

Indochina Peace Campaign

181 Pier Ave.

Santa Monica, Ca. 90405 213-392-3942

May 13, 1975

Dear IPC members and friends,

The Standing Committee (SC) decided at its last meeting that an element of New York IPC "has followed an ideological position at odds with both IPC and the Vietnamese, and behaved in a destructive factional way inside our organization with the intention of pushing it into the Revolutionary Union's politics..." The SC's unanimous decision was that the RU oriented NY group stop functioning as IPC.

The SC decided not to publicize its decision until those in the NY chapter who agreed with and carried out IPC national policy had prepared and organized themselves sufficiently to continue their work when the RU-oriented faction stopped relating to IPC. As many of you know, the SC decision was publicized ahead of schedule unfortunately catching many IPC members unaware and unprepared. We apologize for the problems this has created in your work, but hope we can proceed with the discussion that this important decision requires.

In deciding to enforce a separation between the RU-oriented NY group and IPC, the SC relied on its original instructions. The minutes of the Pittsburgh Interim Committee meeting (June 26-28, 1974) authorized the SC to "fill a hole in the organization of IPC. At the present time there is no organizational structure to provide continuity in carrying out the policies and decision of the interim and national meetings between these meetings." (emphasis added) No "sweeping powers" were given to the SC because of the "diverse and independent" nature of our chapters, But the diversity and independence which the SC was to respect was never meant to include



outright refusal to implement IPC program or factional attack on the organization.

Consequently, when the RU-oriented NY group ignored specific instructions from the Pittsburgh Interim Committee meeting to "reserve its differences" with the strategy and "go all out" to implement the Congressional pressure program of IPC, the SC felt authorized to separate them from IPC.

Several chapters have questioned, however, whether the SC had the authority to make such an important decision without prior consultation with the chapters. The SC, while feeling it had the "legal" authority, realized that the decision would be meaningless without the support of the chapters. The following paper which reflects the SC's reasoning behind the decision should provide the basis for the discussion we all want.

In the near future, SC members will be consulting with chapters especially concerning the chapters' viewpoints on (1) whether the process which produced this decision was faulty and should be modified for weighty decisions like this in the future; (2) whether the basic decision separating the RU-oriented group was sound; (3) whether the criteria for separation in this case are sound guidelines for future cases should they arise.

While hoping to encourage thorough discussion and debate, the SC feels strongly that the status of the N.Y. chapter should not become a topic on the agenda of the upcoming national meeting. Once before, a national meeting was disrupted by this kind of politics coming from New York, dominating it almost to the exclusion of other concerns. A continuation of this disruptive influence especially in a meeting as important as the next one cannot be permitted if we are to succeed in finding a new political basis for our IPC network.

in solidarity,

IPC Standing Committee

Dear IPC members,

The Standing Committee has decided to instruct an element of our New York City chapter to stop functioning as IPC. This group is directly aligned with the Revolutionary Union, has followed an ideological position at odds with both IPC and the Vietnamese, and behaves in a destructive factional way inside our organization with the intent of pushing it into the RU's politics. Our recommendation is that they openly declare their politics and organizational ties, leave IPC and do their Indochina work within the context of the United Campaign or some other coalition effort.

The history of this problem goes back to the beginning of IPC with its "single issue focus". We have always had to struggle for the protection of our organization from factions of the Left wanting to convert it into something other than it is. Over the 1972-73 years we deepened our commitment to a single-issue united front form of organization, and decided on a political line and program which has served us well. As determined by the October, 1973 Germantown National Meeting, our political line is:

--to build a United Campaign to cut aid to Thieu and Lon Nol, free Saigon's political prisoners, and honor the Paris Agreement;

--Solidarity with Indochina (including efforts to give a human face to the 'enemy,' medical aid programs, and identification with the political program of the Indochinese, e.g. the PRG's program, Paris Agreement, etc.

--Build and defend the anti-war movement.

Out of that meeting grew the United Campaign and our new links with the Coalition to Stop Funding the War (which had just succeeded on the vote to end the Cambodia bombing and direct U.S. participation). We explicitly defined the "Watergate opportunity" as opening a path towards dividing the Congress from the Executive on the war.

It was at the June, 1974 Pittsburgh Interim Committee meeting that a split with New

York over the Congressional strategy began to develop. There, members of the NYC chapter fought for hours to introduce a policy change which would have made IPC an "anti-imperialist" organization and reduced Congressional work to the level of an optional tactic. In the heat of these debates, one NY member now aligned with the RU position (Gina Harmon) took the position that this would be "a step" towards changing IPC into an anti-imperialist coalition in the future. But the majority of those present properly regarded that as a question of policy clearly out of order at an Interim Committee meeting whose business is to implement the political line through deciding on programs, resources, etc. The only immediate issue was that NY IPC opposed the priority given to the Congressional strategy which was then in a critical period.

After often rancorous argument, the issue was resolved by these key votes:

1)"IPC adopts an all out, but not exclusive, effort to pressure Congress to cut military and economic aid to Indochina for FY 1975." NY opposed, but accepted the "all out but not exclusive" formulation.

2) The "all out" emphasis was given teeth by a resolution that: "(1)A coordinator be chosen by every chapter in every region to be the primary contact person with the Coalition. Their task is the full range of organizing tactics on key legislation.(2) The coalition will distribute key contact lists to IPC chapters for the purpose of direct follow-up.(3)Each IPC group will take on a particular district (s).(4)The Indochina Peace Pledge will be used as a tool" NY accepted the instructions but in the months ahead completely disregarded it.

3) At the end of the meeting a heavy criticism session broke out with a large majority critical of NY's style and politics. Finally a resolution was overwhelmingly adopted by roll call, which specified: "There is a lack of unity in places, which weakens our ability to carry out our campaign with maximum effect. We cannot be simply a clearing house, or a collection of many camps, or a magnet for diverse interests." 4

We have to unify our energy so as to strike the most telling blows. For example, around the Congressional pressure work we cannot carry out internal disputes in such a way which weakens the effort or makes it ineffective in important parts of the country. People with disagreements about such a policy should both point out and reserve those disagreements while at the same time encouraging the policy itself. People who believe in the policy, on the other hand, must not defend it as a "faith" of olden times but objectively evaluate it in practice so as to discover shortcomings. Objective people then should be able to either sharpen or revise a line without the drain of factionalism and bitterness." Despite these specific instructions to the N.Y chapter, N.Y. never reserved its judgement, never unified with the Congressional strategy, and never stopped pursuing a different political line.

In the past few months severe internal tensions have broken out in the NY chapter, and incidents of destruction of IPC resources have been exposed. A de facto takeover of the chapter has occurred under the leadership of an RU-oriented element which now uses the facilities and resources of IPC. The same element attended the Ohio Issues Conference as NY-IPC after a divisive internal battle in which they tried to prevent other NY IPCers from coming. The second group, which accepts the national policies and program of IPC, attended only because of a last-minute Standing Committee intervention. The RU-oriented group has on many occasions refused to circulate the National IPC Newsletter within the chapter, and on several occasions destroyed the bundles of Focal Points they have received.

At the Issues Conference, the RU-oriented group presented a position paper outlining their views, and less visibly distributed copies of "Draft Programme for the Party of the US Working Class", an RU pamphlet.

The position paper was, once again, totally at odds with the Congressional strategy and the promises given at Pittsburgh. In describing their work, they omitted any mention of the Congressional emphasis agreed to at Pittsburgh: "We make demands on the government and back it up with agitation, media work of all kinds, demonstrations and direct confrontations, street work and work place organizing." They continue to operate outside the single-issue focus of IPC: "We must participate as IPC in coalition work against US imperialist aggression today. That work is clearly focused on the Middle East, on supporting the liberation struggles of the Palestinian and Omani peoples." While NY IPC is off organizing around these themes, national IPC has no position whatsoever on the Middle East; and the Pittsburgh Interim Committee specifically stated that the basis for coalitions between IPC and other groups was the Indochina Peace Pledge.

