

The Time is Right

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

Did you go to the march on April 15? Did you notice that there was lots of spirit on the march down Woodward and that things fell apart after that? The speakers (except for a couple) were mostly boring and the people were frustrated with the whole set-up. So they climbed the Soldier's and Sailor's statue, hung flags and then moved around in the street facing off cops for an hour and a half, eventually getting into a trashing set down by Hudson's, blocking traffic on the Jefferson Freeway for awhile and finally dispersing after losing 18 people in busts.

The pig media talked mainly about the trashing. The Detroit Coalition to End the War Now and the Student Mobilization Committee leadership talked mainly about what a great success it all was (marred only by the trashing). The people who were there did not talk about much of anything afterwards, What's to say? It was another peace march.

Around the country it was pretty much the same. The structured part of the demonstrations were standard "end the war now" rallies, marches and speeches. The only difference was that there was mass violence involving thousands in Boston and Berkeley. On the whole, the demonstrations were smaller than the ones last Fall, although 15,000 marched in Detroit.

Looks like we've reached an impasse, as they say in the straight press. We were going to try for mass working class participation. We were going to force them to withdraw the troops from Vietnam.

Instead, it turned out to be another demonstration of students and professional people. (What else did we expect on a Wednesday afternoon?) And instead of withdrawing from Vietnam, they pulled off another CIA coup in Cambodia and expanded the war to the whole sub-continent.

How can they ignore us like this? Maybe because they've learned to live with the peace movement. When everyone, including Nixon, agrees that the war is bad, then we have consensus again. Peace marches will become safety valves for discontent.

The producers of these marches will argue for awhile that the marches aren't succeeding because the trashing is alienating a potentially larger base. But violence isn't the issue. Violence is a traditional and current response of American working people. Working class kids will sooner trash Hudson's than listen to labor leaders who have sold out two generations of workers. When march leaders start cooperation with pigs in trying to contain that anger, they put themselves into a pig bag.

The way out of this dead-end is to build the struggle. The Demonstration isn't the struggle. The struggle is the sum total of all the local struggles of people reacting to the ways they are being fucked over by the war and by imperialism.

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