York. The content of Third World antiwar activity will take many different forms. The forms will vary with the area and change as the conjunctural circumstances change. We hope that other locals, as did Detroit, will send in reports concerning the forms of Third World antiwar activity in their area.