

Comrades—1963 Vietnam and Peace Movement

Summary—the Lead

The crises in South Vietnam during 1963 and the signing of the partial nuclear test ban led the peace movement to pivot away from the issue of nuclear disarmament and toward the Vietnam War. That pivot was a reflection of the larger Cold War conflict heating up in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam was a battle of the Cold War waged not only in the whole of Indochina, but ultimately inside the USA with the active assistance of Hanoi and its allies.

Harold W. Rood, military strategist, sums it up nicely,

The victories denied the Communists on the battlefields of South Vietnam were recouped strategically through a campaign waged within the West. Campuses, editorial offices, film and television studios became the strategic arena. ... The politics of peace in the West was the politics of war for the communist conquest of Indo-China.

The peace movement, the press, and academia provided the ground troops, the agents of influence, for Hanoi's political war in the USA concluding in Hanoi's favor in the halls of Congress a decade later. Very early Hanoi could confidently count in its order of battle ABC, CBS, and NBC, the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post* and the Los Angeles *Times*. In their war museums and in commemorations of key events in the Vietnam War, Hanoi still thanks the antiwar movement and the press for its victory in April 1975.

Setting the Stage: The New Players.

Hanoi first created a political military apparatus in the south of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front, NLF. Le Duan, the Vietnamese Communist Party chairman, later said that the North Vietnamese "set policy, ran operations, and drafted all major party documents on the South including ... the ... (1959) resolution that ordered the start of the war." Vietnam's January 1959 Resolution 15 of Hanoi's Third Congress of the Fifteenth Plenum launched the armed struggle.

Similarly, the *History of the Vietnamese Communist Party* (Vol. II) "makes it abundantly clear that Southern leaders from the very beginning of the war were under the disciplined control of the Politburo in Hanoi."

By the early sixties Hanoi began a worldwide campaign of outreach to communists, fellow travelers, and progressives. In a very short time, the American peace movement shifted from nuclear disarmament to Vietnam, in some part because of the mounting influence of domestic and foreign communists and fellow travelers on the peace movement who were being welcomed into an increasingly "inclusive" peace movement. With the encouragement, cash, and tactical assistance, the movement decided to join forces with domestic and foreign communists in an international campaign to stop the war in Vietnam and bring social justice to America.

In South Vietnam the Diem regime developed a growing economy, and ruthlessly rounded up Viet Cong. In addition the Strategic Hamlet program was providing security and improved education and agriculture.

Hanoi and the communist cause were in trouble.

The Diem regime needed to be discredited in South Vietnam and in world public opinion including the USA. Communist models for assassinations of characters and of their persons were well-practiced: Stalin's purge of former Bolshevik heroes; besmirching and killing Mihailovich in Yugoslavia, Chiang Kai-shek in China, and London exile government of Poland; Ho Chi Minh's murdering nationalist competitors, class enemies in Land Reform and South Vietnamese hamlet officials, teachers and intellectuals.

There were plenty of opportunities to question the Diem regime: Press coverage, Buddhist protests, battle of Ap Bac, napalm, and the poisoned tongue of Madame Nhu. In 1963 political conflicts inside South Vietnam largely set Hanoi's propaganda themes: The corrupt Catholic regime of President Diem oppressed majority Buddhists; its troops were cowardly on the battlefield of Ap Bac; Diem's regime abused the America's Saigon press corps; and napalm was chemical war banned by international law. These were powerful half-truths.

American newsmen in Vietnam were young and inexperienced with Vietnam, war and politics. Ambassador Lodge thought US newsmen capable of “average” reporting of “earthquakes or Hollywood divorces” and routine police beat, but lacked judgment on the complexities of Vietnam. That would be “too much to hope for from young reporters.”

By 1963, if not earlier, the American press corps in South Vietnam had come to adopt much of Hanoi’s propaganda. The press mocked the U.S. Missions’ daily press conference as the “Five O’Clock Follies” as inaccurate, but left Hanoi’s propaganda unexamined. Allied claims, easily verified, of a communist campaign of terror was unbelievable “atrocious propaganda.” Nothing was said about Hanoi’s oppressive regime far worse than Diem’s failures. It was easier to believe rumors at the bar of the Continental or at the Givral coffee shop than to believe American and South Vietnamese authorities, let alone check out stories on their own.

Meanwhile, academics in the USA were busy publishing materials and signing petitions with a pro-Hanoi tilt.

In 1963 Hanoi’s political strategy to win the war on the streets of America began to emerge as Hanoi’s agents of influence began to meet across the globe. First in Prague and Moscow and Havana and then later the leaders and top activists of the American peace movement would on an increasingly frequent basis meet Vietnam communists not only in Hanoi and Paris, but also Vancouver, Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Windsor, Havana, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo, Helsinki, Geneva, Munich, East Berlin, Moscow, Budapest, Sofia, Bratislava, Tokyo, Jakarta, Peking, Phnom Penh, and Vientiane. Here we report on the beginnings of such meetings and conferences in 1962 and 1963.

Under the *dau tranh* theory of revolutionary war, visitors to North Vietnam following the Hanoi line, could be considered “fighting the U. S. aggressors” in the political struggle prong of their strategy for revolutionary war. Similarly friendly news men could be fellow “combatants.” Both would afterwards receive war medals. How was this so?

Hanoi Political Strategy of War

Hanoi understood that the political struggle in South Vietnam and in the USA, like that previously in Indochina and in France, sometimes bore sweeter fruit than military struggles. The communist doctrines of Lenin, Stalin and Mao had long held that politics and war were one and the same. As V.I. Lenin said, “War is simply the continuation of politics by other (violent) means.” For Communists--Lenin, Mao, and Ho--war and statecraft were indistinguishable.

American antiwar leaders were an integral part of Hanoi’s grand unified war winning strategy (*dau tranh*) for People’s Revolutionary war against a stronger enemy. Hanoi targeted the antiwar movement and U.S. media. As Doug Pike described it, this was a well-designed program of unified “political actions among the enemy” (*dich van*). Political action was one of three tactical pincers of “political struggle” (*dau tranh chinh tri*) equal to or greater than “armed struggle” (*dau tranh vu trang*). Political struggle (*dau tranh chinh tri*) had three tactical elements, political actions against the enemy (*dich van*), political action against the military (*binh van*) and political actions action among the people (*dan van*).

Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap wrote, “Political struggle (*dau tranh chinh tri*) plays a very fundamental role because it is in the political field that lies our fundamental superiority and the enemy’s fundamental weakness.”

Armed Brigade of Propaganda, First Unit of Liberation Army

The political and propaganda contributions of the antiwar movement to communist victories were integral to Hanoi’s long-term war strategy and continuation of long held doctrine. On December 22, 1944 Ho Chi Minh instructed Vo Nguyen Giap that the first unit formed of the Liberation Army of Vietnam was the Armed Brigade of Propaganda (*doi tuyen truyen vo trang*), because Ho told Giap, “Politics is more important than military affairs” and “fighting is less important than propaganda.”

The strategy of political struggle is the politics of war at the grassroots played across the planet and across great cultural divides. It was the politics of total war on all fronts from the battlefields in Vietnam to the streets, newsrooms, editorial boards, classrooms, and sometimes-corporate boardrooms of America.

People’s Army of Viet Nam (PAVN), Sr. Col. Bui Tin, editor of the Army newspaper *Nhan Dan*, later described the unique political value of the antiwar movement to military victory:

[The antiwar movement] was essential to our strategy. ... The American rear was vulnerable. These people represented the conscience of America. The conscience

vulnerable... These people represented the conscience of America. The conscience of America was part of its war-making capability, and we were turning that power in our favor. America lost because of its democracy; through dissent and protest it lost the ability to mobilize the will to win. ... Every day our leadership would listen to the world news over the radio at 9 a.m. to follow the growth of the American anti-war movement. Visits to Hanoi by people like Jane Fonda... gave us confidence that we should hold on in the face of battlefield reverses.”

In short, the Vietnam War was a war of ideas lost by the USA. This war largely began in 1961-63.

Hanoi's Propaganda Narrative: Emerging Talking Points for the Antiwar Movement

By 1963 a surprisingly a pro-Hanoi narrative, a template, a paint the numbers story line on Vietnam was already being developed. The Saigon press corps had adopted most of it as had leftist university faculties: an imperialist capitalist U.S. was conducting an illegal, immoral, unjust and unwinnable colonial war in Vietnam, a place far, far away from our national interest. Hanoi declared the conflict a civil war over national unity, claimed peasant support in South Vietnam for the Viet Cong, US napalm, declared chemicals and artillery were harming the innocents and demanded an immediate cease fire. Forced to confess, POW Everett Alvarez, Jr., said, “I protest the long, involved, costly, controversial war, a violation of the gallant, heroic, liberated, freedom loving, independent loving Vietnamese people," which should have been a clue that the Hanoi line was a fraud.

Many of the top leaders in the peace movement found it easy to believe the worst about the U.S. because they saw communists as good socialists representing “justice, peace, democracy.” They transformed all American and South Vietnam’s military actions and weapons into illegitimate “terror, repression or war crimes.”

Crude Propaganda Not Ready for USA: Eating Babies, Livers

Hanoi kept up a drum beat of incredulous claims of intentional war crimes and genocide.

Early propaganda was very crude. In September of 1954, attempting to halt the mass exodus to the south, Ho Chi Minh warned Vietnamese mothers that American sailors were eating their babies. A Navy Lieutenant aiding refugees at the port of Haiphong, Dr. Tom Dooley, wrote of Communist propaganda leaflets telling of American sailors “roasting a child alive.” The National Liberation Front, a creature of North Vietnam, in South Viet Nam later wrote:

You have probably hear [sic] about the U.S.-Diem troops indulging in cannibalism, disemboweling a man, and *eating his liver* ... Young men eat human liver ... during dancing party or fishing trip."

Later settling on gentler terms with the help of its American advisors at Bratislava and elsewhere, Hanoi settled for the theme that Vietnam War was an illegal, immoral and unwinnable war, skipping the less credible details about eating babies and livers. Ho Chi Minh now said American tactics followed a "burn all, kill all, and destroy all" policy in which American troops used "napalm bombs, poison gas, and toxic chemicals to massacre our compatriots and ravage our villages." Westerners were aware of Nazi war crimes. Going to the very edge of credibility Hanoi would also claim that schools, hospitals and pagodas and later dikes were intentional targets. Many credulous visitors and fellow travelers believed such claims. Napalm used against military targets, troops and fortifications, is lawful. Schools and hospitals had no military value. Dikes were off limits, but they could have been easily wiped out as they often were in Vietnam’s annual floods.

Such propaganda helped restrain and nullify the full use of allied military power, reinforced a policy of limited war and graduated responses, and created complex rules of engagement.

