

**sunday october 27  
2pm embankment  
charing cross**

VICTORY FOR THE NLF AND  
THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION  
DEFEAT US AGGRESSION  
END LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S  
COMPLICITY IN THE WAR

**vietnam**

**solidarity  
campaign**

**bulletin 18  
sixpence**

## Table of Contents

- Editorial: pages 3,4
- Political Education: An Analysis of the September 17th Public Meeting, by G. Crossick: pages 5-8
- Has VSC a Future, by G. Richman: pages 9-11
- Press Statement: page 12
- American Soldiers and the Vietnam Protest Movement, by E. Tate: pages 13-14
- The Direction of VSC, by Brian Douieb: pages 15-16

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### List of Coming Events

- 10 Oct. Public meeting to form Kentish Town Oct 27 ad-hoc cmttee. Friendly Society Hall, 5 Highgate Rd, N.W.5 7.30
- 12 Oct. "Karl Marx pub crawl" sponsored by Southwest London ad-hoc cmttee. Meet at Centre Point, St. Giles Circus, 7.30. Tickets from 27 Pearman St. S.E.1 2/6
- 20 Oct. Films and "Folk songs for Freedom", sponsored by Hackney VSC. White Hart Pub, Stoke Newington High St. For details contact Brian Douieb, 254 9336.
- 21 Oct. Vietnam film show, sponsored by national ad-hoc cmttee. Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton St., W.C.2 7.30
- 26 Oct. Public meeting to discuss plans and tactics for demonstration. Time and place to be announced.
- 27 Oct. Demonstration. Assemble at the Embankment, Charing Cross 2 pm.
- 29 Oct. VSC public meeting to reassess and analysis the demonstration, and to discuss future perspectives.

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A word about the rally that is to follow the demonstration itself. VSC members have a special responsibility to use this rally to organise the thousands of uninvolved individuals who will be on the march. We hope to have leaflets available for distribution at the rally and for local groups to take back with them to use in attempting to explain the demonstration to people in the local areas. It is clear that we cannot leave this job to the bourgeois press, which is certain to distort both our actions and our politics beyond recognition. We should make it our aim to reach a million people, with information about the demonstration.

Finally, we should beware of provocations and strive for an orderly dispersal. Experiences of last Oct. and last March show that most arrests and victimisations are made after the demonstration is over. If we act in a unified way during the rally and in leaving Hyde Park, we can prevent these unnecessary arrests.

## EDITORIAL

On page 12, there is a reprint of the press statement issued by the October 27 Ad Hoc Committee. As readers will note, it gives full information about the route of the demonstration. It is necessary to make a few comments here about this route. VSC agreed to support this route at the N.C. meeting in Sheffield. At this meeting, three proposals were put forward and strenuously argued for. These were (1) a march along Oxford St. (but not into Grosvenor Square); (2) a march through the City of London; and (3) a march to the South Vietnamese Embassy. Although good reasons were given for each alternative, all three were finally rejected. It was felt that to march along Oxford St. would insure going into Grosvenor Square, and no one wanted that (for reasons I will explain below). The connections between the City and the war were too abstract (though nonetheless real). And the South Vietnamese Embassy as a target was seen to be a political de-escalation.

As a compromise, therefore, the final route, involving a march through Whitehall 1, was adopted. The arguments made in favour of this route were: (1) it would enable all of the demonstrators, and not just a few hundreds, to mass outside the target and to participate in collective self-defense if the police attacked; (2) that by focusing on British complicity, it would provide the basis for a local campaign after October 27 (namely a campaign against local examples of British complicity); and (3) by marching to Hyde Park for a rally afterwards, individual demonstrators could be contacted and integrated into the campaign, while at the same time, there would be no repetition of the chaotic and unsatisfactory dispersal on March 17.