As for political focus after the fighting in Indochina ends, the NY group proposed a program which reflects in every respect the RU's "Draft Programme".

NY working paper

1. "Free all US colonies."
2. "End all US military aid and alliances with puppet regimes"
3. "Withdraw all US troops and ships from foreign countries"
4. "dismantle nuclear weapons"
5. "Support just wars of national liberation and revolution against imperialism"

RU "Draft Programme" (p.43)

1. "Withdraw all US forces from foreign soil and the territorial waters of other countries"
2. "Free all colonies in the grip of US imperialism"
3. "End all US military alliances and military aid to US puppets..."
4. "Abolish and destroy all nuclear weapons"
5. "Support just wars for national liberation and revolutionary wars against imperialism..."

In substance and often in language the two programs are the same with only changes in numbering.

What we object to is not the existence of the NY element, nor the RU, and certainly not the politics involved. But they represent a political line quite at odds with the

legitimate and required line of IPC, and a covert and factional style of opportunism which leads to chaos within otherwise open organizations.

Politically, the line of the RU and its allies is quite different from IPC. First, they have continually attacked the Congressional strategy (no matter how well it was working). Second, they have disagreed with and violated the single-issue Indochina focus that has been vital to our survival and success. Third, their view of the world is what they would like to consider a "Chinese" view. IPC has not taken a position on the Russia-China debate although we have studied it in our organizers schools. If anything, we have respected the political line of the Vietnamese revolutionaries which, during the war, has been obviously different from the Chinese and the Russians. The Vietnamese do not view the Soviet Union as "social imperialist". They do not view the US and the Soviet Union as "twin superpowers." They believe the primary contradiction is with US imperialism, not the "superpowers", and that both the Soviet and Chinese governments are socialist. The Will of Ho Chi Minh pledge the Vietnamese Workers Party to seek to harmonize and unify the international communist movement. As long as they maintain this position, groups like RU will have to consider Hanoi "revisionist." The only reason those who hold the RU line do not take this position is because the Vietnamese enjoy such great prestige and popularity in revolutionary circles.

Organizationally, the NY group has operated in a factional manner, like the RU generally. What is factionalism, and how is it distinct from democratic argument? Factionalism is the adoption of one pose to penetrate an organization while holding to a secret identity and agenda. Factionalists inevitably bring about distrust and suspicion, drive out other people and bring about a situation where they have taken over only the shell of the organization with all the members being either secret cadre or allies. Factionalists don't mind destroying organization they can't take over, because they hold the view that there is only one correct line and party for

Left. Here, for example, is how the RU speaks of other tendencies on the Left:

...the proletariat (i.e. the RU) takes a ruthless stand against those petty bourgeois hustlers who refuse to take the stand of the working class...the leaders of these groups are deadly enemies of the working class...

These various agents of imperialism, in and of themselves, amount to nothing more than cockroaches which the working class could squash under its feet. But these types do pose a greater potential danger--they can act as "shock troops" for the development of a phony "socialist" or "progressive" movement....

(Draft Programme, p. 25-26)

Many good organizations have been paralyzed or ruined by this type of political invasion by factions. SDS fell apart in 1969 at the hands of Progressive Labor and others, including the Revolutionary Youth Movement faction, part of which became the RU. More recently, VVAM has turned from a healthy and independent organization into a shambles of factions as the RU moved into its chapters and offices. IPC has largely been spared this fate, although chaos has been created in both NY and in a UCLA-oriented chapter last year.

The way we have succeeded is by keeping these tendencies totally out of our organization, and this policy must be continued, especially in the delicate transition period ahead. We have welcomed anyone into IPC who has accepted our program and policies in good faith (as a box in Focal Point repeats every issue). We have many members with other political notions or affinities (NAM, Prairie Fire, AFSC, etc.) who have kept those politics out of our single issue front. They have not tried to hide their other interests, but neither have they used IPC as a recruiting ground. This has been the basis for our unity and trust, and it has to be preserved against any forces who disrespect it.

Therefore, we have decided that asking the NY group to leave is by far the best of alternatives. We ask them to understand that we have a right to our politics and organizational process, and they to theirs. Those among us interested in the NY group or the RU may seek them out and join. The Left must for now include an unlimited variety of alternatives which people can choose from on the basis of free and un-

manipulated interest. We are happy with our politics, with our process, and with the contribution we have made to changing the climate in this country, changing the foreign policy of this country, which has in turn contributed to the great and historic victory of the Vietnamese and Indochinese people.

Our success -- and our successful future -- lies in avoiding dogmatism of the Left. We started IPC when people thought it was impossible. We kept it going when people thought the war was over, and when most of the Left was closing down its anti-war activity. We adopted a Watergate and Congressional strategy which represented a sharp break from conventional perspectives. We made political prisoners and aid to Indochina into issues the Congress could not avoid even though much of the organized Left would not join us. We have won because we followed our own logic, we did our own study, and we were creative and we knew what we were talking about even when the dead hand of tradition tried to caution that we were "incorrect." As the Vietnamese have done, we have started to chart our own path to revolutionary change. Let us continue on it!

THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE COALITION TO RECLAIM THE INDOCHINA RESOURCES (CRIR)
A PRELIMINARY REPORT

In the predawn hours of Monday, May 26, one of the most complete libraries of Indochinese literature, photos and films in the United States was stolen from the office of the Indochina Solidarity Committee (ISC), located in the Washington Square Church. The theft was committed by a group of people who had become associated politically with the Revolutionary Union (RU) and who at the time of the theft constituted a majority of ISC. We, the working committee of an informal Coalition to Reclaim the Indochina Resources, have demanded the return of the materials; that demand, already backed by a number of movement organizations and hundreds of individuals, was rejected. The following report is part of our effort to provide information and analysis of the theft and to build support for the return of the materials.

BACKGROUND

For over ten years the U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (USCANLFSVN), which later became Indochina Solidarity Committee, was part of the anti-war, anti-imperialist movement in solidarity with the liberation struggles in Indochina. Now after that war has been won, ISC has been destroyed as a result of a split.

For some time, growing political differences had developed within ISC and, concurrently, within the local chapter of Indochina Peace Campaign/New York City (IPC/NYC) (of which all ISC people were members). The major political differences arose because some ISC members had, in the last year or so, transferred their political allegiance to the politics of the Revolutionary Union, while others did not.

The Revolutionary Union, which had its origins in the 1968 SDS splits, is a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization that is currently striving to form itself into the "new communist party" in the United States. This push has caused RU supporters to seek hegemony in many movement organizations around the country. RU supporters who believe that it is the most correct group to lead the working class at this time tend to treat those who disagree with their leadership as if that disagreement makes one the enemy. This has been evidenced by their style of unnecessarily ruthless and antagonistic methods of struggle with people of other political tendencies or beliefs. Such conflicts have resulted in RU takeovers of or thefts from a number of groups. Among others affected have been The Rest of the News, People's Translation Service, Thirdworld Newsreel in San Francisco, and some chapters and the national office of the VVAW/WSO. An overtly anti-worker theft occurred in El Paso. There, two RU cadre provided money and technical skills in the joint production of a film about the Farah strike with a Chicano workers center. The center, integrally connected with the Farah workers, provided access to the workers for filmed interviews which are the film's political substance. When the film was finished just recently, the RU refused to give or sell a copy of it to the workers center despite the fact that it includes original footage of the strike's first day shot by a worker and made available by the center.

We believe that people should investigate the line and practice of the RU for themselves. Our own, initial investigation has resulted in our belief that RU thefts from the movement in the last few weeks alone total thousands of dollars worth of equipment and other materials. A more complete investigation, leading to a paper documenting and detailing these and other similar RU activities, is underway.