Hanoi's Propaganda Themes: the Narrative, Template, Paint by the numbers

1. The national liberation front, NLF, sought to liberate the nation of Vietnam from corrupt and inept puppets of the United States. This despite Ho Chi Minh murdering Vietnamese nationalists and Le Duan, first Secretary of the Communist Party, saying “The Vietnamese Revolution is to fulfill the internationalist duty...under the leadership of the Soviet Union.”
2. It was a civil war between north and south in which the USA was not to interfere despite massive aid Soviet and Chinese aid given to Hanoi.
3. The corrupt Diem regime was oppressing the people of South Vietnam, particularly

Buddhists despite evidence to the contrary (Higgins, UN) and minor compared to oppression in Communist North Vietnam where there was no religious freedom and nationalist leaders had already been executed.

4. A cowardly ARVN of South Vietnam would not fight; take casualties, a result of misreporting of the battle of Ap Bac. Military experts disagreed about Ap Bac and ARVN had other successes.
5. The American war worsened the lives of the Vietnamese people, and America's gross overuse of weaponry devastated the countryside and killed hundreds of thousands of innocents. Viet Cong assassinations of officials, teachers and intellectuals went unreported.
6. U.S .use of herbicidal spraying was illegal chemical warfare destroying the ecology and creating generations of birth defects and diseases down to the present day.
7. A web of allied lies justified the war. Claims of a communist conquest, false reports of Hanoi troops in South Vietnam, attacks on US warships and false theories like the Domino Theory.
8. All this was used to avoid free elections in Vietnam. Free elections never occurred in North Vietnam.

Meanwhile, after internal struggles the antiwar movement would soon adopt much of Hanoi propaganda as its own.

Hanoi propaganda was shaped by political opportunities on the ground in South Vietnam

1963 Peace Movement in Transition from Nuclear Disarmament to the Vietnam War

Former SDS President Todd Gitlen remembers 1963,

That whole year was full of signs of opening. The movement against the Bomb subsided with [a Kennedy speech on] detente and the Soviet and US signing of a [nuclear] test ban [in August, 1963].

The Peace Players

In 1963 the established old soldiers of the peace movement included the Fellowship for Reconciliation, FOR, the American Friends Service Committee, AFSC, Catholic Worker, Student Peace Movement, SPU, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, SANE. In early sixties these groups were focused on nuclear disarmament sometimes, except for SANE, in collaboration with American communists and soviet front groups. American peace groups joined with communist party factions in the USA—the Stalinist Communist Party USA, CPUSA, the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party, SWP, Young Socialists Alliance, YSA.

Front Groups: Soviet and Vietnamese

Soviet front groups, united and popular fronts, were well established for decades. Willi Munzenberg described them as Innocent's Clubs to "get hold of artists and professors . . . spread the doctrine that Russia is prepared to sacrifice everything for peace." Similarly, Comintern's Otto Kuusinen said, "We must create . . . organizations . . . under the influence of our party." Lenin had proposed fronts, the Comintern had ordered them, Willi Munzenberg had created many of them, and Communist Parties dutifully applied them worldwide.

Some Americans were comfortable in joining front groups and attending their conferences. The Vietnamese Communist Party under Ho's leadership and the Soviet payroll adapted broad-based fronts as early as 1930. Quite comfortable in such Communist venues and organizations were members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the American Friends Service Committee; Women Strike for Peace; the National Welfare Rights Organization; Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam; the National Peace Action Coalition; and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ); the American Deserters Committee, the VVAW and assorted professors.

Though a numerical minority, the collaborators with Hanoi created a large number of front groups claiming to speak for vast constituencies: women, lawyers, doctors, students, racial minorities, and war veterans. They would finally settle on united antiwar front groups claiming to represent and "mobilize" absolutely all democratic and progressive people's dedicated to peace, social justice and a communist victory in Indochina.

Some Peace Groups Were Split over Communist Participation

In the late fifties and early sixties, organizations in the American peace movements were internally split over whether Communists would be allowed into their membership and leadership.

Some groups had long been allied with communists in prior work for peace, sometimes on Soviet terms. Others would quickly join with Communists for common causes of peace and social justice. Others were penetrated. Some objected some did not.

It was not long before some groups, led by a few communists and fellow travelers with outsized influence, openly cheered not for the home team but the other side in the Vietnam War in particular, Women Strike for Peace, SDS, American Friends Service Committee, Weathermen.

Peace groups having trustful and civil relations with communists were helpful to Vietnamese communists who were ready to exploit the peace movement for its own purpose, military victory. Each group had its own history before 1963.

Major Antiwar Groups, 1962-1963

The Model: Soviet Fronts

Moscow was already setting the table with a plethora of peace and disarmament front groups claiming to represent a wide spectrum of interests, "false flags," but serving the interests of their masters: American Peace Mobilization, APM, Christian Peace Conference, CPC, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, IADL, International Union of Students, IUS, Liaison Committee of the Stockholm conference Stockholm Conference on Vietnam, National Committee to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee, NCAHUAC, People's Peace Treaty, Russian Orthodox Church, Secours populaire francais (French People's Aid), Soviet Peace Committee, Soviet Women's Committee, U. S. Peace Council, Women's International Democratic Federation WIDF, World Council of Churches, WCC, Stockholm Conference on Vietnam, World Council for Peace, WCP, World Federation of Democratic Youth, WFDY, World Peace Council, WPC, World Youth Festival, WYF, World Federation of Trade Unions, WFTU.

In scores of international conferences, many of these fronts would play important roles working with American peace movement actions against the Vietnam War and coordinating common strategies, tactics, dates, locations and propaganda themes. Very specific tactics and themes were found repeatedly in captured enemy documents on the battlefields of South Vietnam. These instructions detailed arguments and themes given to Viet Cong troops in South Vietnam were near identical to the advice and instructions given to the anti-war movement in the USA, often word for word, picture by picture, and number by number. Leaflets printed in Hanoi were distributed on the battlefields of South Vietnam and in the streets, coffee houses and colleges of America.

In the West some antiwar groups enthusiastically participated in international communist front groups and conferences. Those who did were often self-described as pacifists or progressives who saw hope for social justice and world peace in socialism and communism. Some found hope in Mao Tse-tung, Kim Ill Sung, and Brezhnev as well as Ho Chi Minh.

If social justice and peace cannot be achieved without the defeat of capitalism and imperialism then America became the enemy at home and abroad. Hence Vietnam was a crucial battlefield for the domestic Left as well as the Right inside the USA.

In Peace and Revolution, Guenter Lewy describes the widespread compromising of pacifist principles within the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), the War Resisters League (WRL), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Some American groups already had long term relations with Communists, e.g. Catholic Worker, Women's International League For Peace and Freedom, WILPF, ETC. Others were quick to adopt them, Women Strike for Peace, Students for a Democratic Society. Some slowly came about after Hanoi rejected their overture, FOR.

Others agonized and disappeared into history, SPU, SANE.

SANE, National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy

Through the mid-sixties SANE, refused to participate in front groups and tried to keep communists out of its organizations and demonstrations. They said the Communists wanted not peace, but a Viet Cong victory. This restricted their recruitment of an ideologically committed cadre to organize nationwide protests.

Sanford Gottlieb, SANE organizer, said he wanted no "kooks, Communists, or draft-dodgers" in his marches and refused sponsors. Gottlieb said the Vietnamese people were victims of both sides and urged both sides to accept a ceasefire and an international settlement. Gottlieb asked Ho Chi Minh to "respond favorably to immediate peace talks" without requiring a prior American withdrawal. In secret talks Hanoi was refusing a ceasefire and demanding complete

unity of Viet Nam.

A Congressional report said,

The leaders of ... pacifist organizations like ... SANE ... have sought to protect themselves by demarcating their own position from that of the Communists and by establishing certain criteria and certain controls to protect their organization against Communist infiltration. ...

Marxist anti-war leader and former CPUSA member Sidney Peck remembered:

[At first] the moderates ... had political control and dominance of the peace movement until 1965 through SANE. They wanted a respectable peace movement and a respectable opposition. ... They were exclusionary. They continued the pattern of McCarthyism (Red-Baiting) in the peace movement. They excluded the Left. ... [By 1965] the dominant leadership of the anti-war coalition was in the hands of progressive left people We [progressives] assumed the public leadership of the movement over the tremendous opposition of these other (moderate) forces.

After a series of moderate speeches came the high point of the successful SANE rally-- the SDS President's concluding speech for the rally. While attacking Viet Nam policies, Carl Oglesby did not want to sound too anti-American to his SANE crowd. He said, "Don't blame me. ... Blame rather those who mouthed my liberal values and broke my American heart." Later, Oglesby described his speech as an:

attempt to describe Imperialism without giving it that name, and to attribute Imperialist policy to the structure of Monopoly Capitalism without pronouncing that term either ... Imperialism and Monopoly Capitalism were concepts proper and necessary ... but ... drained of meaning by ... cold war propaganda.

Some among the SANE crowd loved Oglesby carrying signs saying, "Put an End to Imperialism in Asia," and "We are maintaining a fascist clique in Saigon."

The SANE sponsored rally in Washington on November 27, 1965 of 30,000 was to be SANE's "Last Hurrah" as a recognized leader of the American peace movement. Other groups were rapidly emerging. broad coalitions of major peace groups. Emerging from the united front strategy as a creature of the combined efforts of the Vietnam Day Committee and the SDS, the new National Coordinating Committee, NCC, had met before the SANE rally. According to historian and SDS member James Miller, "The born again Marxist-Leninists sects turned out in full force -- there were Trotskyites, Maoists, Castroites, even some old-fashioned Communists."

This was yet to come but the ingredients were forming in 1962-63. Many groups too numerous to discuss here became Soviet shills and eventually carriers of Hanoi propaganda.

We take the major players before we describe their actions in the early sixties.

Students for a Democratic Society, SDS

In the spring of 1962 at Port Huron, Michigan at the founding conference of Students for a Democratic Society, Tom Hayden defeated democratic socialist Michael Harrington who had desired to exclude communists. Hayden's Port Huron Statement adopted the public posture of moral equivalency between U.S imperialism and Communist imperialism. Yet in fact, Hayden and SDS, far from believing in their moral equivalency, thought Communism had a superior vision of the future. Hence, SDS animosity toward President Kennedy.

Kennedy Commits to Vietnam

John Fitzgerald Kennedy belatedly decided he had to make U.S. "power credible" after his humiliation by Khrushchev in a Vienna meeting. Kennedy told James "Scotty" Reston, "Now is the time, Vietnam is the place." Kennedy told the Economic Club of New York in 1962, "Vietnam would collapse instantaneously if it were not for United States assistance." And in March 6, 1963 President Kennedy asked about Senator Mansfield's recommendation to cut aid, Kennedy said,

'I don't see how we are going to be able, unless we are going to pull out of Southeast Asia and turn it over to the Communists, how we are going to be able to reduce very much our economic programs and military programs in South Viet-Nam in Cambodia, in Thailand.