On 25 September, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the VSC proposals. There was strong opposition from several individuals at the meeting, who walked out when the committee refused to agree to march to Grosvenor Square. These people, in league with several of the smaller "maoist" groups, are now calling for a separate march to Grosvenor Square on October 27. We should be clear about these people; they are nothing less than irresponsible splitters. In proposing a march to Grosvenor Square, they are unable to offer any arguments beyond vague clichés about "symbols." What they are trying to do, in fact, is to manipulate thousands of people into a battle with the police which few will understand and fewer still benefit by. It is irresponsible to ask thousands of people to march into Grosvenor Square unless their collective self-defense can be guaranteed. The "splitters" give no such guarantee, nor are they concerned to. They feel no responsibility to the people on the march, and therefore deserve absolutely no support from the marchers.

October 27 will be our most militant demonstration yet, we will be at our strongest, and we will insist on the principle of no provocations, no arrests. If the police attack us, we will defend ourselves militantly and effectively. All out on October 27 to make it our most successful demonstration yet!

There are several other points which need to be mentioned. Local groups should take pains to organise themselves for the demonstration. (by having meetings just prior to the demonstration, forming into small cohesive groups, choosing stewards, etc.). In addition, local groups might consider holding meetings after the demonstration to discuss and analyse it, and to plan on-going local campaigns. Also, and this is very important, local groups are needed to volunteer to sell literature, collect money, etc., on the march. Please contact VSC if your group is sufficiently organised to do this.

Elsewhere in the Bulletin, we print a financial appeal. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of VSC depends upon the response to this appeal.

The national office is trying to bring its mailing list up-to-date. Will comrades who have moved send in change of address, and will people who know of possible VSC supporters, send those names and addresses in.

Finally, a word about the Bulletin itself. The Bulletin is specifically intended to be an open forum for the exchange of information and for public debate. The articles in this issue are intended to begin a discussion on the future of VSC, and further contributions to this discussion are especially welcome. We will try to print all that we receive. Also, could local groups send in reports and analyses of their local campaigns. The Bulletin is meant to keep us informed. We should use it.

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If local groups would like any of the following from VSC, just write to 120 Commercial Road, London, E.1.---

Literature (ask for titles and prices)  
Speakers  
Buttons (1s.)  
Flags--paper and also beautiful large  
cloth ones (1s. paper, 10s. cloth)  
NLF shopping bags (2s.)

Bulk rates available for buttons and paper flags.

POLITICAL EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SEPTEMBER 17th  
PUBLIC MEETING.

by  
GEOFFREY CROSSICK.

On September 17th a public meeting was held at Conway Hall, London, by the October 27th Ad-Hoc Committee, its purpose was to be a discussion of the broad issues of the demonstration—primarily the questions of why we demonstrate and how we can build a mass movement behind the mobilisation. In order to make the aim of a discussion more easily achievable, the five platform speakers were limited to brief addresses, in which it was hoped that they would merely outline some of the major problems involved, and then leave the issues to the active discussion that was to take place on the floor of the meeting, which totalled somewhere between 250 and 300 people.

In this brief article, what I want to do is to examine the role which I believe public meetings as a form of political education ought to have in a developing V.S.C., and in the light of these criteria to examine why I believe that the meeting on September 17th was a failure; finally, to suggest that a principal reason for this failure is that in just the same way that we have developed no theory of demonstrations, so we have evolved no theory of the functions of public meetings and political discussion.

The role of open political discussion must be located within the context of two immediate problems facing V.S.C. The first is that after two major demonstrations, and with a third being prepared, we still have no theory or philosophy of demonstrations, let alone a way of embodying that theory in the movement. And tied closely to this is the problem of a growing ritualisation of V.S.C.—most activities and campaigning are geared to two massive demonstrations a year, and we demonstrate for its own sake. There is little conception as yet—though the rare branch does escape this criticism—of V.S.C. as a developing political movement, oriented to involving people, many of them outside the existing structure of left-wing politics, in a constant on-going movement. If V.S.C. is to develop, certain assumptions must be challenged. The essential point, central to my whole argument about our need for a conception of political education, is that on demonstrations it is not enough for us merely to offer people who have reached a certain stage of political consciousness an opportunity to express it; and that conception of a demonstration is implicit in the fact that we have failed to develop a role in political education, and not just propaganda. Linked to this is the need to challenge the assumption of many that numbers or slogans alone can be a political force in demonstrations.

