

Vietnam Newsletter

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

Viet Survey

This past week the D.C.E.W.V. conducted a survey in the segment of the 17th district in which we intend to concentrate our efforts on the Lafferty campaign this summer.

In order to plan specific strategy we thought that it would be important to know something about the people who lived there. We felt that with a survey we would have more of a concrete estimation of prevailing sentiment than one painfully derived from an endless committee discussion.

Also, by administering a second survey after the election, we hope to be able to evaluate how effective our campaign methods have been.

...So we went from house to house and asked people questions. We wanted to know how they felt and what they knew about the war.

We asked them if they favored U.S. policy in Vietnam and almost half said they did. However, we also asked of which measures these people approved in order to continue the war. In most cases people were not willing to reduce federal aid to education, reduce funds for the Medicare and poverty programs, increase draft calls or income tax: the only measure that a significant number (54%) of people were willing to support was one that is quite remote from a middle class' population the calling up of the reserves. This teaches us that people, whether opposed or not to U.S. policy, are not willing to pay for it. Thus as a matter of strategy it would be useful to point out to them that they must pay if the war is to continue.

We asked if they felt themselves relatively well informed on the Vietnam issue and a majority claimed that they were. They were not. For 77% of the "majority" could not answer correctly two out of the three information questions we posed (an example of which is "who is Ho Chi Minh?"). Because the majority of the people felt themselves well informed and, according to our criteria, were not, we felt our campaign should show people that they are not actually well informed, hoping that this would begin to rattle their assumptions, and then of course, inform them.

We asked if the people in the U.S. who have expressed opposition to the war should be allowed to do so and the large majority (81%) answered 'yes'. However, we also asked if whether or not a person opposes the war, he should unite behind the president and support the president's decisions: strikingly to this almost half again nodded with assent. This illustrates an important point: in a general manner people glibly profess lofty American ideals but when probed, contradict themselves, for their beliefs are not genuine. Alarming 67% of all people polled felt that we should unite behind the president. This seems to show that people have an ill conceived idea of what democracy is. In a democracy the people should not support the president because he is president, but rather, the president should support the people because he is president. Thus we feel a primary goal of the Lafferty campaign should be to teach the voter his proper role in a democracy; his obligation is to be critical.

Overall the poll was worthwhile. It has given us a statistical and a person-to-person idea of the sentiments of the district that we shall confront and has suggested specific points upon which we can build strategies.

Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
Vietnam Newsletter
1966

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/9-june-1966/vietnam-newsletter>
Fifth Estate #9, June, 1966

[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/9-june-1966/vietnam-newsletter)