SDS Commits to Anti-Anticommunism

So by 1963 Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, had moved swiftly away from moral

equivalency of communism to capitalism in the spring of 1962's Port Huron Statement. By the fall, SDS had moved to the outright defense of the Soviet Union in the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Similarly, the "red diaper babies" at Berkeley, "We regarded President John F. Kennedy as an arch Cold Warrior, a liberal agent of the imperial ruling class" responsible for 'Radiation, Reaction, and Repression.'" On October 24, 1962 Professor Howard Zinn joined a protest of twenty against Kennedy's "quarantine" Soviet ships to stop missile deliveries and Kennedy's demand that the Soviets remove the missiles from Cuba. Zinn, a secret Communist, said the President's response was "hasty and provocative." The group of twenty urged peaceful diplomatic means instead. Accompanying Zinn were CPUSA members Dorothy Miller, Harry C. Steinmetz and Herbert Shapiro and Staughton Lynd.

On October 28, 1962 Khrushchev wrote Kennedy indicating missiles were being withdrawn on the condition Cuba would never again be invaded. Khrushchev told his Central committee the pledge of no invasion of the Cuban island was a great public victory.

On the next day, Harold W. Rood writes, "by a happy coincidence... terms for ending the crisis ... (the) same as those put forth by Premier Khrushchev" were published in "An Appeal to President Kennedy and Comrade Khrushchev," signed by about 500 college professors.

SDS's Tom Hayden and others claimed that JFK, not Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, was dangerous. Hayden said Kennedy was "trafficking in human life" during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 when the President objected to Soviet placing intermediate range nuclear missiles into the hands of Fidel Castro. The missiles were only ninety miles from America's homeland and less than fifteen minutes away from incinerating New York and Washington. Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence was not pacifism as many in the West presumed, but the of defeat U.S. imperialism, soon an objective of SDS.

The Democratic socialist patrons of SDS were unhappy.

Dissent editor Irving Howe objected to the SDS's,

readiness... to excuse the lack of freedom in Cuba, a country that seemed to them the home of a better or more glamorous kind of communism. They ... [have a] ... distaste for our 'rigid anticommunism' ... "How can you be in favor of Castro, who speaks of exporting revolution to South America, and then also be in favor of nonviolence?"

SDS was not only breaking away from its democratic socialist benefactors in the Socialist League for Industrial Democracy it was joining the other side.

SDS allied itself with a Maoist group the Progressive Labor Party which openly declared itself Communist. In December 1962 SDS roundly applauded Soviet spy Alger Hiss. SDS was ready for prime time participation in a pro-Hanoi peace movement. With the U.S. military on wartime alert, Hayden, the SDS and then Student Peace Union, SPU, a spin off of the AFSC, led protests against the USA in Vietnam in 1962.

War Resisters League, WRL

The War Resisters League, WRL, started as a strictly pacifist, peace organization sometimes aligned with the Socialist party. WRL leaders were Jim Peck, Bayard Rustin, David Dellinger, and Ralph DiGia. During WWII WRL members conducted hunger strikes among imprisoned conscientious objectors to the draft. After WWII it shifted to social justice. These pacifists turned to direct action, nonviolent civil obedience sometimes provoking force from police authorities.

WRL chose to criticize both American and Soviet foreign policy. Yet WRL's civil disobedience protests against American nuclear civil defenses was in effect urging U.S. unilateral actions while the Soviets and the Chinese were working vigorously to build civil defenses. WRL joined Women Strike for Peace in "a series of daring trespasses and civil disobedience actions" against nuclear proliferation.

Committee for Nonviolent Action, CNVA

WRL formed the Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA) to protest nuclear testing in Nevada. CNVA pioneered nonviolent direct action, including civil disobedience in the peace movement.

Brad Lyttle had organized in 1960-61, the "San Francisco-to-Moscow Walk for Peace," a multi-national effort. In Moscow Lyttle said, "I have protested against American rockets aimed at your cities and families. There are Soviet rockets aimed at my city and my family. Are you demonstrating against that?" Signs included "We oppose both Russian and American Bombs" and

demonstrating against that? Signs included "We oppose both Russian and American Bombs" and "Neither Red nor Dead," but CNVA policy was unilateral American disarmament even in the face of Soviet rockets aimed at America.

CNVA later traveled to Hanoi under the leadership of pacifist A.J. Muste. Muste in the early sixties had joined Norman Thomas in objecting to communists in the antiwar movement, but before he died argued for inclusion of Communists in the peace organizations.

In 1963 Brad Lyttle of CNVA led the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Walk for Peace, a racially integrated peace walk most noteworthy for a march on Albany Georgia halted by brutal police. Major participants were Lyttle, David Dellinger, Barbara Deming, Gene Keyes, AJ Muste. Some carried signs "For Cuba, Compassion, Understanding, Reconciliation, Mutual Aid."

Christmas Eve 1963 in Champaign, IL, Gene Keyes of CNVA "lit a candle with a draft card, following a 12-hour vigil in front of the Selective Service office."

In the end, WRL's greatest contribution to the pro-Hanoi peace movement, like SDS's Tom Hayden, was David Dellinger, a key leader of the pro-Hanoi movement as well as a frequent traveler to Hanoi and Paris to confer with Vietnamese communists.

Catholic Worker

The religious were particularly vulnerable to organizations claiming to seek social justice relief from poverty and materialism. The Archbishop of Canterbury once found the future of civilization in Stalin's Soviet Union. *The Protestant* magazine thanked "God for the Red Army" in Central Europe at the end of WWII.

Dorothy Day of Catholic Worker wrote in June 1963, that in the past the War Resisters League, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Friends Service Committee, the Peacemakers, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, had barred Communists from membership. "But undoubtedly with the thousands now participating in mass demonstrations around the country, this is no longer true."

Lay Catholic critic David Lukinbill writes,

The major Communist-inspired voice in progressive American Catholic circles (often working under the social justice banner) was surely Dorothy Day, and the movement she began, the Catholic Worker Movement, virtually parallels the antiwar, [and other policies] ... which Communist governments working in America advocate."

Day's authorized biographer Miller (1973) wrote that Catholic Worker's "affront" to most Catholics was "its disposition to make common cause with Communists" even "speaking of Communists as 'brothers'" and "recognizing the shortcomings of ... capitalism were as obvious" as the shortcomings of capitalism. ` Dorothy Day wrote,

I have spoken...at Carnegie Hall against the Smith and McCarran acts, with Communists, and fellow travelers, others of us have walked on picket lines protesting the payment of income tax...in Peter Maurin's words, 'we have no party line, neither Communist or Catholic.'

In contrast from the beginning, newly formed antiwar groups like Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, (1960-62) and Women Strike for Peace, WSP, (1961) and later Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, CLC, WSP welcomed communists.

Fellowship of Reconciliation, FOR

Muste, A. J., an early member, executive director and chairman of Fellowship of Reconciliation was a committed pacifist, a long time fellow traveler and only sometime critic of Communists, later explained the necessity of the inclusion of Communists in the antiwar movement and of the united front strategy:

The ordinary run of American citizens ... tend to be scared off by the more "Communist" [participants] ... Therefore, we should *dilute, cover up*, ... our "non-exclusion" policy in order to gain mass support ... In practice, a non-communist coalition is in danger of becoming an anti-communist one ... [I]f we ... abandon ... non-exclusion ... we would quickly disintegrate.

Alfred Hassler, Muste's successor at FOR, had for two prior decades excluded Communists as untrustworthy—loyal agents of the Soviet Union—and fought to avoid a CPUSA takeover of antiwar SANE. Communists had a greater loyalty to the Soviet Union than they did to peace. Some FOR members objected to assisting the North Vietnamese who were victimizing civilians. FOR was still a few years away from expressing "solidarity" with the North and being

invited to Hanoi. That would come in time.

Catholic Peace Fellowship at Christian Peace Conference in Prague

Fellowship of Reconciliation's John Heidbrink invited Catholic Worker's Jim Forest, Father Daniel Berrigan, Herman Evans and James Douglass to, very curiously, the Communist capitol of Prague to formalize the Catholic Peace Fellowship as an affiliate of FOR. Happy coincidence?

Perhaps the Catholic Peace Fellowship wanted or needed the formal blessing of the Communists. James H. Forest who represented FOR's affiliate the Catholic Peace Fellowship was a former editor of the *Catholic Worker* and a son of a prominent member of the CPUSA. A James Forest, perhaps the father, was a CPUSA member "assigned as head of the American Desk at the Soviet controlled WCP (World Council for Peace) headquarters in Helsinki."

At the time BBC reported that Soviet Bloc communists ... "constantly make elaborate attempts to attract Christians everywhere into 'peace fronts". So, the Christian Peace Conference "is [such]...a carefully groomed, important front organization." The Christian Peace Conference, CPC "tends to promote aims identical to those of the (World Peace Council), which...supports Soviet foreign policy."

Soviet policy was neither Christian salvation nor world peace nor brotherhood; it was a communist victory in Indochina and national liberation in the third world (and not in eastern Europe). The BBC reported, "The Christian Peace Conference has appointed itself as one of the champions of the new nations of Africa and Asia."

The coffers were full. "Since it disposes of large funds, money almost entirely derived from East European sources, invitations to delegates from Asia and Africa to Prague are almost invariably accompanied by free tickets. According to accounts of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, FOR, John Heidbrink had funded the trip of the U.S. Catholic group to the Christian Peace Conference through an anonymous donor. Perhaps a communist.

Throughout the war the Soviets, Cubans and East-bloc communists organized conferences and invited antiwar activists.

American Friends Service Committee, AFSC

American Friends Service Committee had long leaned toward communist regimes. The AFSC opposed every war and wanted peace everywhere, under any and all circumstances and with any and all opponents—WWI, WWII, Hitler, and Stalin. AFSC always settled for the peace with police states that oppressed and murdered their own citizens. The AFSC Friends displayed a willful blindness to the need for American national security against tyranny and espionage. In the late forties AFSC supported, like every Soviet agent on FDR's payroll, every concession Stalin demanded from the West. In the early fifties AFSC donated to the legal defense funds of atom spy Morton Sobel and Soviet espionage agent Steve Nelson.

In 1963 American Friends Service Committee formed the Washington Peace Center, "active on many social justice fronts," soon thereafter began organizing multiple protests against the war and opposing the draft.

By 1964 the AFSC would adopt the complete Hanoi narrative on the Vietnam War: demanding an immediate cease fire, declare the conflict a civil war, peasant support in South Vietnam for the Viet Cong, the war was unwinnable, and US napalm, chemicals and artillery were "shrivelling ... villages" and harming the innocent.

During the Vietnam War AFSC would in the end support the Communist enemy at every turn.

Women's International League For Peace and Freedom, WILPF

During the 1950s the Women's International League For Peace and Freedom, WILPF, opposed the Korean War, McCarthyism, supported civil rights and refused to ban communists from membership. Like other peace groups, WILPF, was active in seeking to end nuclear weapons testing, presenting a 10,000 signature petition to the White House.