Against this it is necessary for us to develop an outlook and a strategy which recognises that the major politicising influence lies in the political content of the demonstration, and the political quality of the campaign

which leads up to it, and which assesses it afterwards. In essence, the question is whether or not this movement has an educational role which is qualitatively different from a mere propagandising one, however important the latter may be. And it is here that the role of public meetings and open political discussion is central. For V.S.C. must have an educational function in the way in which it involves demonstrators and participators in the movement in a discussion on the meaning of political activity and relating their specific activity, whether it be local or national, to this broader discussion. If all we are doing is offering propaganda, and not this political education, then we are not qualitatively developing people's politics, we are merely increasing their militancy along a single line.

The aims of the September 17th meeting, as articulated in discussions of V.S.C. and the Ad Hoc Committee, and as expressed by the chairman, Dave Slaney, were to examine the broad prospects, nature and strategy of the demonstration. However, the meeting itself, as I will outline shortly, revealed that many people within V.S.C. either did not agree with this concept of public meetings or, the case with the majority, had not fully considered its implications. These aims for the meeting involved asking three fundamental questions:

1) Why do we demonstrate? A question which V.S.C. has never really asked itself, let alone answered.

2) What do we hope to achieve on demonstrations? The failure to answer this question was most evident immediately after March 17th, we had no criteria of success, and there was considerable uncertainty as to what we had achieved.

3) How can we best organise to achieve these ends. The role of this discussion is central. It defines what we attempt to do, and it allows those participating in the discussion to develop their ideas and consciousness - and that includes us, those of us who believe that we hold a position on these issues. If we deny the role of open discussion in developing our views, if we see it as mere exchange of views, then we are adopting just that totalitarian, non-dialectical attitude to knowledge and ideas that we condemn in bourgeois thought.

I now want briefly to outline what I consider to be the main features of the public meeting on September 17th, and to locate a principal reason for that meeting's failure to fulfill a fruitful function, in the lack within V.S.C. of a constructive attitude towards political education. What I want to argue is that if we had been clearer about the purpose of such meetings, then we would have been in a better position to avoid the traps into which we fell.

Six speeches were made from the platform, by representatives of various organisations in the Ad-Hoc Committee. Their attempts to cover the issues involved varied, and two of the speakers failed to do anything apart from

affirming the duty to support the Vietnamese. It was during these speeches that we heard the first interruptions that were to disrupt most effective discussion during the meeting. About fifty members or supporters of the self-styled Maoist British Vietnam Solidarity Front interrupted the speakers with chanted demands that the demonstration go to the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square, and accusations that those who disagreed with them were police agents, C.I.A. agents, and counter-revolutionaries.

My main concern here is not with the interruptions, but with the response to them. I realise that they put all of us who were present under considerable strain, and that in many ways the presence of these B.V.S.F. people may have been enough to prevent the meeting being effective, for their interruptions inhibited what attempts there were to discuss the issues properly. Nevertheless, I am particularly interested here in the response of most speakers from the floor to the arguments of the B.V.S.F., because I feel that that response is closely tied to a looseness of thought about the role of these meetings, a looseness which in this case led to our opponents structuring the nature of the discussion for us. The principal concern of the B.V.S.F. was to make one point—that the only revolutionary thing to do was to march to the U.S. Embassy, and that all who disagreed were, therefore, police agents or, at least, counter-revolutionaries. They offered no political arguments as to the nature of the movement that the demonstration was meant to be part of, no analysis of the political content of going to the Embassy, no arguments about the relations between a march to the embassy and those participating in it. In short it was a form of totemism, a belief in a symbol being the reality. It was argued with bad temper and ill-feeling. The result on this occasion was that people who disagreed with them adopted their form of argument, that is to say, they denied their accusations, called them liars, adventurers, splitters etc etc, and at times lost their tempers. Instead of arguing and discussing along the lines of the three questions referred to above, which could have led to a clear identification of the political emptiness of the attacks on V.S.C. and the Ad-Hoc Committee, the argument was on a superficial level—the value of going to the Embassy as opposed to Whitehall, the value of fighting with the police, etc. The result was that by allowing the B.V.S.F. to structure the arguments the discussion became a conflict over a limited issue, where we marched to, an issue which cannot be taken in isolation, yet which was largely taken in that way in the meeting.