USCANLFSVN was formed in 1965 by Walter Teague and several others and remained, until 1972, a voluntary association. Many hundreds of people contributed to its

work and helped gather its collections of revolutionary Indochinese materials. Gradually, from 1972 until late 1974, USCANLFSVN/ISC became more collective. Among the new people who joined were Martha Chamberlain in 1971 and later, from 1971 until 1974: Gina Harman, Mike Stout, Felice Weintraub, Chris Galanos and Gary Hansjergen.

During the period of collective work, much was accomplished. But the underlying political differences grew and became increasingly disruptive in 1974. At some point Harman joined RU, and the other four became at least complete supporters of RU and its politics. This new allegiance came in direct conflict with the historic functioning of USCANLFSVN/ISC (ISC, for short).

ISC had always been an independent solidarity committee, which did not take positions on matters unrelated to its primary work and carefully avoided positions contradictory to those of the Indochinese revolutionaries. In practice this meant that it worked for broad coalitions within the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. Just as the Vietnamese, so too ISC worked as best it could with all people and organizations who opposed the war; for example ISC did not take public positions on questions that could put it at odds with the Indochinese, such as a position on the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Gradually, it became more difficult for ISC to function collectively. The five who adopted RU's politics began to take more antagonistic positions toward various political tendencies that the RU had disagreements with. This meant that ISC resources were not readily available to feminist groups, or groups associated in any way with Trotskyist or Prairie Fire politics, or groups supportive of the Soviet Union - no matter what the quality of their work in opposition to the war and in support of the Vietnamese. Increasingly, the five found fault with coalitions and tendencies that gave what they felt was too much consideration to the self-determination of third world people. For example, they opposed the right of third world women in organizing the United States/Vietnam Women's Conference to select the third world delegates.

As the political stance of Harman and the others hardened, it became less possible for ISC to work with unity and respect in other coalitions. Private criticism and derision toward those who differed with RU became common. Eventually the five started using their majority to block anything that didn't fit with their new political priorities although this 'democratic' process could not change the fact that ISC is, and always has been, more than just a collection of seven people.

The fact is that there would be no materials were it not for the work of many persons other than those who now presume control of them. By themselves Walter Teague and Martha Chamberlain have worked more years on ISC than Harman, Weintraub, Stout, Hansjergen and Galanos together. Many others, not now or ever members of ISC, worked to accumulate those materials and resources. Without a doubt that work was not done so that the resources would be available only to persons acceptable to these five (especially so long as acceptability for them conforms to unnecessarily restrictive RU politics). Without a doubt Harman and the others, or even all of RU, did not do anything like most of the work involved or even constitute a majority of those who did any work at all.

After a final breakdown in collectivity, which occurred during preparations for the Victory Celebration in Montreal on May 18-19, Teague and Chamberlain proposed to the others that a public split be avoided and that the organization be disbanded with one last newsletter stressing the victories and announcing what future work each person was to be doing. They suggested that the resources be equitably distributed according to usefulness, etc. The others adamantly rejected the proposal

and instead said that they were going to keep the name and organization and that Chamberlain and Teague should resign immediately. The five were urged to consider the proposal for a week after which discussion would resume. Martha and Walter parted, and there were no further discussions until after the materials were taken.

THE THEFT ITSELF

On Monday, May 26, in the early morning hours, the RU supporters in ISC and others stole the major important resources from the ISC office in the Washington Square Church. They also took many valuable items belonging to the church and to individuals. Lists of these are available from the working committee.

About two o'clock PM, Walter and Martha discovered that the others in ISC had changed the lock on the office; when they tried to enter, the other ISC people and some of their friends came with sticks and threatened Walter, Martha and the staff of the church should they try to enter. They told Martha and Walter that they had been voted out of ISC and would be kept out of the office by force. There are no such expulsion procedures in ISC.

After refusing entry to the minister of the church, the RU supporters did accept his offer to mediate and finally admitted that they had taken items from the ISC office. Later they agreed that Walter could enter the office with Gary to inventory what was left and to discuss what each side thought right to do with the various resources. They admitted taking valuable church and personal items but were unwilling to return or to release to anyone the Indochinese materials. They did finally return some church equipment and a tape deck belonging to Walter, but kept a mimeograph and shortwave radio that belonged to other individuals. They also kept much other valuable equipment that others helped provide to ISC. From that Monday until Saturday night the five and their friends held on to the gutted and dysfunctional ISC office. They barricaded it and carried around lead pipes and similar weapons. Also from Monday until Saturday, many long-time supporters of the work of ISC came to the church to prevent anything else from being taken out. During this time they were joined by members of the church who volunteered to stay around the clock to protect the church and remaining materials.

Chamberlain and Teague and the others refused to negotiate away any more of ISC's remaining resources, partly because the others already had thousands of dollars worth of equipment as well as important political items, but also because they refused to capitulate to threats and intimidation. The minister finally had to insist that the others in ISC leave the church with only their personal possessions and the office was closed to all.

The mass meeting on Sunday, June 1, was attended by over fifty people representing a broad spectrum of the New York anti-war and progressive movement. This coalition agreed to denounce the theft and to build pressure for the return of the materials, temporarily to the custody of an uninvolved (if not unconcerned) group (The War Resisters League was ultimately chosen), after which the movement as a whole would then decide the best and proper place for these resources to be accessible for all.

The coalition established a working committee which has itemized the remaining organizational materials in the ISC office and turned them over to the War Resisters League. Gina Harman has been contacted by telephone and given one week to return the materials. The week has long since passed and the materials have not been brought back.

By their theft of the Indochina materials, the five people from ISC have proven

their disdain for the years of work of hundreds of people, and have abrogated to themselves the right to determine the use of materials that in reality belong to the whole movement. Unless a group representing the movement at large has custody of these resources, many good and serious activists will be denied access to them or will be given access to them under only the most restrictive and sectarian terms. Certainly this denial will include all the old members of ISC and those who have strong disagreements with RU. It will clearly include all those individuals who worked against the removal of more materials from Washington Square Church and all who have joined in demanding their return. And since the allegiance of the five is to RU, and since RU's behaviour is increasingly sectarian, it will probably include people in the growing number of groups that the RU is antagonistic with.

Refusal to return these items can only prove the exploitative nature of their actions. They are now declaring that they, and they alone, are the ISC. They will probably publish an ISC newsletter and have claimed that everyone will have access to the materials at some point in the future, except those who are working for the return of the materials. The same people are also working under the name of IPC/NYC even though they were expelled from IPC for "sectarian, disruptive and antagonistic behavior," by the national IPC Standing Committee, in a letter dated May 13.

The five and their political friends who were expelled from IPC are now planning to form an Indochina friendship association which will be made up mostly of their own people and for which the Indochina resources will be very useful. We hope this opportunism will be condemned. What is needed is the formation of a true friendship association in which all activists and future supporters of U.S./Vietnamese friendship may join without having to accept the RU's line on such questions as the Sino-Soviet split, the national question, women, homosexuality, their limited concept of the united front, or the RU's recent approach to coalition which has caused so many splits and breakdowns.

Our criticisms of the actions of those in ISC and the others that support the Revolutionary Union are not criticisms of the call for revolution and socialism. We join in that call and are dedicated to work for a classless and progressive world, but we do not think that the RU, functioning as it now does, will lead that revolution. Rather, at this point they are becoming increasingly destructive of the movement we should all support and build.

An organization is not communist or deserving of revolutionary leadership because it says that it is; the practice of those who accept its discipline is determinative. Whatever the formal relationship between RU and the other four, Gina Harman is openly a member. There is no question that she supports the taking of the materials; the presumption is that RU does. If it didn't, then she wouldn't; that is what discipline is all about. It is our position that Harman's support of and participation in the theft is not the practice of the cadre of a truly revolutionary organization. The RU can't have it both ways; unless it disciplines Harman (and uses its influence with the others) to return the materials, it will be accountable for the theft.