From the mid-1960s on, WILPF was actively involved all over the country in demonstrations, meetings, vigils, and rallies to stop the war in Vietnam. In the 1970s and 1980s, WILPF worked on disarmament issues, the nuclear freeze...

Women Strike for Peace, WSP

Though, they systematically feigned the innocence of naïve housewives, many Women

Strike for Peace, WSP, advocates had prior experience as members of the Communist Party or of WILPF. Indeed, WSP founders, Bella Abzug and Dagmar Wilson, were communists or experienced fellow travelers. They were very comfortable working with Communists. Abzug, had participated in Communist Party and Soviet fronts, including the World Peace Council, WPC, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, IADL and the World Federation of Trade Unions, WFTU. Abzug was a known Communist sympathizer who a number of FBI sources had identified as a Communist.

Dagmar Wilson, a WSP founder believed “the Russians want to disarm. ... They do not have private money tied up in the armament industry ... They won't have ... vested interests profiting from the arms race.” Dagmar Wilson and a WSP delegation met the Soviet Ambassador to the UN, attended a seventeen nation disarmament conference in Geneva, spent a week in Moscow in July 1962 at the Soviet funded World Peace Congress, WPC. Some American women in Women Strike for Peace, WSP, including Ruth Gage-Colby, also attended the conference in Moscow.

As the CIA suspected, the Soviets picked up the WSP travel tab, according to Barbara Bick. During 1962 WSP would travel to other disarmament conferences in Accra, Vienna, and Geneva as well as Moscow. During 1962 San Francisco and East Bay WFP (WSP) distributed radiation test ban leaflets and bumper stickers at a daily vigil at the Federal Building.

By April 1963 the FBI saw no effort of the CPUSA to takeover WSP Party influence was already considerable among its own communist members.

Though allegedly formed at a kitchen table with no leaders, no members, and no organization WSP eventually claimed 500,000 “advocates” and received extensive press coverage, not possible with bake sale financing and tiny budgets.

Origins of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, VVAW

During 1963 Jan Barry volunteered for Vietnam where he witnessed Buddhist protests in Nha Trang on the coast. He disapproved of the Saigon regime's Strategic Hamlet program of "tanks and machine guns and barbed wire all over the country." Though Barry now opposed America's “colonial military policy,” he accepted an appointment to West Point. Barry soon dropped out of West Point and out of the Army. In April 1967, he marched in New York City with Veterans for Peace (a Communist front group). Someone brought a banner, “Vietnam Veterans Against the War,” which Barry and 5 others carried. Barry, using an alias, Jan Crumb, founded Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) that year.

Intellectual Fronts: Peace Research Institute, Institute for Policy Studies

Marcus Raskin and Arthur Waskow in 1961 published a pro-Soviet book advocating UN membership for communist states of Communist China, East Germany, North Korea, and North Vietnam; unilateral US halt to nuclear testing; eradicating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); return of Berlin to East Germany; and neutralization of Central Europe. In 1962 American Friends Service Committee published Arthur Waskow's *Unintended War. A study and commentary in the Beyond Deterrence series*. Philadelphia: Peace Literature Service of the [1962]

In 1963 the Peace Research Institute (PRI) merged with the Institute for Policy Studies, IPS, founded by Richard J. Barnet and Marcus G. Raskin. Arthur Waskow had worked for Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin, later a member of the IPS founded Members of Congress for Peace Through Law (MCPL). Though Communist Samuel Rubin (Samuel Rubin Foundation) initially funded IPS with \$1.2 million and the IPS consistently supported the foreign policies and military adventures of the Soviet Union, IPS maintained a seldom pierced veil of academic and political respectability.

IPS maintained a pro-Soviet positions on issues for decades.

A Maoist faction of academia would later form the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, CCAS, to not only to end the War in Vietnam, but to promote Mao's revolution in the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, costing tens of millions of lives. Among CCAS founders were Marilyn B. Young.

The politics of South Vietnam in 1963 provide the context of Hanoi strategy and the participation of the peace movement.

Political Actions in Vietnam, 1963

Ignorance of Vietnam, War

English speaking sources of reliable information for reporters on Vietnam's history, culture, language and politics were rare as hen's teeth. Few scholars had studied Vietnam and few

Americans spoke any Vietnamese, a five-tonal language where every set of characters could have many meanings. Bad roads and sweltering tropical heat made travel miserable. Newsmen, dependent upon a few telegraph machines to meet daily news deadlines seldom ventured out of Saigon. Throughout the war very few ever learned the language, fewer still lived in Vietnamese hamlets or barracked with South Vietnamese soldiers. The vast majority of the U.S. military had short one- year tours insufficient to learn much about the language and culture.

The Vietnamese Communists were active participants in the political process of South Vietnam. There were no dissenters in Communist North Vietnam. The Communists took advantage of the grievances of Buddhists, the poison tongue of Madame Nhu, and complaints about the Strategic Hamlets program to erode the political legitimacy of President Diem who was waging effective counterinsurgency against the communists and improving the education and economy of South Vietnam.

July 1963—Saigon Police Confront American Reporters

In July 1963 the Saigon police beaten AP reporter Arnett in a scuffle over which there was a dispute over who threw the first punch. Malcolm W. Brown photographed police surrounding David Halberstam and Arnett and claimed he too had been attacked covering a demonstration in Saigon. The Saigon Mission, William Truehart, refused to back Arnett's side of the story. Truehart's report was different. On July 7, 1963 following a Buddhist ceremony at Saigon Chantareansay Pagoda, reporters Browne, Sheehan, Halberstam "were allowed to observe and photograph ceremony [and] ... (operate) freely for at least an hour." After "reporters... acted in belligerent manner towards police, one AP reporter (Arnett) was roughed up and cameras of at least two other reporters were damaged.

Long after the war Arnett would again be associated with another false CNN story, "Talewind," a story of still another false poison gas episode out of Vietnam. CNN fired Arnett for his reporting from Bagdad. Pete Arnett is now lionized in Saigon's War Crimes Museum.

Buddhist Protests

On August 18, 1963 twenty thousand protesters assembled at the Xa Loi pagoda in Saigon demanding the Diem government be overthrown because of the systematic persecution of devout Buddhists. It was a phony charge given heavy play by ignorant American journalists.

Higgins and UN Missions Debunk Charges of Persecution of Buddhists

In July 1963 the top brass of the New York *Herald Tribune*, sent Korean War correspondent Marguerite Higgins to Vietnam to do an in depth investigation of the story of Diem's oppression of Buddhists. Tracking down "the names and places of alleged persecutions," in rural and urban locations from village to village in the Mekong Delta, Phan Thiet, Phan Rang province, Hue, and Saigon, Higgins found no religious oppression of Buddhists. Nothing there.

During 1963 a United Nations investigation issued December 7, 1963 and six Vietnamese-speaking Americans independently confirmed that claims of persecution of Buddhists were bogus.

Moreover, "No Buddhist was barred under Diem from any residential area, or school, or job because of his beliefs." There were only six Catholics in Diem's 17-member cabinet. Buddhists monks were exempt from the draft. Catholic priests were not exempt from military service.

During the Diem regime the number of Buddhist pagodas had more than doubled from 2,206 in 1954 to 4,776 active pagodas by 1963. Catholic Diem had built 1,275 built pagodas and restored 1,295 pagodas.

From where had the allegations of persecution come? It was a political operation in service of the war objectives of Hanoi and its allies in Moscow and Beijing.

In 1963 Thich Tri Quang had led a violent mob uprising of Buddhists to overthrow the Catholic dominated Diem government. In August 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem declared martial law and raided previously "privileged sanctuaries of subversion"-- Buddhist pagodas. After a tough fight with injuries, the government discovered weapons and Viet Cong documents in some pagodas.

Today one is given guided tours of the Marble Mountains where Buddhists shrines are commingled with Viet Cong fortifications and sniper locations in caves high above former U.S. military bases on the coast at Danang. The Viet Cong held these easily detectable and prominent positions only because Americans did not choose to destroy the ancient Buddhist Pagodas there.

Buddhist Political Operation, A Communist Front?

Marguerite Higgins found a sophisticated Buddhist political operation spreading the false stories she had uncovered. The Buddhists were mobilizing protests to overthrow Diem's South Vietnam government. The operation had all the hallmarks of Hanoi's "political front" (Lester K.

Vietnamese government. The operation had all the marks of a Hanoi "political struggle" (*dau tranh chinh tri*). Out of the Xa Loi Pagoda, phone banks, switchboards, mimeograph machines and daily press conferences supported media campaigns and political protests. The Buddhist expressions of discontent were only remotely spontaneous.

Suicides Staged and Monks Doped

The intrepid Higgins most astonishing discovery was the prearranged and publicly announced self-immolations of a series of duped and drugged Buddhist Monks.

Thich Duc Nhiep sent out press releases on each planned suicide. American photographers who could not pronounce his name, said, "Hey Tic Toc Toe, when's the next barbecue going to be." AP's Malcolm Browne's time lapsed photos of the burning of Thich Quang Duc on June 11, 1963 in Saigon, shows the monk fully aflame, but immobile from 9:30 am through 9:33 am, quite obviously too drugged to feel the horrific pain of being burned alive. The doped monk felt no pain.

Persons gathered to watch, wearing the robes of Buddhist monks and carrying English language signs, A BUDDHIST PRIEST BURNS FOR BUDDHIST DEMANDS, not meant for Vietnamese reading audiences, but intended for a gullible and lazy American press corps and an American audience 10,000 miles away.

Through the press, the war was now being waged in the hearts and minds of Americans well as South Vietnamese.

Thich Tri Quang: Machiavelli with Incense

Thich Tri Quang was the grand conspirator of Buddhist political-media apparatus who Marguerite Higgins characterized as "Machiavelli with incense."

Quang Threatens Kennedy: Many More, Staged Self-Immolations

Quang asked Higgins to tell President Kennedy to disassociate himself from Ngo Dinh Diem, otherwise "there would be many more self-immolations. ...ten, forty, fifty...these events will blacken President Kennedy's reputation as well as Diem's." Quang denied he wanted to blackmail the President. Higgins asked if sending monks to their fiery deaths was ethical, Quang replied, "in a revolution many things must be done," an ethos indistinguishable from Hanoi's top Communist leadership, Ho and Giap.

Communists Influence on Buddhist Operations

Later Maj. Lien Thanh, former Commander of Hue's National Police force declared, Leaders of the Buddhist crisis were not genuine monks. They were members of the communist party, but were masked as high-ranking monks to lead the Buddhist anti-government demonstrations. They called for freedom of religion, but their goal was to overthrow the existing nationalist government.

Indeed, at the August 1963 rally of Buddhists the communists lauded their own agents for their fine organizational skills in gathering the crowd and following their instructions to act as devout Buddhists. The "precisely the same... (professional agitators)" showed up year after year. Diem said the Buddhists were "stirred up by extremely clever Viet Cong cadres... Communist controlled agitators."