I want to argue that this was not merely the result of an unfortunate set of circumstances, but evolved from the absence of a clear conception on our part of what the meeting was really about. It is significant that when Richard Kuper of I.S. spoke, deliberately quietly and

and withdrawing from the polemic to ask some of the real questions about the function of demonstrations and their political content, he met with very little interruption. It was when they weremet with similarly structured arguments to their own that the B.V.S.F. thrived. There is a manipulative tradition on the British left. It involves platform speakers putting "our line", polemical debate for "victory", and organising demonstrations without the democratic participation, in advance, of as large a section as possible of the demonstrators. All this is, in essence, the absolutist attitude towards political education and discussion that I criticised in the first part of this article. And this is what, I argue, came over most clearly in the way the polemic was conducted by both sides on September 17th. The fact that a vote at the end defeated the demand that we go to the U.S. Embassy is not very relevant. It is a victory on an issue which we had not chosen to fight, but had had imposed upon us. For that reason the evening represented no advance politically for those present at it, they were given no chance to enter into real political discussion.

The conclusion is short, because it has been the basic thread of my argument. It is not just that something went wrong at one meeting. It is that our failure at that meeting was partially due to a failure to have a clear idea of what the meeting and others like it, are about. We in V.S.C. have acted with a degree of irresponsibility, in that we have never really asked what these meetings and political discussion in general, are about. Are they just showpiece occasions, or do they have a very vital role in the context of a view of V.S.C.'s educative function that I have tried to argue for here? The need is urgent for a broad discussion that should have been held long ago about the nature of these meetings and of the Campaign as a whole. If this discussion never takes place then we shall continue, irresponsibly, to make militant leaps in the dark.

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The V.S.C. badly needs financial contributions. At the present time, we are spending a great deal of money on preparations for October 27. In addition, money is needed to carry on our normal activities. If we are to exist as a strong organisation after Oct. 27, it is essential that we raise money now. If each member of the V.S.C. would make out a banker's order for 5 shillings per month, we would be able to meet our expenses. Surely 5s. per month is not too much to give to the one organisation in Britain which is effectively opposing U.S. aggression in Vietnam. Fill in a banker's order today, payable to

Vietnam Solidarity Campaign  
120 Commercial Road  
London, E. 1



V.S.C. has grown in numbers and scope in the past year. From a minority position in the peace movement, it has become a real organisation carrying the message of solidarity with the Vietnamese liberation struggle into the vanguard of political life, sweeping the inchoate and fragmented Left along with it. But its responsibilities have grown in even greater measure. To introduce the meaning of the victory of the N.L.F. against U.S. aggression, first into the whole working class movement, and then into the thinking of the mass of the population, demands more than a propagandist role. It requires organisation, which will qualitatively change the relation of forces within the Left and in public life, and this can be done only if the unity which uniquely characterises V.S.C. (no constituent element having the capacity for this task) can be consciously developed so as to transform in turn the elements within V.S.C. Only then can we confront the British Government with power, and thus challenge its complicity in the war, a complicity which buttresses U.S. imperialism throughout the world.

The war in Vietnam is not an isolated event. It typifies the world wide struggle against imperialist oppression, and thus can truly be identified with oppression wherever it occurs, including within the Western capitalist societies. And so success in that struggle rightly inspires and enthuses people with the belief that we too can successfully confront oppression at home. It gives us the courage to think in terms of ourselves as a new society in the making, as contrasted with a protest movement which seeks to change the policy of existing Governments and structures. It is this liberating effect which gives our demonstrations their militancy, for they are an example of something that we decide upon and determine, rather than a response to what authority decides..