In the last few days hundreds of people and many groups have signed the petitions demanding the return of the resources. With the growing awareness of a nationwide pattern of such ripoffs, many groups are becoming increasingly concerned. If those who are holding onto these resources do not heed the movement's call, many groups are considering further actions to expose and rectify these destructive politics and tactics.

page five

The working committee urges you to do the following:

1. Call (982-0068) or write the five demanding that they return the resources; write "ISC", c/o Mike Stout, 126 Macdougall Street, New York, NY 10012
2. Sign (as an individual or organization), circulate and return to us the attached petition.
3. Have your organization send the working committee (with a copy to the five) a letter endorsing (as an organization) the petition's demand.
4. If you haven't done so already, stop working jointly with the five until the materials are returned.
5. Within your organization or study group discuss the revolutionary validity of activities such as these whether engaged in by members of a cadre organization or not.
6. Send us information (thoroughly investigated and documented where possible) of similar activities.
7. Send us your differences with our approach; send us your suggestions and any information as to the location or use of the materials.

Thank you for your support.

The working committee of

The Coalition to Reclaim the Indochina Resources (CRIR)
c/o Washington Square Church
135 West 4th Street
New York, NY 10012

June 26, 1975

PETITION

In the middle of the night, approximately 2 AM on Monday, May 26, one of the most complete collections of Indochinese literature, photos and films in the U.S. was stolen from the office of the Indochina Solidarity Committee (ISC) located in the Washington Square Methodist Church. This was done by some people from ISC who are members or associated with the Revolutionary Union (RU).

We demand that the materials be put in the temporary custody of the War Resistor's League. After their return, a representative grouping of the anti-war and anti-imperialist movement will decide how these resources will be used.

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Please return to The Coalition to Reclaim the Indochina Resources
c/o Washington Square Church.
135 West 4th Street
New York, New York 10012

INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Box C. Old Chelsea Sta. New York, N.Y. 10011 (212) 982-7162

Dear Friends and Supporters,

June 15, 1975

We are writing to you to share our joy for the Victories of the Indochinese Peoples, and to inform you of the Closing of the Indochina Solidarity Committee.

THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLE HAVE WON!

Vietnam, Cambodia and now Laos are free of U.S. Imperialism and are embarking on their long needed social revolutions to create democratic, prosperous, sovereign and progressive societies.

All who have been a part of this great struggle may rejoice. Some of us will now turn more of our attention to our own peoples' social needs and others will continue to work on the issues that remain important for both the Indochinese and American peoples; such as the questions of the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees and repatriation for those who want it, the reconstruction of the countrysides and economies, material aid, recognition of the new governments and the reunification of Vietnam - and most important for Americans, keeping alive the revolutionary lessons of that war.

THE WORK CONTINUES . . .

In the following pages, we explain briefly the ending of ISC, but we want to stress here that more important is the work we will all be continuing towards the ending of the system of imperialism and all the exploitation and repression that humankind suffers under.

U.S. / VIETNAMESE FRIENDSHIP

Serious thought and preparation is being given by many different anti-war and anti-imperialist activists and organizations around the U.S. to the formation of a broad-based U.S./VIETNAMESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION. We strongly support this aim and will work with the New York chapter of the Indochina Peace Campaign, at 135 West 4 Street, toward the establishment of a local friendship group. We urge you to consider supporting this goal so that we can build upon the last 10 years of work. We will forward information about these plans shortly.

I.S.C. CLOSES

For over ten years the U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (USCANLFSVN), which later became Indochina Solidarity Committee (ISC), was part of the anti-war, anti-imperialist movement in solidarity with the liberation struggles in Indochina. Now after that war has been won, ISC has been disbanded. Unfortunately, this was not done with unity, but because of a split that has destroyed the old ISC.

For some time, growing political differences had developed within ISC and, concurrently, within the local chapter of Indochina Peace Campaign/New York City (IPC/NYC) (in which all ISC people were members and which had essentially become one organization.) The major political differences arose out of the fact that some ISC members had, in the last year or so, transferred their political allegiance to the politics of the Revolutionary Union (RU), while others did not.

The Revolutionary Union, which had its origins in the 1968 SDS splits, is a self-proclaimed Marxist/Leninist/Maoist nationwide organization that is currently striving to form itself into the "New Communist Party" in the U.S. This push has caused RU supporters to seek hegemony in many movement organizations around the country. RU supporters, who sincerely believe that they are the most correct group to lead the working class at this time, tend to treat those who disagree with their leadership as if that disagreement makes one the "enemy." This has been evidenced by their style of ruthless and often antagonistic methods of struggle with people of other political tendencies. Such conflicts have destroyed or resulted in RU takeovers and ripoffs of certain groups, ie: The Rest of the New, People's Translation Service, San Francisco Thirdworld Newsreel, and some chapters and the national office of VVAW/WSO.

We believe people should investigate the line and practice of RU for themselves, but here for example is how the RU speaks of other tendencies on the Left:

...the proletariat (i.e. the RU) takes a ruthless stand against those petty bourgeois hustlers who refuse to take the stand of the working class...the leaders of these groups are deadly enemies of the working class... These various agents of imperialism, in and of themselves, amount to nothing more than cockroaches which the working class could squash under its feet. But these types do pose a greater potential danger--they can act as "shock troops" for the development of a phony "socialist" or "progressive" movement...

(Draft Programme, p. 25-26)

The lessons of the United Front in Vietnam seem lost to them. It seems that in their fight for power, the RU has become insensitive to the qualities of humanity that are the goals of any left revolution. Even during protracted armed struggle the Vietnamese maintained their great sensitivity and love of humanity. They gave their guerrilla soldiers flowers for medals and combined poetry and politics to lead their people.

USCANLFSVN TO ISC TO NOW

USCANLFSVN was formed in 1965 by Walter Teague and several others and remained, until 1972, a voluntary association. Many hundreds of people contributed to its work and helped gather one of the most complete collections of revolutionary Indochinese materials in the U.S. Gradually from 1972 to late 1974, USCANLFSVN/ISC became more collective. Among the new people who joined were Martha Chamberlain in 1971 and later, from 1971 until 1974, the five members of ISC who have politically joined RU; Gina Harman, Mike Stout, Felice Weintraub, Chris Galanos and Gary Hansjorgen.

During the period of collective work, much was accomplished. But the underlying political differences grew and became increasingly disruptive in 1974.

At some point Gina Harman joined RU and the other four became at least complete supporters of RU and its politics. This new allegiance came in direct conflict with the historic functioning of ISC.

USCANLFSVN/ISC had always been an independent solidarity committee, which did not take positions on matters unrelated to its primary work and carefully avoided positions contradictory to those of the Indochinese Revolutionaries. In practice this meant that we worked for broad coalitions within the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. Just as the Vietnamese accepted support from pacifists or liberals, Trotskyists or Maoists, so too we worked as best we could with all tendencies who opposed the war. It meant for example, that we did not take public positions on questions that could put us at odds with the Indochinese, such as taking sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

But gradually, it became more difficult for ISC to function collectively. The five who adopted RU's politics began to take more antagonistic positions toward various political tendencies that the RU had disagreements with. This meant, for example that our resources were not readily available to feminist groups, or groups associated in any way with Trotskyist or Prairie Fire politics, or supporters of the Soviet Union. Increasingly, the others found fault with coalitions and tendencies that gave what they felt was too much consideration to the self determination of 3rd World people. Within the U.S. for example, they opposed the right of 3rd world women in the organizing of the U.S./ Vietnam Women's Conference to select 3rd world delegates.

As their political stance hardened, it became less possible for us to work with unity and respect in other coalitions, such as with national IPC and the U.S. Vietnamese Women's Conference. Private criticism and derision toward one and all that were on the "outs" with RU became common. Eventually the others in ISC started using their majority to block anything that didn't fit with their new political priorities. But this process could not change the fact that ISC remained more than just a collective of seven people.

Over a period of ten years, hundreds of people had worked and associated with USCANLFSVN/ISC and had helped put together an extensive collection of Indochina resources. This included thousands of documents, photos, films and books. One of the most valuable was the most complete set of Vietnamese literature in English in this country, gathered from 1964 until the present. Many other items were donated by the Vietnamese and many visitors to Indochina. These materials, gathered and held in trust for both the Indochinese and American people, should have great continuing value for all who want to understand the Indochina war from the revolutionary point of view.