Quang told journalist Denis Warner he looked forward to government raids, "Don't you think it will help our cause if some of us are killed?" Riot managers "put women and children in front" so the police had to "wade...through the women and children" before getting to rock throwers. In full support of their Catholic leader Diem, on August 21, South Vietnamese Generals Dinh and Don—both Buddhists-- occupied pagodas, discovered weapons and Viet Cong documents.

Halberstam Fuels the Buddhist Crisis

The Buddhist revolt was stopped, but David Halberstam using unnamed sources received a Pulitzer prize claiming falsely on every point that: great bloodshed had occurred; the raid was planned by the hated Ngo Dinh Nhu and opposed by the South Vietnamese military; opposition to the government was widespread; and that soldiers were defecting en masse.

None of it was true.

Halberstam

Not only Diem but US officials from the President on down thought little of Halberstam.

Kennedy thought Halberstam was running a political campaign, "reminiscent of Mr. [Hubert I.] Matthews" of the *New York Times* supporting the Castro communist revolution. Kennedy "stated that it was essential that we not permit Halberstam unduly to influence our

actions.” On September 21, 1963, McNamara wrote to JFK about the Halberstam’s accuracy. He “underestimated the effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam, overemphasized Viet Cong successes, and failed to mention the supposed 4 to 1 casualty ratio in favor of the government forces.” And Halberstam's views of the strategic hamlet program in the Delta, are "overly lugubrious" and "should be treated with reserve!" In a CIA memo to McCone on September 20 entitled "David Halberstam's Reporting on South Vietnam, the CIA concluded:

A review of all the articles written by Mr. Halberstam since June indicates that he is by and large accurate in terms of the facts that he includes in his articles. The conclusions (Halberstam) draws from his facts, plus the emphasis of his reporting, ... tend to call his objectivity into question....”

Halberstam used anonymous sources “impossible to refute.” ...

However, other observers writing from South Vietnam indicate that large segments of the American military community have been and still remain optimistic about the course of the war. Such optimistic sources are almost never quoted by Mr. Halberstam."

Disinformation about dissent in the military over the Buddhist crisis came from none other than Reuters stringer and master spy Pham Xuan An. But Pulitzer stories like Halberstam’s had an embarrassingly perfect record of never being corrected since the *Times* Walter Duranty covered up Stalin’s starving of millions of Ukrainians, a harvest of sorrow, in a manmade famine.

Diem was Hanoi’s prime target.

Corruption, Unique to Diem? Vietnam?

Sadly, reporting Diem as corrupt, despotic and ineffective came right out of the Communist playbook. The Communists had used “identical images and charges... identical phrasing” with great effect against Gen. Draja Mihailovich in Yugoslavia and against nationalist Chaing Kai-shek in China. Influenced by Communist interpreters of events and personalities, the CIA’s predecessor, the OSS, had helped bring down both Mihailovich and Chaing. Gen. George C. Marshall embargoed all arms supplies to Chaing Kai-shek while Mao received Soviet supplies through Manchuria. The OSS favored Communist Tito over Mihailovich.

Whatever the corruption in South Vietnam, President Diem’s personal corruptibility was largely fictional. Many saw Diem as an honest nationalist and as a man of “Confusionist... moral and ethical principles” devoid of personal corruptibility. Rumors were enough. President Johnson later told Senator Eugene McCarthy the Kennedy administration “spoke to me about Diem. He was corrupt and he deserved to be killed. And therefore we had him killed.” President Johnson failed to mention his own stolen election to the Senate, not to mention the history of corruption in New Jersey, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, New Orleans, Houston etc. The Mafia ran rampant for decades in the USA while Diem acted rather quickly. Saigon’s Binh Xuyen gangsters who had for decades operated the Hall of Mirrors, with 1,000 women of ‘every color, every race, every language,” the world’s largest brothel.

In fact, Diem successfully threw Binh Xuyen gangsters out of Saigon, no mean achievement in the middle of a war for national survival.

While Diem took out the Saigon gangsters, Diem did too little about wartime profiteers, as too did Abraham Lincoln. “War profiteering was rampant in all contracting during the Civil War, anything an Army needs from livestock, ordinance, food or transportation were all over priced and the quality substandard.”

Reading the New York *Times* many South Vietnamese generals began to believe the U.S. government no longer supported Diem. In Washington, the Halberstam stories reached Averill Harriman and Roger Hilsman, who queried Ambassador Lodge. Soon Lodge joined the anti-Diem bandwagon. Hilsman wrote cable no. 243 to Lodge over the vacation season and on the weekend of August 24, 1963 which in effect “gave the green light” to coup planning without approval of the President or his top advisors. Lodge ordered CIA agent Col. Lou Conein, to work with the Vietnam generals on a coup. Lodge would eventually approve the coup that led directly and immediately to the assassination of Diem.

Experienced journalists—Marguerite Higgins, Keyes Beech and Joseph Alsop defended Diem against Halberstam’s stories, but to no avail. Higgins wrote, “Reporters here [in Vietnam]

Diem against Hanoi's stories, but to no avail. Higgins wrote, "Reporters here [in Vietnam] would like to see us lose the war to prove they are right..."

Diem Must Go

The CIA had Diem in its sights too.

The CIA's National Intelligence Estimate 53-63 reflected exactly what the Communist would have wanted, that Buddhist disorders would continue and that Diem was so unpopular that chances of a coup were about even. Don't worry be happy, the "Communists would not necessarily profit if Diem was overthrown," the CIA opined.

There was, the CIA thought, plenty of other effective South Vietnamese leaders. One such possible future leader liked by the CIA was Col. Pham Ngoc Thao, a secret Communist agent, who stayed up late talking to American reporters, e.g. AP's Malcolm Browne and plotting coups against one South Vietnamese leader after another. How did the CIA speak with such certainty? Pham Xuan An, had been a CIA asset when working with Edward Landsdale and Rufus Phillips in the fifties, and perhaps other communist spies told the CIA that Pham Ngoc Thao was reliable.

Oblivious to unpleasant possibilities the CIA wrote in July 1963, while "an obvious windfall for the Communists ... The Buddhist issue has not been effectively exploited by the Communists..."

So in 1963 the U.S. Embassy gave coup plotter and a highly probable communist collaborator Tri Quang three months asylum (September through November) before and after the Diem coup in 1963.

The CIA never judged Tri Quang to be a Communist. In February 1965 the CIA opined in SNIE 53-65, Tri Quang "is probably not now deliberately working for a Communist victory... [Yet] his disruptive actions...are serving these ends." The CIA's source possibly Pham Xuan An, spy extraordinaire.

A very few Vietnamese like An and Thao, had outsized influence because they could communicate with generically ignorant Americans. .

Achievements of Diem

For all the claims of Diem oppression 1954-1963 was period of improving economic prosperity, educational improvements and freedom. Agriculture production increased 485%, cattle and fisheries 500%. Educational advancements in the numbers of high schools 148%, students 307%, teachers 1,020% and university students 380%.

Strategic Hamlets

Among the little told successes of the Diem regime was pacification of hamlets beginning with providing safe havens, fortifications, outside of Viet Cong territory. Hanoi promptly described Diem's strategic hamlets as "concentration camps," a characterization more accurate for Hanoi practice than Saigon policy. According to Rufus Phillips, "The Strategic Hamlet Program had thrown the VC off balance." Besides village self-defense the program provided schools, pigs, wells, windmills, seeds, fertilizer. "Despite Viet Cong propaganda, there is no belief that the Vietnamese government or the Americans are deliberately bombing harmless villages." When the allies kept defeating the Communists in the hamlets, the VC were merely "adding to the people's woes" waging battles inside hamlets.

Strategic Hamlets were a top target of Hanoi. According to Nguyen Thanh Tho, former member of Hanoi's politburo "Through Duong Va Nhut, Pham Hung (Hanoi) had ordered General Minh to dismantle the Strategic Hamlets as soon as he became president." Meanwhile Hanoi's super spy was doing his part.

The Party Line: Pacification—Brutal and ...Ineffective.

Pham Xuan An also was anxious to have Americans understand the failures of pacification programs to interpret them as ineffective and brutal. It was one of An's long term projects. Pham Xuan An kept the North Vietnamese informed on all pacification efforts.

In one instance, Pham Xuan An drove Rufus Phillips, American pacification specialist, in his battered green Renault to Cho Lon, site of a 100-man Viet Cong ambush of South Vietnamese village self-defense forces at An Phu. According to Phillip's account, Pham, a Vietnamese friend, told him about "An incident occurred yesterday, right outside of Saigon. The area is insecure as hell." Pham Xuan An says, "There were many places I could have taken Rufus, but this one [had] innocent people...killed ...and there was no such thing as security in these programs." The Viet Cong attack had passed through General Westmoreland's vaunted "Rings of Steel." Decentralized South Vietnamese units failing to communicate had taken six hours to respond to calls for

assistance. Phillips passed the word to Edward Lansdale and Brig. Gen. Fritz Fine who wrote reports, but “not a goddamned thing happened” in Cho Lon.

Though Rufus Phillips believed An’s motivation was concern for the human tragedy at An Phu, spy An had also achieved the objective of disinformation, showing that pacification was not working in at least one place to Phillips, a man deeply dedicated to helping the Vietnamese pacification and nation building.

Spy An’s northern commander, Mai Chi Tho, thought that impugning the effectiveness of pacification was one of An’s greatest achievements, but Mai Chi Tho did not explain to Larry Berman, An’s biographer, why An’s reports on pacification had high value added. After all, the North Vietnamese already had reports from thousands of their other cadre in the hamlets of South Vietnam who saw pacification up close and personal every day in thousands of hamlets, strategic and otherwise.

An’s contribution was surely different. The value of An’s work was likely sowing disinformation among the allies, saying the effective was ineffective and the humane was inhumane. To have deceived Rufus Phillips, a man of extraordinary integrity and credibility, was a great, but temporary propaganda coup.

On September 4, 1963, R.J. Smith, acting Deputy Director warned the Director of the CIA, that the Buddhist affair was not impacting the Diem regime’s counterinsurgency efforts and their protests provided no reason not to support Diem. After all it had taken the British nine years to put down the Communist rebellion in Malaya. The Joints Chiefs made feeble protests to coup plotting to no avail.

Whatever his virtues and the support of his friends, Diem’s future was grim. American support among top U.S. policy makers was evaporating.

On September 2, 1963, the *Times of Vietnam*, an organ of Diem’s brother Nhu, had headlined “CIA Financing Planned Coup d’Etat.” Madam Nhu soon on tour of the U.S. made similar claims that the media dis missed and U.S. officials lied about.