The perspective of V.S.C. must be for an anti-imperialist movement which will give meaning to the slogan of solidarity "their victory is our victory". This is in no way saying that V.S.C. must become the revolutionary party, or change from a single issue to a multi-issue movement. On the contrary, it concentrates on Vietnam precisely by showing the relation between such features as the war and British foreign and domestic policy, the economic penetration of Britain by the U.S.A., the degradation of cultural and social life by imperialism, the impact of authoritarianism and the sense of aimlessness felt by ordinary people. To win people for a solidarity line they have to be moved to act politically, and we have to understand how to make the connection for them. Again, the link is not made by mere sympathising with their problems, but by injecting the political content of the Vietnam war into the discussion, so that they recognise the total nature of the system, and its oppression, and the necessity to confront it politically.

This perspective does not tell us specifically what to do. It implies however the absolute necessity for a real debate within V.S.C. on the nature of our problems. It also means two demonstrations a year falls short by a long way from achieving our aims. Have we really exhausted the potential which V.S.C. has for mobilising political consciousness?

Obviously, we need 30 to 40 flourishing V.S.C. branches which can carry out sustained campaigns on whatever they feel relevant to our political aspirations, including the ability to plan and organise demonstrations at a higher level (one which really achieves and manifests power) than we have so far managed. Based on individual members with a real sense of identity with, and enthusiasm for V.S.C. itself, these branches will have to develop a new style. Again debate is needed, but here are two examples. Firstly comrades should read carefully Dave Clark's letter in Black Dwarf, contrasting the minimal value of leafletting with the interaction achieved between V.S.C. members and the public through the wall poster he describes (the folk nights on overspill estates are a further attempt to involve the audience). The vital element here is feedback - "we do have some positive indication of people's feeling about the war AND ALSO ABOUT OURSELVES".

Secondly, I will try and analyse the experience of the N.W. London ad-hoc committee. For the Bank Holiday fair on Hampstead Heath, we planned leafletting and publicity - using posters, cardboard boxes covered with slogans which we could wear, rosettes and badges, effigies of Johnson and Wilson to hang from trees, a mobile dragon representing Vietnam etc. In the event, although about 20 people turned up, there was no cohesion, no collective action, and very little interaction with the thousands of people who took our leaflets. Bad planning, due to taking on more than we could achieve, emphasised our separation and isolation from the public and made us feel despondent and that politics was a duty, ie. a moral exercise not a development of strength.

Later, we planned a street theatre with a simple sketch on the war, and a street meeting with it. This captured the enthusiasm of members, and about 25 turned up and we had a crowd around us, a response to our leaflets, and began to talk to people. As a result, we felt positive about the activity, wanted to improve and develop the idea, rather than asking: "what on earth should we do?" The lessons are-

- 1) The activity represented what members wanted to do, it was democratic.

- 2) We had set out to do something which was within our power, and so could judge successes and failures.

- 3) There was a common activity, concentrating our forces and enhancing collective strength, instead of dispersing it.

- 4) As a result of all this we had got through to people far more, they recognised our seriousness because they could see our collectivity.

- 5) In a simple way, the street theatre began to break down

the conformist life-style, by being culturally active instead of passive, and by trying to involve the audience instead of offering them an object ( a leaflet). It is also unconventional in itself, and thus breaks down self-consciousness and staid behaviour.

If the theatre develops there should be more movement, more audience participation, more political discussion, and eventually new forms of activity such as demonstrations focussing on directors of firms engaged in complicity (c.f. the successful action of G.L.C. tenants over the disrepair and rats in an East End block of flats, by demonstrating at the home of the chairman of the housing committee).

In the light of the points made so far, do we know who is in V.S.C. and why, and how beyond paying a subscription they would like to work? Is V.S.C. democratic, does everyone play a part in making decisions? Do we know much about the tens of thousands who support our demonstrations? Have we the forces to experiment and discover how to sustain campaigns on complicity in the war, on anti-imperialist propaganda? Can we produce a steady stream of literature or a journal which will be a genuine forum for debate and have an impact on the Left? Can we develop an audience for and give political value to the artistic theatrical and cultural forces in general which challenge the cultural oppression of the system? Can we protect ourselves from disruption by such elements as B.V.S.F., or prevent ourselves being dissolved into the ad-hoc committee on each demonstration?