THE BREAK

After a final breakdown in collectivity, which occurred during preparations for the Victory Celebration in Montreal May 18-19, we proposed to the others that a public split be avoided and that the organization be disbanded with one last newsletter stressing the victories and announcing what future work each of us was going to be doing. We suggested that the resources be equitably distributed according to usefulness, etc. The others adamantly rejected our proposal and instead said that they were going to keep the name and organization and that Martha and Walter should resign immediately. We urged them to consider our proposal for a week and we parted. We had no further discussions until the events described below.

THE RIPOFF

On Monday, May 26 in the early AM, the RU supporters in ISC and others stole the major important resources from the ISC office in the Washington Square Church. They also took many valuable items belonging to the church and individuals. Lists are available.

About 2PM, Walter Teague and Martha Chamberlain discovered that the others in ISC had changed the lock on the office and when they tried to enter, the other ISC people and some of their friends came with sticks and threatened Walter, Martha, and the staff of the church if they tried to enter. They told Martha and Walter that they had been "voted" out of ISC and would be kept out of the office by force.

There have been no such procedures in ISC in the past. After refusing entry to the minister of the church, the RU supporters did accept his offer to mediate and finally admitted that they had taken items from the ISC office. Later they agreed that Walter could enter the office with Gary to inventory what was left and to discuss what each side thought right to do with the various resources. The other group admitted they had

taken valuable church and personal items but were unwilling to return or to release to anyone the Indochinese materials. They did finally return some church equipment and a tape deck of Walters, but kept a mimeograph and shortwave radio that belonged to other individuals. They also kept much other valuable equipment that others helped provide to ISC. From that Monday until Saturday night that group and their friends held on to the gutted and dysfunctional ISC office. They barricaded it and carried around lead pipes, and other similar weapons. Also from Monday until Sunday, many long time supporters of the work of USCANLFSVN/ISC came to the church to prevent anything else from being taken out. During this time they were joined by members of the church who volunteered to stay 24 hours a day to protect the church and remaining materials.

A mass meeting was called for Sunday by many different concerned groups. The other ISC people decided to force the issue before that mass meeting and on Saturday requested a meeting with the minister, Paul Abels. They made various proposals, none of which included the return of any Indochina items, but which did demand for example, 5/7ths of the value of the remaining furniture in the ISC office. During these negotiations, the church members and staff learned that they were calling around for carloads of their people to come to the church. Again church members and friends of ISC and IPC gathered at the church to prevent any further thefts.

Martha and Walter and the others refused to negotiate away any more of ISC's remaining resources, partly because the others already had thousands of dollars worth of equipment as well as the important political items, but also because we did not wish to allow the threat of force to intimidate anyone.

The minister finally had to insist that the others in ISC leave the church with only their personal possessions and the office was closed to all.

The mass meeting on Sunday June 1 was attended by over 50 people representing a broad spectrum of the New York anti-war and progressive movement. They agreed to denounce the theft and to build pressure for the return of the materials, temporarily to the custody of an uninvolved group (The War Resisters League), after which the movement as a whole would then decide the best and proper place for these resources to be accessible for all.

THE COMMITTEE TO RECLAIM THE INDOCHINA RESOURCES

They set up a Committee to Reclaim the Indochina Resources to begin this work at 135 West 4 Street. This committee itemized the remaining organizational materials in the ISC office and turned them over to the War Resisters League.

By their theft of the Indochina materials, the 5 people from ISC have proven their disdain for the years of work of hundreds of people, and have abrogated to themselves the right to determine the use of materials that in reality belong to the whole movement. We urge you to do all you can to pressure them to return these items.

We believe a group representing the movement at large must have custody of these resources, otherwise many good and serious activists will be denied access to these materials. Certainly this denial will include all the old members of ISC, and those who have strong disagreements with the RU. It will clearly include all those individuals who worked against the removal of more materials from Washington Square Church and all who have joined in demanding their return. And since the real allegiance of the other group is now to RU, and since RU's behaviour is increasingly sectarian, it will probably include people in the growing number of groups that the RU is antagonistic toward.

Refusal to return these items can only prove the exploitative nature of their actions. They are now declaring that they are the only ISC. They will probably publish an ISC

newsletter and have claimed that anyone will have access to the materials at some point in the future, except those who are working for the return of the materials. The same people are also trying to hold onto the name of IPC/NYC even though they were expelled from IPC for "sectarian, disruptive and antagonistic behavior," by the national IPC Standing Committee, in a letter dated May 13.

It has been made very clear to us through months of practice with them, that in light of their almost total contempt for the politics, practices and program of National IPC, the only reason they can put forward for attempting to maintain the national affiliation, is as a means to attack the "wrong" politics of National IPC. We too have had disagreements with some of national IPC's politics, but we and the others in the official IPC/NYC chapter also respect the work and intentions of the national and local chapters of IPC and do not see ourselves as antagonistic to the essential program or politics of National IPC.

The others are now planning to form an Indochina friendship association which will be made up mostly of their own people and for which the Indochina resources will be very useful. We hope this opportunism will be exposed and condemned. What is needed is the formation of a true friendship association in which all activists and future supporters of U.S./Vietnamese Friendship may join without having to accept the RU's line on such questions as the Sino-Soviet split, the national question, their limited concept of the united front, or the RU's recent approach to coalition which has caused so many splits and breakdowns; such as with the Oman Coalition, the difficulties in the U.S./Vietnamese Womens Conference, etc.

If you wish more documentation or clarification, please write or call us. We will continue to use the Box C address and 982-7162. We will be working with the others in IPC/NYC chapter and other groups. All new materials on Indochina and the progressive movements received at Box C, will be used by IPC/NYC and others and then turned over to the Washington Square Library for Social Change at 133 West 4 Street, where they will be accessible to the public.

Thanks to you all, we have been able to be part of the great popular movement in this country against the Indochina war. The heroic resistance in Indochina and the contradictions here at home have revived the progressive movement in the U.S. and it is up to us all to keep it growing until we get rid of the system that caused and profited from that war.

One important lesson taught by the Indochinese is that if we are to succeed, we must learn how to unite the broadest possible sectors of our population, guided by a true revolutionary party, around the essential common goals of our people, and in unity with the worlds liberation struggles.

Our criticisms of the actions of those in ISC and the others that support the Revolutionary Union are not criticisms of the stated long range goal of RU and others who call for revolution and socialism. We join in that call and dedication for a classless and progressive world, but we do not think the RU, functioning as it now does, will lead that revolution. Rather at this point, they are becoming increasingly destructive of the movement we should all support and build.

In the last few days hundreds of people and many groups have signed the petitions demanding the return of the resources. With the growing awareness of a nationwide pattern of such ripoffs, many groups are increasingly concerned. If those who are holding on to these resources do not heed the movements' call, many groups are considering further actions to expose and rectify these destructive politics and tactics.

We urge you to consider doing the following:

1. Call or write the other "ISC" group demanding the return of the resources.
c/o Mike Stout, 126 Macdougall Street, . #982-0068.
2. Sign and circulate the enclosed petition.
3. Have your organization send the CRIR committee and the other ISC group a letter endorsing that the items be returned.
4. Consider other actions to expose and remove these politics from our movement.
5. Help us build a new Indochina resource library.

We would like to hear from you on these matters. We are especially interested in reestablishing an Indochina Library and resource center at the WSLFSC and later at some national resource center, and need documents, films, books and photos concerning Indochina 1964 (and before) till now.