Diem Coup and Assassination

Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was manipulated into being disillusioned with South Vietnam’s leader, Ngo Dinh Diem. In a military coup on November 2, 1963, Diem was assassinated; hands bound execution style in the back of his head. The CIA had advised President Kennedy in July 1963, “A non-Communist successor regime (to Diem) might prove no more effective than Diem in fighting the Viet Cong. However, there is a reasonably large pool of under-utilized but experienced and trained manpower... could provide effective leadership... .” Years of ineffective leaders and coups followed.

Back on the political front outside of Vietnam, Hanoi was gathering its fraternal, communist, and progressive, fellow traveling, forces. The US Peace movement was developing some interest and conducting some modest operations against the Vietnam War.

1962—Introducing the Peace Movement to Vietnam

Internationally, the National liberation Front, NLF, founded and controlled in Hanoi was officially debuted in 1962 to the "International Socialist Camp." Except for Indonesia under Sukarno, the only governments that ever recognized the NLF or later the PRG as legitimate representatives of the people of South Vietnam were communist.

Many peace groups whose charters included social justice did accept the NLF and argue it was an independent of Hanoi despite all the evidence to the contrary.

February-March 1962—NLF conference in South Vietnam Elects Secretary General

February 16 - March 3, 1962 NLF held its “First Congress,” a broad coalition of political forces. Wilfred Burchett, on the KGB payroll and a reliable agent of Soviet propaganda since the Korean War (biological warfare, POW interrogations), attended and reported on the Congress in his book *The Furtive War* as well as to the world press. After the congress he interviewed Nguyen Van Hieu, who Burchette describes as a Professor belonging to the Radical Socialist Party just elected by the Congress as secretary-general of the NLF.

Hieu claimed widespread popular support for the Viet Cong, massive poverty and prostitution under the Diem regime, NLF control of the countryside in the south, and denied the NLF got arms from North Vietnam. NLF subsisted upon captured arms even radios, a logistical impossibility.

March 1962--Lenin of the NLF, Debuts

From the beginning Hanoi assigned talented and experienced leadership to the Viet

From the beginning, Hanoi assigned talented and experienced leadership to the Viet Cong. Nguyen Van Hieu elected Secretary General of the National Liberation Front, NLF, in the March 1962 Congress. Hieu was "the Lenin of the NLF." He dealt with Westerners as well as with Communist countries. He was a "skilled propagandist and organizational genius." From June 26, 1962 through June 1964 under Nguyen Van Hieu's leadership some 58 members of NLF visited foreign countries establishing permanent offices in seven—Cuba, Algeria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Red China, USSR and Indonesia—and in two organizations Afro-Asian Solidarity Council in Cairo and International Labor Unions in Prague.

Hieu met and charmed leaders of the American antiwar movement in Moscow, Helsinki, Bratislava, Stockholm, Hanoi and doubtless elsewhere. Hieu described the value of his international travels and meetings.

The crimes of the U.S. imperialists have also been severely condemned by the people of the whole world... We ... thank warmly all intellectuals and scientists... among them American[s]... who ... (protest) ... Progressive mankind regards the patriotic movement in South Vietnam as an integral part of the world movement for national liberation and for the defense of world peace."

Over time those peace movement leaders meeting Hieu were, in part, Tom Hayden, Dave Dellinger, Rennie Davis, Barbara Bick (CPUSA), Vivian Rothstein, Norm Fruchter, Carol McEldowney, Cathy Wilkerson, Jeff Jones, Steve Halliwell, Bronson Clark, Sidney Peck, Cora Weiss, and Mike Myerson, representing the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, Women Strike for Peace, WSP, CPUSA's DuBois Clubs, American Friends Service Committee, AFSC, and other groups.

In November 1967 Nguyen Van Hieu, nominally NLF ambassador to Cambodia, would deliver three American POWs into the hands of Tom Hayden after giving a statement. Hieu said the POW release was being made to the antiwar movement "in expectation that [the POWs] ... would be able to contribute to the U.S. peace movement." POW Jackson said almost exactly the same lines as Mr. Nguyen Van Hieu, accomplished and practiced greeter of peace activists.

Nguyen Van Hieu as a "roving" minister for the NLF, made many tours abroad. By 1967 he was nominally NLF ambassador to Cambodia and represented NLF in its fictionally independent foreign affairs. By 1968 he joined the Paris talks and became Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG) in June 1969.

Hieu proclaimed the democratic intentions of the Viet Cong for "independence, democracy, peace and neutrality," but by 1976 as Minister of Education, Nguyen Van Hieu was running reeducation camps for former third force neutralists as well as opponents and supporters of the fallen Saigon regime.

Organizationally the North Vietnamese Minister of Propaganda and Re-education, To Huu, (1963-1975) was responsible for the Office of Foreign Activity, which directed all international propaganda activities. These international propaganda activities included work among various foreign committees - friendship, peace, and solidarity committees. After a Hanoi trip, Tom Hayden, Staughton Lynd and Herbert Aptheker cited the poetry of To Huu, a great admirer of Joseph Stalin, the mass murderer and Soviet dictator. To Huu wrote, "Stalin! Stalin! How much I love it when I hear my child learn your name... I love my papa and mama, I love myself just once. But I love you ten times!"

How could progressives resist such charm?

March 1962--Hanoi's Outreach to Americans: Women Strike for Peace, Berkeley,

Through Hieu's contacts and that of many others Vietnamese communists Hanoi established ties to American antiwar protest activists very quickly including Ruth Gage-Colby of Women Strike for Peace. The Vietnamese News Agency, VNA, 1428 GMT 20 March 1962 said:

All Vietnamese women wholeheartedly support 'Women Strike for Peace,'...[W]e are very elated ...that American women are engaged in a campaign to safeguard world peace.... With the same aspiration for peace-Vietnamese women always side with American women..."

Ruth Gage-Colby later met with North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong.

June 1962—Hanoi Down with Diem

In June 1962 in Hanoi,

Almost everyone, from the school kids to the rickshaw drivers displayed color

paper armbands with the slogan "down with Ngo Dinh Diem" the traitors showed they were stepping up propaganda against South Vietnam aiming directly at Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem.

Dang Chi Binh, a South Vietnamese spy.

June 1962: Berkeley: Bring Troops Home: Communists Win.

According to David Horowitz, "red diaper babies" led one of the first Vietnam protests. On campus in the USA, it was often the "red diaper babies"--those whose parents were members of the Soviet KGB funded Communist Party USA, CPUSA--who took the lead. They organized "the first demonstration in America against the war in Vietnam." It was in Berkeley in June 1962. In *Radical Son* David Horowitz identifies his comrades as Bob Scheer, Maurice Zeitlin, Sol Stern, and Susan Griffin.

This Berkeley cadre soon adopted Bring the Troops Home," as their slogan, "because if the troops were brought home... America would be defeated, and the Communist would win—a revolutionary gain." One Berkeley antiwar activist (1962-1969) was radical sociologist, Jeffrey Schevitz, who became an agent of the East German secret police, the Stasi and taught at universities such as Washington University, Cortland State College, State College of Buffalo and the Free University of Berlin.

June 1962: Vietnamese Communist Debuts-Lidice, Moscow

Lidice--Led by Nguyen Van Hieu, the NLF, the Viet Cong, made its first international debut in Czechoslovakia on June 26, 1962. While there, Hieu visited Lidice, a Communist shrine to the victims of both Fascism and American nuclear weapons.

Moscow--Nguyen Van Hieu went on to Moscow, July 9-14, 1962 where the Soviet controlled organizations, Afro-Asian People's Solidarity organization and the World Congress for Disarmament and Peace, greeted him and his delegation. Thousands representing 100 nations attended the World Congress in a massive auditorium. Nikita Khrushchev, Secretary of Soviet Communist Party, gave a speech entitled "general and complete disarmament - guarantee of peace and security for all people."

Some non-aligned groups chose to criticize Soviet nuclear testing, tried to demonstrate in Red Square against Soviet weapons. Their banners were confiscated and deportation threatened. As a result in 1963 forty peace organizations would ally to form the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace without Soviet members and independent of the World Peace Council.

American peace groups among the founding organizations were the fellow traveling American Friends Service Committee, Committee on Non-Violent Action, Fellowship of Reconciliation and War Resisters League. Its noncommunist credentials would not last long.

By August 1968 the "noncommunist" Confederation would be sponsoring a conference on "Anti-Imperialists and Anti-Capitalist Struggle" in communist Ljubljana, Yugoslavia well attended by proclaimed communists members of SDS including Bernardine Dohrn.

Immediately going its own way Women Strike for Peace, WSP, declared its support for Khrushchev's Soviet model of "general and complete disarmament." The "Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament under Strict International Control" was an official "draft of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

July 1962—Ho Chi Minh and Bernard Fall

In July 1962, Ho Chi Minh told French scholar Bernard Fall: "We shall marshal world public opinion about this unjust war against the South Vietnamese people." There would be plenty of time. "We held off the French for eight years. We can hold off the Americans for at least as long. Americans don't like long, inconclusive wars. This is going to be a long, inconclusive war."

In Lidice and Moscow and soon Helsinki, Ho's emissaries were rapidly recruiting an American cadre to carry his messages of an unjust war while the Communist terror campaign against the hapless civilian populations in South Vietnam's hamlets seldom made the news.

July August, 1962: Helsinki-Youth Festival-Strange Bed Fellows

July 29-August 6, 1962 the Vietnamese delegation attending the World Youth Festival in Helsinki had an opportunity to meet not a handful, but 450 Americans.

Entertainers Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton, Judy Collins, Odetta and Bob Dylan had helped raise funds at the City University of New York that ultimately paid Americans to attend the Soviet run Helsinki confab. Willard Uphaus, supporter of Communist fronts and Carlton Goodlett and Victor Rabinowitz, identified members of the CPUSA raised funds for the festival in a letter in the April 2, 1962 issue of the *National Guardian*.

Nguyen Van Hieu very likely also attended the World Youth Festival in Helsinki. Bobbie Rabinowitz, a member of the Young Communist League, remembers, "We...met with the Vietnamese delegation and learned about the growing US involvement in that region. (This information was kept from us at home)." Early on, this propaganda theme was developed: "We met first hand with those who were tortured at the hands of the US government 'advisors.'" Most of all "(We)...were able to document and bring the story home to a fledgling anti-Vietnam War movement..."

Other communist-aligned attendees were Charles Berrard, Michael Eugene Myerson, Harold Supriano and Michele Hall, daughter of CPUSA controlled Longshoremen in Hawaii and future wife of Assemblyman, State Senator, Congressman and California Democratic Party Chairman John Burton (D-CA). Professor Howard Zinn, an identified member of CPUSA active in Communist fronts, American Peace Mobilization and New York CP dominated American Veterans Committee, helped recruit attendees to Helsinki confab.