Are we going to come out of Oct. 27th with perspectives and a challenge to grow and develop, or can we think of nothing better than "March 17th in 1969? If so, V.S.C. stands in real danger of decline in the next few months. If V.S.C. has a future, only we can create it.

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Angry Arts Film Society announces its second season.

- Programme 1: "CUBA SI!" Oct 14/15  
Chris Marker's documentary of Castro's Cuba.
- Programme 2: "ONE FOURTH OF HUMANITY" Nov 18/19  
Edgar Snow on China, revolution to mid-60's.
- Programme 3: "END OF A REVOLUTION?" Dec 16/17  
Bolivia--Che's death and Debray's trial.  
and "A GROUP OF TERRORISTS ATTACHED"  
African guerrilla war in Portuguese Guiné.
- Programme 4: "THE 17TH PARALLEL" Jan 13/14  
Joris Ivens' study of front-line North Viet-  
namese village.

Tickets in advance only, from Angry Arts Film Society  
59 Fleet St., E.C.4

"NEWSREEL": "news service" for the American left. Films available for local showing at £1 from Angry Arts Film Society.

Press statement on the October 27th demonstration against  
the War in Vietnam. October 2nd 1968.

We are calling this press conference to give you information and answer questions about the forthcoming October 27th mass mobilisation which will be against the American aggression in Vietnam, and the British Labour Governments support for the war.

Already all signs point to this demonstration being the biggest ever to be held in Britain against the Vietnam war.

Reports from Ad-hoc committees and organisations all over the country indicate that it will be much bigger than the March 17th demonstration. We are convinced that the increase in numbers will not necessarily be due to our own organizational abilities, but will be due to the increasing anger and frustration which more and more people feel about the Labour Governments support for the Americans in Vietnam. It is also clear that hopes that the Paris negotiations would end the war were an illusion, as the Americans are now clearly increasing their attacks on Vietnam.

Our hope is to bring this anger out onto the streets. We wish to help people realize that the best way to bring the war to an end is by first taking mass action themselves and to confront government policy on Vietnam with an escalating opposition outside Parliament. That is why we are organizing the October 27th demonstration. We hope to show the world that the criminal policy pursued by the Labour Government does not have the support of the British people.

The route of the demonstration, which has been agreed upon by Ad-Hoc committees and supporters throughout the country and in London is the following: We will assemble on the Embankment opposite Charing Cross Cross at 2.00 pm and then proceed east to Blackfriars. We will turn north to Fleet Street and back west past the Australian High Commissioners office where we will register our opposition to Australian involvement in the war. We will then march to Whitehall to protest at S.E.A.T.O. offices and Downing Street and the Ministry of Defence. After that we will go through Victoria to Hyde Park where we will hold a mass rally against the war. Jean-Paul Sartre, the world-famous philosopher and critic of the war has been invited to speak. We would like the police to stay away from the demonstration and rally so that there will be no arrests and provocations.

Issued by the October 27th. Ad-Hoc Committee  
120, Commercial Road,  
London, E.1.  
tel. 480-6789

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Available from VSC:

"THE NATURE OF MASS DEMONSTRATIONS"

A pamphlet by John Berger. Analyses mass demonstrations in terms of their revolutionary potential. Provides a good focal point for local group discussions on why we demonstrate.  
Sixpence/copy. Bulk rates available.

One of the least publicised aspects of the American Vietnam protest movement has been its impact upon the army. Anti-war sentiment inside the army was high-lighted recently when uniformed soldiers participated in Vietnam protest actions. On September 17th, a contingent of soldiers led a demonstration in San Francisco; and also participated in a teach-in against the war. The opposition will escalate a step further on October 12th when servicemen plan a mass mobilisation of uniformed men against the war. Another development has been the mushrooming of soldiers' anti-war "underground" newspapers. It is estimated that there are twelve such papers circulating in the West Coast area of the United States.