Thank you for your support,

Yours in Struggle,

Martha Chamberlain

Martha Chamberlain

Walter Teague

Walter Teague

NOTE: New York City supporters are invited to a MEETING called by the Committee to Reclaim the Indochina Resources on Thursday, June 26, at the Washington Square Church, 135 West 4 Street, at 7pm.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY CHANGE OF ADDRESS

July 1, 1975

Dear Friends and Subscribers:

Due to a mail dispute over our Post Office Box with two former members of ISC we have temporarily changed our mailing address. We hope this dispute is settled soon,

until then please address all correspondence to: ISC c/o Mike Stout
126 MacDougal Street # 1D
New York, N.Y. 10012

Other change of address notices have been sent out by the two former ISC members, please ignore them. Any further changes or developments will be published in the next Newsletter only.

We also have a new telephone number: (212) 924-9102. Please call or write for any further information.

In Solidarity, .

Indochina Solidarity Committee

table of contents

Laos: Completely Liberated.....	3
Cambodia: Vigilance & Self-reliance.....	8
South Vietnam: People's Power Consolidated.....	15
Lessons of the War: the Road Forward.....	21

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- African Asia
- Agence France-Presso
- A. J. Mawakine
- Christian Science Monitor
- Commissional Records
- Far Eastern Economic Review
- Focal Point (IPC National Paper)
- Foreign Broadcast Information Service
- Hoi Phong (Liberation) News Agency
- Guardian (N.Y.)
- Hsinhua News Agency (Chinese)
- International Bulletin (InterNews)
- Komuchua Information Agency (AKI)
- Khouson Pathet Lam (LPE News Agency)
- Laos News - LAF Publication
- Liberation News Service (LNS)
- Nhan Dan-DHVN
- New York Times (NYT)
- New York Post (NYP)
- Radio Pathet Lao
- South Vietnam in Struggle - NLF
- Thoi Bao Ca (Vietnam Resource Center)
- Vietnam Information Bulletin (DRVN)
- Vietnam News Agency (DRVN)
- Vietnam Report - Union of Vietnamese
- Voice of FUNK (FUNK Radio)
- Washington Post (WP)

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Criticisms, comments and suggestions on the I.S.C. Newsletter are welcomed.

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WALTER TEAGUE &
MARTHA CHAMBERLAIN
135 W. 4TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.
10012, U.S.A.

AUGUST 6, 1975

Dear Friends,

We are writing to you in order to help explain some recent events concerning people who have identified themselves as representing Indochina Solidarity Committee. We are candid and detailed in this letter because we know it is important to you to know the truth of the politics and actions of those you have contact with.

Coming after your great victories, this matter is both unpleasant and complicated, but it does reflect the state of the political movement here in the U. S.

We will present here a selection of documents and our opinions on the split in Indochina Solidarity Committee and the New York City chapter of Indochina Peace Campaign. We will not try to present a thorough or precise analysis of the principal political group involved (the Revolutionary Union - RU). That would require much more time and space. But we have included articles and information that gives some insight into the recent practice of the RU and the people who have contacted you as ISC representatives. We will begin putting together a bibliography of articles on the RU by various newspapers and political organizations and will send them to you later.

To introduce ourselves:

WALTER TEAGUE I have been associated with public support for the NFLSVN in the U. S. for the past 10 years. I helped found the U. S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam in April, 1965. This led to many arrests and to my being brought along with other public supporters of the NLF, before the reactionary House Un-American Activities Committee of the U. S. Congress in 1966. This congressional committee was trying at that time to stop anti-war protest, but failed. From 1966 on I and the rest of the committee (USCNALFSVN) were in the midst of all major anti-war work and did all we could to encourage the peace movement and the general public to learn about and support the Indochinese peoples' just struggle for liberation.

I April 1969, I was sent to Paris to meet with Madam Binh as the representative of a broad coalition of U. S. and Canadian groups that wanted to invite Madam Binh to visit Canada and the U. S. We had of course, no knowledge then of the imminent formation of the PRGRSVN!

My primary motivations have been not only deep admiration and identification with your struggle, but also a clear understanding of how opposition to the U. S. war in Indochina and building support for liberation struggles (your's in particular) have led to a revitalization and advancement of our own progressive and revolutionary movement here in the U. S. I am old enough to have grown up in an America almost devoid of political or class consciousness following the set backs for the progressive forces in the late 1940's and 50's. The U. S. in the 60's and 70's is a drastically different place and the momentum and depth of the political change are irreversible.

In a word, at a time when no clear single revolutionary force existed in the U.S., it has been my way of joining the worldwide revolution.

MARTHA CHAMBERLAIN I grew up in a small farming area in mid-western U. S. and began anti-war work at 18 by campaigning for E. McCarthy - because of moral outrage at the war and killing. As years passed I understood better U. S. policies - and gained an anti-imperialist perspective on the war. I joined the committee, USCANLFSVN, early in 1971. I have a sister in the RU, but do not agree with many of their political positions. I work for the Wash. Sq. Church as Secretary and my work enables me to work closely with many different progressive political groups in New York City. In 1973 I went to Cuba with the Venceremos Brigade. Recently, I was asked by the organizers of the protest at the U. S. Embassy in Saigon, to be one of the 8 or so people to go from the U. S. The ISC collective voted that time, 5 against and 2 for, and I did not go therefore. Presently, I am working with the Indochina Peace Campaign/NYC chapter and am interested in working with the national office of the new Friends of Indochina organization that is being set up in Wash., D.C.

I have come to understand clearly, because of recent events around the ISC split, and the IPC/NYC split, the important differences between sectarian behavior and united front work based upon real respect for people.

A brief description of the organizations involved:

The UNITED STATES COMMITTEE TO AID THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIET NAM (USCANLFSVN) founded in April, 1965 as a committee of volunteers, chaired by Walter Teague, functioned as such thru 1971 when it began to develop into a more collective organization around the May day demonstrations in Wash. D. C. and other such events. The committee moved its offices to the Wash. Sq. Church which also housed the Greenwich Village Peace Center and is still a place where diverse progressive groups meet for forums, etc. In 1973 the committee changed its name to Indochina Solidarity Committee.

(ISC)

The INDOCHINA SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE functioned as a more-or-less collective of from 5 to 13 people with the assistance of many others. It published and distributed newsletters, etc. and worked with many other groups, generally continuing and expanding on the work of USCANLFSVN. Starting in 1974, some members of ISC began to gravitate toward the politics of RU* and on May 26th, 1975, an open split occurred which effectively caused the end of ISC as an independent solidarity committee. The name of ISC is now used by the 5 RU supporters from the ISC collective and is clearly aligned with RU, as is shown in their latest newsletter. (See the attached last two pages of that newsletter.) (See also their denial that they are part of RU, but their full defense and agreement with the RU in their reply to our letter explaining the May 26th "rip-off").

(IPC/NYC)

The INDOCHINA PEACE CAMPAIGN/NYC Chapter was formed in 1973 under the joint leadership of previous IPC activists and ISC people. At first the principles of a mass organization were adhered to, but as the ISC's political collectivity dissolved, the RU supporters began to function as a separate contending group within IPC/NYC and struggled to push their line upon the chapter and the national organization. This led to IPC/NYC becoming overtly Marxist/Leninist (at least in word) and less active as a mass organization. Because of this, many less politically developed people left IPC/NYC and eventually the two sides separated into two separately functioning IPC's. At that point, the national steering committee of IPC saw an opportunity to formerly expell the RU faction for their destructive behavior and the non-RU IPC/NYC was able to continue with markedly better relations with the national IPC.

* DESCRIBED ON NEXT PAGE

In July, 1975, National IPC was dissolved at a conference in Ann Arbor, Mich., and two new organizations were formed: 1. Campaign for a New Foreign Policy (anti-imperialist, but primarily reformist and aimed at the military spending and government spending and policies abroad.) 2. Friends of Indochina (See the summary enclosed.) Local chapters of IPC were to continue during the interim while the new organizations were being formed, as they saw fit. The New York City chapter is continuing to use the name, IPC/NYC. The expelled RU-IPC group is also continuing to use the name of IPC/NYC and is apparently raising money for material aid.