CIA Recruits Participants at Helsinki

Meanwhile, Gloria Steinem was under a CIA contract to recruit participants to infiltrate the communist confab and to fund "liberal" Americans participants in the 450-member U.S. group of pacifists and CPUSA activists. It was a futile stunt. Among those whom Steinem recruited through her CIA front, Independent Research Service, were Zbigniew Brzezinski, Barney Frank, Clay Felker, the Rev. and very radical William Sloan Coffin, attorney Tom Garrity and reporter Robert Kaiser. Among those invited, but not attending were Michael Harrington and Tom Hayden.

December 1962-WSP before HCUA

The WSP would improve its already amicable relations with Communists back home where the "inclusive" WSP boasted of welcoming Communists in the headlines grabbing testimony of "housewives and mothers" before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in December 1962. At the HCUA hearing Lyla Hoffman admitted she was a former member. Blanche Posner and others took the 5th. Some Communists--Barbara Bick, Mary Clarke—were among WSP's top leaders. Mary Stalcup Markward identified Barbara Bick as member of CPUSA. Mary Clarke admitted as much to author Robbie Liberman. Bella Abzug, a WSP founder and friend of Cora Weiss, was an identified CPUSA member. Cora Weiss's father, Samuel, and husband, Peter, were CPUSA members.

A few American antiwar leaders objected to communist participation.

January 1963—Oxford Conference; Chilly Warms to Soviet Apologists .

January 4-7, 1963 nonaligned, noncommunists held the Oxford conference at Somerville College, expressing concern about heavy Soviet influence in the conferences of the World Council of Peace, Partisans of Peace, and the East-West Roundtables at Pugwash and Dartmouth. Homer Jacks opened an Oxford conference saying that while American delegates "put world peace above American patriotism," they did not equate "the values of democracy and Communism."

WSP's Colby and Linus Pauling were rejected as officers of the conference. The American delegation apologetically objected to attendance of delegates of the World Council for Peace, e.g. Romesh Chandra, Ilya Ehrenburg, J.D. Bernal, Velio Spano. To promote reduction of east-west tensions, the conference decided to be "nonaligned" with both Moscow and the West, but it would allow Yugoslav and Polish communists and British affiliates of the Soviet controlled World Council of Peace to join.

Easter Sunday 1963 --SANE-Ejects Communists. Dellinger protests Vietnam,

On Easter Sunday in 1963 the Committee for a Sane Nuclear policy held a "Peace walk" in New York City, keeping Communist signs and speakers out of its parade. Yet David Dellinger urged the crowd to stop US intervention in Vietnam winning him the displeasure of liberal peace activists, Norman Cousins, Norman Thomas, Homer Jack, Clarence Pickett, and Bayard Rustin.

Those who did not welcome communists, SANE and SPU, faded away from influence the antiwar movement.

Spring 1963—Women Strike for Peace

Throughout 1963, Women Strike for Peace, WSP, later renamed Women for Peace, at Berkeley, had protested against civil defense and nuclear fallout shelters, armed Forces Day. In the Spring of 1963, Women for Peace invited Dr. Carleton Goodlet, publisher of the San Francisco *Sun Reporter*, an activist of the Soviet controlled World Council of Peace and a CPUSA official to speak on campus at 110 Wheeler on "My Trip Through Africa."

By early 1964, WSP, later Women for Peace, co-sponsored a meeting in Bouley Ballroom

By early 1964, WSP, later Women for Peace, co-sponsored a meeting in Pauley Ballroom at Berkeley. A Bertrand Russell tape was played and Bob Scheer gave a speech. A university banned leaflet showed a "Vietnamese father holding his badly burned son." Vietnam had become the top issue of the peace movement.

Spring 1963--Stanford Peace Caucus

In the spring of 1963, members of the Stanford Peace Caucus, SPC, protested nuclear fallout shelters on campus and Air Force General Lauris Norstad, a former NATO Commander, as commencement speaker.

In 1963 an AFSC report, *China Policy*, lauded Mao's China and opposed the nationalists on Taiwan.

May 18, 1963--

In May 18, 1963 in Chapel Hill North Carolina few members of SPU joined Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF, to protest Armed Forces Day. They were met with shouts of "'SPU-red" comparing the peace marchers with Communists.

August 1963--Vietnam Protest Off shoot of Hiroshima Commemoration

In Philadelphia members of the SPU picketed the Federal building against US policy in Vietnam.

Tom Cornell and Christopher Kearns of Catholic Workers led a larger group of 250 protesting against the Diem government's treatment of Buddhists. ABC Evening News covered the protest. Hanoi's political agenda had reached America.

September 1963—SDS Plans Nhu Protests, Adopts Hanoi Line.

An SDS chapter proposed to the national office that a demonstration be held on the "occasion of a visit to Washington by Mme. Ngo Dinh Nhu, sister-in-law of Saigon tyrant Ngo Dinh Diem." SDS President Todd Gitlen approved and invited the Student Peace Union, SPU, to join. Weakened by the signing of the treaty limiting nuclear testing and "needing a cause," the SPU added its numbers to the passionate but numerically small SDS. Some record that the SPU took the initiative in the very first demonstrations against US military intervention in Vietnam in the fall of 1963.

Gitlen recalls, SDS and SPU "issued a call which was quite surprisingly prescient in its demands for United States withdrawal and its attack on the puppet regime, the use of chemical warfare, and the waste of American money." Except for waste of money, Hanoi could not have said it better. In fact it already had.

September-October 1963—Hanoi Conferences

On September 23, 1963, Hanoi held an international conference for trade unionists to promote Hanoi's cause among fraternal and progressive constituencies. And again in October 20-23, 1963 a meeting of the International Trade Union Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Vietnam met in Hanoi and commemorated it with a 221 page book.

The Soviet controlled World Federation of Trade Unions established the International Committee for Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Vietnam and held two conferences in Hanoi in 1964-65. The Soviet controlled WFTU was thereafter active in the peace against the USA in Vietnam while the U.S. labor movement under AFL-CIO leader George Meany supported the war in Vietnam.

October 1963--Dubois Clubs—San Francisco, Berkeley

Gus Hall, chairman of the CPUSA, in October 1963, had ordered the creation of a new Marxist youth group, the W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of America, named after a respected Black American author and civil rights activist. W.E.B. DuBois was a member of the Communist Party and recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1960. W.E.B. DuBois had said that Stalin "asked for neither adulation nor vengeance. He was reasonable and conciliatory." DuBois was a friendly visitor to the Soviet Union, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and China. Michael Myerson, member had attended the 1962 conference of the Youth Festival in Helsinki.

The DuBois Clubs held their national organizing convention in June 1964 in San Francisco. From their beginning, DuBois Clubs worked directly with antiwar groups such as SDS, SNCC, SWP, YSL, etc. Early on, the DuBois Clubs took a leadership role in civil rights and other Berkeley-San Francisco demonstrations during 1963-65.

Some attendees at the organizing convention of June, 1964, were: Carl Boice, Al Richmond, Ken Cloke, Eugene Dennis, Jr., and Herbert Aptheker's daughter, Bettina Aptheker. The DuBois President was Phil Davis, a former S.N.C.C. Field Secretary. Other key early

DuBois Club supporters were: Joan Baez, Terence and Matthew Hallinan, Paul Robeson, and Bertram Russell. Jackie Goldberg was an activist in many Communist front groups: heading U.C. Women for Peace at Berkley, was its delegate to Moscow in 1963, a member of the communist dominated American-Russian Institute in San Francisco and a member of the Policy Committee for upcoming the World Communist Youth Festival (1968 Sofia).

In October 1963, the Friends Committee on National legislation formed the Vietnam Information Center in Washington. Unnoticed, but soon important.

Meanwhile everywhere it was Diem must go. Surely Hanoi's politics in South Vietnam had reached America, but what could be done about it. .

October-November 1963--Madame Nhu Tour of USA,



Nhu Policies Offend American Newsmen and Kennedy Administration

Americans, particularly liberal newsmen, found Madame Nhu's morality laws extreme. She sought to outlaw abortion, adultery, divorce, contraceptives, dance halls, beauty ageants, boxing matches, and animal fighting and was for closing down brothels and opium dens. Many traditional Vietnamese may not have found these ideas altogether distasteful.

American Government officials hated Nhu for undiplomatic remarks about Buddhist suicide protests and the Kennedy administration. In a letter to the *New York Times*, Madame Nhu repeated a prior comment, "I would clap hands at seeing another monk barbecue show, for one cannot be responsible for the madness of others." The macabre barbecue term had been used by an American soldier on a street corner and was used by American photographers, perhaps Malcolm Brown. Her English idioms were imperfect. She thought that the term barbecue was an innocent Americanism. Unlike Robert McNamara she would never be forgiven. Later when touring South Vietnam McNamara held high the hand of General Khanh offering full U.S. support speaking in Vietnamese. Unfortunately, McNamara mispronounced, *viet* (duck) *nam* (down) *muon* (wants to) *nam* (lie down). He was not complimenting the Vietnamese leader who he was calling a downed duck, sick duck, ruptured duck or, worse of all, a duck who wants to lie down to die- a dead duck. Future Lenin Peace Prize winner, Nguyen Huu Tho, said of McNamara's linguistic gaff, "It saved our propaganda cadres a lot of effort."

President Diem defended Nhu's rights to defend herself from character assassination. "One cannot deny a lady the right to defend herself when she has been unjustly attacked." Nhu was entitled to freedom of speech.

Nhu's statements at home and abroad stimulated talk by JKK, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, McGeorge Bundy, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Maxwell Taylor, of getting rid of the Nhu's and of Diem altogether. One of Ambassador Lodge's aides asked if "there were not something the government could do to shut her up..

Prophetically, Made Nhu said, "According to a few immature American junior officials, [Roger Hilsman] the Vietnamese regime is not puppet enough and must be liquidated." Wiki

Certainly, Diem and his sister-in-law Madame Nhu, facing a hostile and influential American press corps, understood the war in Vietnam just might turn in the USA. Perhaps a Nhu tour might do some good. On September 9, Nhu left South Vietnam predicting a "triumphant lecture tour" and "said she, would probably be like walking into "a cage of lions."

Nhu was not shy about her contempt for her detractors. In Belgrade, Nhu said that "President Kennedy, is a politician, and when he hears a loud opinion speaking in a certain way, he

to appease it somehow." And later why "all the people around President Kennedy are pink?" She declared American liberals were "worse than communists." Kennedy's performance with Khrushchev at Vienna, the building of Berlin Wall, the Bay of Pigs in Cuba and the neutralization of Laos were cause for concern among the South Vietnamese. And also next door in Cambodia where in 1963, according to Penh Nouth, Prime Minister and Advisor to President in the Kingdom of Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk "signed a pact with Hanoi" opening Cambodia's eastern border and later the Port of Sihanoukville. That year Cambodia also denounced Accords of Friendship with the U.S.

After stopovers in Europe, Nhu's tour covered 12 cities, 15 speeches and 7 radio or TV interviews in the U.S. coast to coast for 21 days. Nhu cut some of 80 invitations and TV appearances, including David Susskind.