The October 12th action is being publicised by the servicemen with a unique leaflet to show that the military brass cannot legally punish participants - someone high-up in Pentagon circles, obviously with some sympathies to the Vietnam protest movement, leaked the text of a message to the United States Airforce Communications Centre which shows the degree of concern in ruling circles.

The following is a reprint of the original text:

"Personal from General McConnell from General Estes.

"SUB. 2nd Lieutenant Hugh F. Smith FV3179560. I am informed that facts and circumstances of this matter have been discussed with you by General Manss and Capucci and that there is secretarial interest. (Secretary of the army - E.T.) Smith is organising a 'Peace in Vietnam' demonstration for men in uniform to take place in San Francisco. He applied for and received a permit for a demonstration to be held on 21 September. Subsequently, permit changed to 12 October. Strongly believe this demonstration should be quashed if possible because of possible severe impact on military discipline throughout the services. There is no AFR (Air Force Regulations -E.T.) specifically proscribing this activity. AFR35-78 is pointed solely to civil rights demonstrations. Since there are national policy considerations in such an order it should emanate from DOD (Department of Defense - E.T.) or at least Air Force level. I recommend this be done at once so that Smith will realise that if he proceeds he subjects himself with certainty to criminal punitive action.

"In the absence of a regulation or order specifically prohibiting such activity believe any criminal prosecution would be tenuous to say the least, particularly in view of the political climate of the day.

"If the foregoing is unattainable, I reluctantly recommend that we be given the authority to proceed with dispatch with the AFR36-3 action which has been recommended by the commander 349MAW and concurred in by General Sherill, commander 22AF. I realize this would result in a discharge under honourable conditions, but the disposition of Smith is relatively unimportant as compared to the highly undesirable impact on military discipline if armed forces personnel are permitted to demonstrate in uniform against national defense policies with impunity.

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"The Pentagon, Washington D.C., 29 August, 1968."

over/

That anti-war sentiment should show itself inside the army is not surprising. It is a conscript army composed of the poor working class, with a high percentage of blacks; people unable to escape either by fleeing the country or by a college deferment. It is no more immune to the tensions and opposition generated by the war machine than the rest of the general population.

According to a recent visitor to Saigon Fred Halstead, a leading Vietnam protest activist from the U.S. who is running a revolutionary socialist campaign in the presidential elections, class feelings and consciousness is higher in the army than it is in the rest of the population. There is a widespread resentment, spilling over to hatred for the officers by the ordinary soldier.

The explosive implications of this development cannot be over-emphasised enough. It would seem that the American protest movement has made a turn towards trying to influence and help soldiers carry out anti-war activity in the army. Local groups in the various cities have set up coffee houses near bases to enable them to get to know G.I.s. Others have begun to set up literature stands carrying literature explaining why the United States should get out of Vietnam. This is a turn away from draft resistance and encouragement of desertion, which at the most only involved relatively few people and did not touch the mass of the army because for anyone who took that step it meant either a long court case and prison sentence or it meant he left the country, possibly for the rest of his life.

If the American protest movement succeeds in carrying its opposition into the army, it will have brought the defeat of American aggression in Vietnam that much nearer. Without a reliable and stable army, the imperialists could not proceed, or even use it to maintain civil order in the United States. When the grouping of black soldiers refused to embark for Chicago, they only posed the question: what would happen if the mass of the army was similarly infected? This process has been helped along by the draft board which has lifted the deferment on college graduates: for the first time in the course of the war, the same people, the young, recently radicalised college anti-war activists will find themselves in the army. Will they become just ordinary soldiers?

V.S.C. branches in the various areas could help in carrying out some anti-war activity in the army. Many soldiers and servicemen are opposed to the war but they are isolated and alone: we should try to reach them, — discuss with them and even help them. Get away from the notion that they should desert. It is too big a jump. Give them literature on what their fellow soldiers are doing in the United States to help end the war, maybe they could do the same here. Is there a local base near you?