(RU)

The REVOLUTIONARY UNION came out of the 1968 splits within Students for a Democratic Society. The RU describes itself as a Marxist/Leninist/Maoist organization. It is national and fairly large. It is in the process of declaring itself a party some time late this year.

On the surface, the RU has fairly standard Marxist/Leninist/Maoist politics. It is differentiated from the rest of the organized Left in the U.S. by a number of positions that have created serious divisions and antagonisms.

- A. The R.U. is in practice and theory, strongly anti-Soviet and pro-China.
- B. The R.U.'s position on the National Question causes them to downgrade the importance of Third World or Nationalist groupings within the U.S. Because of this the R.U. is almost isolated from the left and progressive nationalist and Third World forces. (An example of this was the R.U.'s position on the recent racial conflict in Boston which centered around the question of "bussing" of black school children to predominantly white schools. The right wing and racist forces took the position that to bus black children to their (white) schools was attacking their community and what little good they had in their schools (also much outright anti-black sentiment and actions took place with the Klu Klux Klan and Nazis joining the anti-bussing movement.) The main slogan of the rightwing was "~~SMASH THE~~ SMASH THE Bussing Plan" R.U. headlined their newspapers with the same slogan. ~~THE~~ ^{BOSTON} ~~THE~~ ^{RU.} took the position ^{THAT} the bussing was a ruling class manipulation (which almost everyone agreed with, even many of the black parents who none-the-less put their children on the busses so that they might get a little better education.) ^{BUT} ~~THE~~ ^{PLACE} R.U. then became the only major left group in the U.S. that did not ~~place~~ their emphasis on the question of racism (which grew to horrendous and obvious proportions as blacks were beaten and small school children had to be rescued by the police from white mobs shouting, "kill the niggers!")
- C. The R.U. downgrades or condemns many aspects of the 1960's and 70's movements in the U. S., which further isolates them from many progressive forces, such as the Women's Liberation Movement.
- D. The R.U. is functioning in an increasingly sectarian manner (a problem that is not unique to the R.U.) which is heightening the divisions on the left in the U. S. This becomes a serious problem with the R.U. due to their self-appointed role ~~of~~ ^{as} the only correct leadership of the proletariat (one can only wish the proletariat would accept the leadership of any left groups!*) The R.U. then uses this righteous self-concept to justify either absorbing or destroying progressive groups. They do this with disregard for the full and long range consequences for a movement that is still growing and needs both unity and education. The left in general does not see R.U. as leadership In fact R.U. is more often seen as being destructive of genuine forces that ~~are~~ ^{ARE} ~~can~~ provide a continuing bases for developing that leadership we so desperately need. An example has been the virtual take over of the VVAW/WSO by the R.U.

When VVAW/WSO was a mass organization of veterans and supporters, led by Vietnam War veterans, it was an effective and genuine force against imperialism and was, in fact had to be, listened to by many Americans. Now that it has become in the main, simply a front for a group seeking hegemony over the movement, it can too easily be discounted by non-activists and the millions of Americans who are still firmly anti-communist. The struggle within VVAW/WSO will educate some, but has done much harm.

- E. While it may be hard to describe or substantiate to anyone who has not witnessed their behavior, R.U.'s style of political and personal work is both an outgrowth of their political analysis and an indication of something amiss. (See the attached R.U. Cadre letter.) Immature, impolite, and unscientific are some of the many words ~~we~~ could use to describe their contemptuous manners toward anyone they disagree with.

Now let us introduce the other five people who were active in the Indochina Solidarity Collective when it split:

MIKE STOUT: Joined the committee, then the USCANLFSVN, in late 1971 and worked diligently to develop his own politics and the work of the committee. He has written and sung songs of Vietnam, and worked with many groups. In 1971 he traveled to Paris with Gina Harmon and met with Indochinese delegations. His work has been exemplary in the main. He does have a tendency toward rigidity and overreaction which is consistent with his strong reactionary Catholic family background. Mike went from a typical 1960's hippie to a staunch Stalinist in a short period of time. He has been much influenced by Gina Harmon, who has been often the only one who could curb his excesses. Mike is now a "closed" member of the R. U.

Mike is a serious and dedicated revolutionary who at present vehemently supports the R.U.'s line. He and the other five, are or were part of an R.U. "work team" whose assignment was to organize ISC and IPC/NYC for the R.U. This was accidentally revealed while we were still working together. He and the others (except Gina) claim they are not members of R.U.

While ~~we~~ disagree with much of Mike's politics and recent behavior and I think he is neurotically dogmatic and vindictive at times, ~~we~~ recognize his sincerity (within the framework of the need to rationalize and justify R.U.'s line) and praise the great amount of good work he has done in the past. ~~We~~ also feel that it is tragic that his and the others' energies are being mixed and distorted in their attempt to combine genuine international proletarian solidarity with the R.U.'s struggle for hegemony.

An example of the problem they face, is the very circumstances that prompted this letter. The conflict was avoidable, and if ISC had been dissolved peacefully and not with any public split, they could have gone on with their work with all of the materials they needed and without the great burden of distrust and bitterness they created for themselves. We offered them all of the informational items they would need and material goods have always been a false issue, since Gina had until recently close to a 100,000.00 in the bank. None-the-less, they chose to precipitate a public split and took many things that belong to others and all that they wanted from the office of ISC. These actions hurt them and us and played into the hands of the right wing forces at Wash. Sq. Church for instance, who are now pushing to expel all political groups from the church.

A more political problem they have, is how to be a solidarity group with the Indochinese countries and ~~still~~ take a militant and outspoken anti-Soviet position.

AT THE SAME TIME

In the first newsletter since the split in ISC, they end with a section that begins to lay out the R.U. position on the Soviet Union. We all had criticisms and private viewpoints on both China and the Soviet Union. We ^(MARTHA + WALTER) did not agree though, on the extent and conclusions and ~~did not think that the newsletter was the place to discuss the "Sino-Soviet split"~~. Now they can do that without our opposition.

Due to these and other problems, Mike and the others are increasingly isolated from the rest of the movement in New York City. The very people who most need the information that a solidarity committee can provide, now are reticent to work with people who have done what the ~~we~~ have done. The love and clarity that was evident in Mike's early songs, has now turned to a rhetorical stridency that is unintelligible to the working class in America and grates on the ears of the activists who want to reach and activate Americans with the messages we share.

GINA HARMON: is the daughter of the millionaire owner of Harmon/Kardon electronics and has long been a close friend of the leadership of R.U. She is the only member of ISC who admits to belonging to R.U., and this only because it was accidentally revealed. She joined ISC in 1972 and is the strongest political leader among the other 5 ISC people. She is intelligent and combative, a fairly good organizer of political discussions, etc., but often too quick to evidence antagonism. She is primarily responsible for the others joining the R.U. and led the fight for R.U.'s line in IPC/NYC, etc. She and Felice Weintraub fought for the R.U.'s line within the recent Vietnamese/American Women's Conference and lost. They were therefore not chosen to represent the U.S. women in Montreal, but they went anyway. She is a serious and dedicated revolutionary and has done much good work around Indochina. As a R.U. cadre, she led the split in ISC, and functioned with total R.U. support.

FELICE WEINTRAUB: joined the committee in 1972 and later left to go to college.
CHRIS GOLANOS: joined in 1973 and GARY HANSJERGEN returned with Felice from Ann Arbor in 1974 to join the committee. The three have all done good work and are dedicated, but their primary allegiance has been to the R.U. since mid 1974.

SOME GENERAL COMMENTS ON THEIR BEHAVIOIR IN ISC/IPC/NYC...

As has been mentioned earlier, the 5 ISC/RU people led the faction of IPC/NYC that was expelled by national, but they continue to use the name of IPC/NYC. Their group has now grown to about 15 people, most of which are RU members, open or closed. This other IPC/NYC has been raising money for material aid. We have no knowledge of how successful they have been.