Time wrote, "Preceded by some of the worst press notices since Tokyo Rose," *Time* reported, "Wherever Mme. Nhu went, large crowds gathered. There were, of course, the inevitable pickets toting such signs as: NO NHUS IS GOOD NEWS and PHU ON NHU. But for the most part the crowds were merely curious." Some reported Nhu meeting "large and vocal" crowds, mostly negative.

On October 9, she spoke before a lunch at the [Overseas Press Club](#) of New York at the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria. Outside picket signs "No *Nhus* is good *Nhus*." Martin of Youth Against War and Fascism, said Nhu was "suppressing the Vietnamese peoples' search for national independence." Two SDSers, Douglas Ireland and Ed Knappman and five others were arrested picketing.

Inside over 1,000 listened for 90 minutes. At 5 ft. 2 in. tall in her spike heels, almost hidden by a 4-foot lectern, *Time* wrote, she "held her own with considerable composure." What if she were President? "My first step," she said, "would be really to inform more of the American people about the Communist danger." Columnist Mary McGrory asked, "Why did you come here at our expense?" Mme. Nhu responded, "I was not aware that all the money in Viet Nam was American."

On October 11, a Fordham University a very tired Nhu "got an enthusiastic reception from 5,000 students at the Jesuit school. 'This can make up for all the vicissitudes, all the sadness I have met here so far," said she. She apologizes for her Barbeque remark about Buddhists. TV newsman Tom Snyder got up in front of the camera and walked out. Afterwards a student said, "Couldn't hate her as much as I wanted to."

On October 12, Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, spoke to 1,100 at Columbia University in McMillin Theater where 150 Action and the Student Peace Union protested. Youth Against War and Fascism met her with boos and "a barrage of eggs."

On October 13, Madame Nhu appeared on [NBC-TV's *Meet the Press*](#), defending the South Vietnamese government. "Your own public, here in America, is not as anti-Communist as ours is in Vietnam. ... To say that 70 percent of my country's population is Buddhist is absolutely [un]true." As for the Buddhist "Barbeque," Nhu said her daughter had a U.S. soldier use the phrase at a Saigon hot-dog stand. "It sounded like a perfectly harmless Americanism." Moreover, Nhu could have said whenever Thich Duc Nhiep sent out press releases on each staged Buddhist suicide. American photographers said, "Hey Tic Toc Toe, when's the next barbecue going to be." Later asked did the six Buddhists who burned themselves alive prove strong opposition to the Diem government? She retort, no more than the thousands of Vietnamese dying obscurely in battle without any publicity.

October 15, Sarah Lawrence at Alexander Hall the Princeton Liberal Forum protested throwing a lemon meringue pie at Nhu's arriving vehicle.

On October 17, she learned the United Nations was investigating the repression of Buddhists in South Vietnam. The UN would exonerate Diem, a month after his assassination. "At a television interview the day after her arrival, ... she insisted, without producing any convincing evidence, had plotted to overthrow the Diem government, and Saigon's resident U.S. newsmen had helped out." All true.

At Harvard on October 17, Madame Nhu addressed Harvard Law Forum for over an hour. She was "sympathetically received with enthusiastic applause and laughter in the right places." The *Crimson* said, Harvard protesters loudly interrupted Madame Nhu's speech several times at Rindge Tech. She spoke of the absolute rights of religion and assembly, growing power of women and

feet. She spoke of the absolute rights of religion and assembly, growing power of women and winning the war in South Vietnam, "the only country actively fighting communism on the battlefield". She also told of a "premeditated campaign of slander waged against me." The press was "always looking for new denigrations." About the Buddhists she said, a "few misguided men and women burned to death—the victims of (communist) incitement." Answering question she said women once "wasted all their energies and intelligence to grab a protector" She had passed a family code protecting women. She organized a paramilitary force of 200,000 women. South Vietnam is fighting "to build democracy," and "the war has the popular support of the people."

Outside 100 SDSers booed Madame Nhu.

On October 18 1963 at a nighttime rally in Washington the SDS made its presence felt. Paul Booth came from Swarthmore to say, "The Vietnamese have paid heavily for our folly This great nation [must] harness its human resources in behalf of causes which are just".

October 19, Nhu spoke at Georgetown in Gaston Hall before the International Relations Club. Before her appearance students were told she was a rich controversial militant Catholic and a devastating speaker. She shows "no sympathy for the Buddhist cries of pro-Catholic presidential suppression and numerous other grievances. She has even indicated a feeling that the Buddhists are communist-organized and the recent demonstrations are open treason."

In Chicago SPU protesters met Madame Nhu getting off her plane at O'Hare Airport.

In Northern California on October 30, 1963 Nhu faced multiple protests. During Madame Nhu's visit to San Francisco, WSP and a group calling themselves Youth Against War and Fascism, picketed the Sheraton-Palace Hotel. Diem and Nhu were "suppressing the Vietnamese peoples' search for national independence."

On campus at the University of California at Berkeley, Nadya Williams, 19, a "red diaper baby" joined a anti-war demonstration outside the hall protesting Madame Nhu. They surrounded and hit her car as she left. "She was NOT welcome." A sign said, "NHU PAID BY USA." WSP activists were stymied by university rules. "When Madame Nhu came to our [Berkeley] campus in November, 1963, we wanted to stage a sit-down as a form of dramatic protest to her treatment of Buddhists." Regulations did not allow political advertising of the sit-down, including posters. Even the Republicans would soon object to such restrictions on political free speech and join the Free Speech movement at Berkeley.

According to the *Militant*, a Trotskyite communist publication, covering Madame Nhu's tour: 90 percent of Vietnamese were Buddhists, napalm had incinerated thousands of ordinary peasants, men women and children and Strategic Hamlets were concentration camps for nine million. Communists of all stripes had adopted the Hanoi line.

SDS Trumpets Its Protests Against Nhu.

In 1963 SDS historians Todd Gitlen and Kirkpatrick Sale, and its SPU tagalongs claim to have led the opposition to Madame Nhu and to the South Vietnamese anticommunists. SDS and SPU were active mostly on campuses where she did not appear.

According to SDS historian Kirkpatrick Sale, SDS and SPU troops were active everywhere against Nhu: 400 at Michigan; another 400 at Wisconsin; 170 people signing a petition against U. S. aid to South Vietnam at the University of Texas; 50 students in downtown Detroit (one with a sign reading, DOWN WITH THE NHU FRONTIER); and 35 picketed Mme. Nhu at Howard University,

Sale writes, "This (antiwar activity) is not insignificant, given the [early 1963] date; but most of this was done without any real push from the upper levels of the SDS organization, and what might have been a dramatic political event was instead a back page oddity."

The Aftermath of Nhu Tour

Time magazine suggested, "a meeting between the President and Mme. Nhu could hardly make relations between the U.S. and Viet Nam worse than they already are. The President might even learn some things he hasn't been told before." Marguerite Higgins, Edward Lansdale and others thought Nhu was misunderstood. Having a poor command of English let alone its idioms Madame Nhu had adopted the term "barbeque" for the Buddhist suicides from the American press corps in South Vietnam. The term was well appreciated by the press corps in Vietnam but not on college campuses.

Diem died by assassination before his sister-in-law finished her tour. Nhu held a press conference saying Americans were responsible for the army coup. She insisted that her husband

and her brother-in-law, President Ngo Dinh Diem, did not committed suicide. "suicide is incompatible with our religion." She asked, "For how long will they (coup plotters) hold power?" Nhu was right on all these points.

In Robert Thompson's view, "the question was not whether we could win with Diem but that without Diem we would very probably lose within six months."

Madame Nhu was not allowed to return to Vietnam so she and her 4 children were exiled to France.

December 1963--Hanoi

In December 1963 the Central Committee of the Vietnam Worker's Party, the ruling Communist Party, issued a resolution: "We are using our political and moral strength with our military and material weakness to oppose an enemy who is weak politically and morally but strong militarily and materially." The war would be protracted, "but we must seize opportunities to win victories."

In 1963 Ralph Schoenman, Bertrand Russell's Secretary General of his war crimes project began meeting with Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, and party officials.

Close behind were established peace movement groups using their "political and moral strength" and Scotty Reston was writing a January 1964 column in the *New York Times* that the war in Vietnam was unwinnable.

The Peace Movement After 1963

Within a very few years hundreds of Americans would attend large conferences controlled, heavily influenced, or even financed by domestic and foreign communists.

They often met for days and weeks at a time before, during and after conferences. Overtly pacifist, humanitarian, and religious leaders gave legitimacy to Communist front groups supporting the enemy. American authorities seldom held willing collaborators to task for their disloyalty and treason.

Top anti-war leaders discussed protest strategy and coordinated antiwar activities and propaganda themes with the enemy, which often sent instructions before events and followed up with congratulatory telegrams when their instructions were followed. The propaganda themes of the enemy and the "peace" movement were often word for word the same.

By 1973-75 members of Congress cut aid to Indochina and bleed out its military defense until it expired. .

Conclusions

In the end it was finally superior Hanoi military technology—Soviet tanks, trucks and 120mm artillery—that ultimately defeated ARVN's pathetically armed forces 1973-1975. Yet it took pen and camera to sap the political will of America and to disarm the South Vietnamese.

Buddhists: Nostalgic for Diem and Thieu

The regime has destroyed and confiscated Buddhist pagodas and religious artifacts, arrested monks and restricted travel and preaching. During the unjustly infamed Diem regime the number of Buddhist pagodas had more than doubled from 2,206 in 1954 to 4,776 active pagodas by 1963. Catholic Diem had built 1,275 built and restored 1,295 pagodas. Major Buddhist leaders were arrested including the conniving collaborator Thich Tri Quang and others such as Thich Quang Do, Thich Huyen Quang, Thich Thien Minh, Thich Quang Lien, Thich Thong Buu, Thich Thong Hue, Thich Thuyen An, Thich Thanh. Images of Buddha and Christ were defaced and replaced with busts of Ho Chi Minh.

On November 2, 1975 twelve Buddhist monks and nuns immolated themselves by fire at the Duoc-Su pagoda in Phung Hiep, Can Tho. Some of the better known were Nguyen Thi Thu, Ho Tan Anh and Thich Chan Hy.

Consequences

Since most of what we think we know about the Vietnam War is false, we have distorted visions of ourselves, of our place in the world and of how wars should be fought. Our children are taught the war propaganda of Hanoi and of the progressive left that an imperialist capitalist U.S. conducted an illegal, immoral, unjust and unwinnable war in Vietnam, a place far, far away from our national interests. Since the conventional Vietnam War template of U.S. government war criminals and innocuous peacemakers is carried to the present, our children are taught a deconstructive history not only of the Vietnam War, but also of a grievously flawed America. Many believe communist political correctness that America is evil, racist and imperialist and not worth defending.

worth defending.

A slight majority of Americans do not believe this, but many of its professors do.