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#### PUBLICITY MATERIAL FOR OCTOBER 27

The following material is available for use by local groups, or individuals, to launch a local campaign about Oct. 27. Send orders to VSC, 120 Commercial Rd., E. 1

- posters, in the form of an NLF flag, announcing the demo:  
6d. per poster ..... 50 for £1.
- leaflets for the demo: 1000 for 25 shillings
- stickers for the demo: 1000 for 25 shillings

## THE DIRECTION OF VSC

By Brian Douieb  
VSC and East London I.S.

The war in Vietnam has achieved more, in terms of interest and support in a movement, than ANY OTHER issue during the past 18 months. But, neither the interest, nor the support, has emanated from the British working class!

Those of us who were present at the National Council meeting in Sheffield and the London public meeting at the Conway Hall experienced this frustration which has for too long perpetuated factional arguments resulting in, "Where to go on October 27th." For once, let's pose the question of how do we win workers' support to build and mobilise around the war--but more important, how can we direct this to one of long term support for the revolutionary movement.

To achieve this, we must make the war REAL to the British worker--but without at the same time losing increasing support from the university, etc. The militant worker is not unimpressed by American brutality, but he often fails to see how it is connected with his own pressing concerns and what he can do about it. We must make the point-by-point significance of the links to British economic, political and moral support for the aggression in terms which are relevant--and this means CHANGING THE EMPHASIS of our propaganda from just indication to constant pointed propaganda of WHAT THE WAR MEANS for the British economy, etc.--NOT VAGUE TERMINOLOGY OR PATRONISATION, BUT CLARITY. This was the whole basis of I.S.'s and the National Council's "combined" proposal for the political strategy of the demonstration--to show the direct links, NOT AS SECONDARY BUT INTEGRAL REASONS for the Government's repressive policies to the working class. But if this strategy is only employed in our demonstrations, we are still going to be faced with continued lack of support and the possibility of VSC's dissolution. The WHOLE perspective of the campaign must be on this strategy for two good reasons: 1) as previously mentioned, to successfully build a Vietnam campaign with a long-term perspective capable of directing support to the revolutionary movement; and 2) to bring the left groupings closer by a sound and clearly defined programme for an anti-war movement.

Many comrades have stated time and time again, it's not a matter of where we go on a demonstration BUT WHY! The argument for a demonstration to Grosvenor Square completely ignores political common sense. To talk in

terms of storming "the lair of American imperialism" is blatant naivete (not to mention insanity!). Comrades should have realised by now that trying to fight American aggression in Vietnam on the steps of the embassy is leading us into a blind alley. Perhaps they should remember Ho Chi Minh's statement that the best way to help the Vietnamese Revolution is by creating a Revolution in your own country. Instead of fruitlessly wasting time and energy outside the U.S. embassy, they could help organise and build a strong, conscious working-class movement and united party. Unfortunately, they are only capable of verbal diarrhoea and intent upon extending

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List of Local Ad Hoc Committees In/Around London

- 1) North London Ad Hoc - Jerry Osner  
19 Talbot Rd., N.6 FIT-3365
- 2) East London Ad Hoc - Brian Douieb  
8 Malvern Rd., E.8 254-9336
- 3) Kentish Town Ad Hoc - Dave Slaney  
31 Dartmouth Park Hill  
N.W.5 267-0291
- 4) South Essex Ad Hoc - Jenny Malden  
7 Cawdor House, Cameron Close  
Brentwood, Essex
- 5) Southeast London Ad Hoc - Al Richardson  
27 Pearman St., S.E.1
- 6) West Middlesex Ad Hoc - Mike Martin  
37 Thornton Ave., W.4
- 7) Northwest London - Meg Turner  
28 Milman Rd.  
Queen's Park, N.W.6 GLA 3636
- 8) Croydon Ad Hoc - Barbara Wilson  
27 The Glade  
Shirley, Croydon CRO 709
- 9) Surrey Ad Hoc - Steve Goldborough  
Courland Grove Hall  
Courland Grove, S.W.8

To find out about local committees outside London, please get in touch with VSC national headquarters.