

Fall Offensive

Dena Clamage

1969

For the past year, everyone has been trying to play down the war in Vietnam. According to President Nixon, the war is almost over. Twenty-five thousand troops have been withdrawn, leaving only 475,000 American soldiers in the rice paddies and brothels of South Vietnam.

The money press puts battle news and body counts on page 16-C. TeeVee 2 hardly mentions the war at all any more.

The reasoning behind this silence is hardly subtle. The U.S. is losing the war. Has already lost the war. The fact that the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) is now the de facto government in South Vietnam signals the last stages of the U.S. occupation of Vietnam. More important, it signals the beginning of the end of an era—the era of the American Empire.

Since World War I, U.S. capital has penetrated every corner of the world.

Since World War II, U.S. business and finance has turned the world into its private preserve, dominating investment, markets and natural resources.

For the last twenty years, America has enjoyed an unprecedented expansion of its economy with high growth rates and at least statistical prosperity.

All this has been achieved at the expense of the people of the Third World and Europe, black Americans and white American working people. Although white Americans may seem “affluent” relative to the rest of the world, they have paid dearly for this seeming affluence with speedup and unsafe working conditions, higher taxes, inflation, deteriorating schools, cities, social services—and with the lives of the sons, fathers and husbands who have died protecting the bosses’ prerogatives.

But the people are fighting back now—and winning!

To a certain extent, the movement has complied with the bosses’ efforts to keep their defeats a secret. There have been no major anti-war actions since April of last year.

But this fall the silence will be broken. Three major actions are being planned which will blow the lid off the whole question, pressuring the ruling class to openly admit its defeat and get the hell out of Vietnam—once and for all—on the terms of the Vietnamese people.

On October 8 through 11, SDS is calling for militant action in Chicago, where people will demand an immediate end to the war and declare their support for the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the black liberation struggle at home. Also, the demonstration will be overtly anti-imperialist, tracing the war to its origins in the American capitalist system.

According to SDS publicity for the action, tactics will include a memorial rally for Che Guevara, an action at Chicago schools, a women’s action, a youth rock festival, and a march on the Chicago courts centering around the trial of the “Conspiracy 8” of the Democratic Convention demonstration.

For more info, people should call 923-5812.

The Detroit Coalition to End the War Now (DCEWN) has also called for several fall actions as part of the national New Mobilization Committee and the National Vietnam Moratorium Committee.

On October 15 and November 14 and 15, the Coalition will be participating in a national "Moratorium on business as usual." On these days, the Coalition is asking "students, faculty members, and citizens" to stay out of school and off work in order to "organize in their own communities against the war."

The Coalition will also be organizing people for the November 15 March on Washington, sponsored by the New Mobilization Committee.

According to James Lafferty, co-chairman of the DCEWN, "It is important that the war end as an expression of the will of the people and not because of inner conflicts within the power structure. If a mass movement in this country is successful in compelling a total withdrawal from Vietnam, this will not only render a service to the Vietnamese but will also be a service to the people who are in revolt in Asia, Africa and Latin America."

The Detroit Coalition has arranged for bus transportation to Washington for those wishing to participate in the demonstration. For more information call 873-4508.

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