The IPC/NYC, which we are active with, has grown to about 20 people at present and is in the process of organizing for the Friends of Indochina. We also are able to work effectively with many of the progressive groups and coalitions and we are in fact ^{ourselves} made up of people from many different groups and tendencies. We were recently very glad to have been asked by Cora Weiss and others to help assist in welcoming and establishing the PRG and DRVN observers delegates to the U. N., here in NYC.

We are now aware that both prior to and since the ISC split, the R. U. people in ISC were beginning secret attempts to ingratiate and link themselves with various Vietnamese and Indochinese groups. The documents that follow (particularly Martha's and Walter's letter on the split) do not go into these more private and serious matters for obvious reasons. But we do want to here mention two such items.

One of the final acts of the RU people that convinced Martha and Walter that ISC should be dissolved, occurred around the Victory Celebration of May 18th(?) in

Montreal, Canada.

Unknown to Martha and Walter, the others received a request for help from the Union of Vietnamese in Canada and Gina and Gary left secretly for Montreal. In the past one of the most important areas of collectivity lay with our relationships with representatives of the Indochinese people's struggles. For the others not to inform and involve Martha and Walter was a totally non-collective act and ended any principled relationship between us. We attempted to have an organizational meeting to discuss our work, and were informed that Gary and Gina were not available. We asked where they were and we were told by Chris and Felice that they didn't know! Later, Mike said they were in Montreal for some economic conference or something.

We only learned of the plans for the Celebration and the presence of Vietnamese delegations in Montreal from Doug Hosstetter and Cora Weiss with whom we were working on preparations for the huge rally in NYC on May 11th. We were informed that Gina and Gary had sat in on a meeting between Doug and Cora with the delegates and that Gina had to be asked to leave.

It became clear to us (and others) what they had been doing when we went to the Victory Celebration in Montreal. A R.U. supporter was put forward as the Vietnam veteran (He is fine person, but let himself be used) much to the surprise of the New York people. No one had any complaint with the way things went during the celebration, but the clear attempt of the R.U. people to manipulate events for their benefit, was a blotch on the spirit of this great occasion. The good and trusted relationships built up over the years with the New York people (many more than just we ISC people) were severely harmed by these events - especially since the ISC people had been among those most associated with the friendship between Americans and Vietnamese in Canada.

Another case, has been the clear attempt by the R.U. people to gain through various maneuvering, a special relationship with the Indochinese representatives coming to the U. S.

What is most tragic and ironic about their efforts (which include the splitting and seizing of the ISC resources) to gain political stature and legitimacy for the R.U. is that if they had simply continued their good work without resorting to secrecy, factionalism, maneuverings and outright theft and threats, then they certainly would have been able to contribute much more effectively to the Indochinese and American peoples' struggles. Such continued good practice without all the confusions, suspicions and damage their recent behavior has caused, might have gained them naturally, what they are now seeking to manufacture.

As to their claims of assistance, we can't really say how practical they are. We do feel that they probably are both genuine and opportunistic. Certainly too close association with the R.U. would be great cause of concern for politically active and aware people in the U. S. On the other hand, they certainly could be of some material assistance. A mysterious \$350,000.00 showed up in our IPC/NYC bank account several days ago. It was withdrawn before we knew about it by the bank which has not yet explained the "mistake." It might be that Gina had been able to obtain a large contribution from one of her industrialist friends and the money got deposited in the wrong account. The question though is really one of politics and not money.

Yours in the struggle,

Martha Chamberlain
Walter Teague

Martha Chamberlain

DOCUMENTS AND CHRONOLOGY

CHRONOLOGY:

1. (April 27) The RU faction in IPC/NYC - still one group at this time - submitted their own proposal to a national issues conference of IPC. It was similar to RU's line and clearly did not support the principles of unity of national IPC and was in conflict with the other section of IPC/NYC.
2. (April and May) After months of struggle, IPC/NYC found itself unable to function with unity. The RU faction had been meeting separately and secretly and functioned as a block. The non-RU people in IPC/NYC therefore decided to caucus also and announced that they would also meet separately, but wanted to work together as much as possible. The RU faction, led by the RU people, refused to cooperate and finally the two groups no longer met together.
3. (May 13) National IPC's steering committee expelled the RU faction in a long letter, (which is attached) for their factionalism. Most IPC chapters agreed with the expulsion, but many disagreed with the method. They thought it should have been done more democratically.
4. (Late May) The RU faction replied to and tried to gain support against the National steering committee's expulsion, but they failed. (document attached.)
5. All of this happened in the general context of RU's many attempts to gain control of groups around the country such as; Ithaca Rest of the News, VVAW/WSO, U.S. China People's Friendship Assoc., Union of Radical Political Economists, San Francisco Newsreel, People's Translations Service, etc.
6. (May 26) Growing conflicts with ISC led the RU people to taking the valuable items from the ISC office in the early hours of the 26th along with many items that belonged to the church and other individuals. They held onto the gutted office by force and threats to the church staff for four days. These actions were preplanned for some time. On May 31, they had to leave the office with only their personal belongings and they had only returned some of the church property.
7. (June 1) IPC/NYC and the Church condemned the RU action and called a mass meeting of anti-war and progressive people at the church for June 1st where over 50 groups were represented. This meeting formed the Coalition to Reclaim the Indochina Resources which tried to convince the RU to turn over the materials to a neutral group which would hold them until the larger anti-war movement could determine how they could be handled so that everyone would have access to them. If the RU did not agree to this, then CRIR would publicize what had happened so that pressure on RU might cause them to reconsider their actions and at least would forewarn others about this kind of behavior.
8. (May 30) IPC/NYC, the non-RU group, issued a statement on the RU "ripoff".
9. (June 10) IPC /NYC issued its statement on the expulsion of the RU faction of IPC/NYC.
10. (June 10) The minister of Wash. Sq. Church, after consulting with the board members of the church, issued a letter expelling the RU people from the church premises until such time as they rectified their actions.

(June 15)

11. Martha and Walter issue a statement on the ISC split detailing the event and asking for past supporters of ISC to sign the CRIR petition and to write to both the RU people and to Martha and Walter urging the RU people to return the personal items and to turn over the Indochinese materials to the War Resisters League (the items left in the ISC office after the ripoff were voluntarily turned over to the custody of WRL by Martha and Walter and the working committee of the CRIR) or to some such neutral body.
12. (June) The ISC/RU people issue a reply to Martha and Walter's statement. In it they try to justify what they did and they give an account of events that no one involved except themselves agrees with. They accuse Walter of "becoming a Mad Dog" and they also urge people to support them and to write to Walter and urge him to return what he "has taken."
13. (June) The CRIR working committee issues its "working paper" on the events.
14. (June to Aug.) During the following period, CRIR and Martha and Walter receive many letters of support from around the country and hundreds of people voice their solidarity. Many organizations sign the petition call upon the RU people to return the Indochinese materials and send carbon copies of letters of criticism of the RU people, to CRIR.

So far, neither CRIR nor we have received a single letter or telephone call supporting the RU version of what happened.

DOCUMENTS:

1. Letter from Martha and Walter, dated August 6, 1975.
2. IPC/RU Faction's program paper given at IPC National Issues conference, April 27.
3. IPC/National Steering Committee's Letter of expulsion of the RU Faction, dtd May 13.
4. IPC/RU Faction's reply to expulsion, May.
5. Background materials on some recent RU activities:
 - A. Michigan Free Press "Perspective"
 - B. RU reply to MFP, dtd May 15
 - C. California, non-RU chapter/region of VVAW/WSO pamphlet on RU
 - D. Letter from non-RU Ithaca Rest Of The News, dtd. June 10
 - E. "RU Cadre Effects on VVAW/WSO" letter from non-RU St. Louis chapter of VVAW/WSO
6. IPC/NYC non-RU chapter, letter on expulsion of RU faction, dtd June 10.
7. "Chapter Vote on RU expulsion" from the National IPC Newsletter.
8. ISC/non-RU letter on the RU "ripoff" from Martha and Walter, DTD June 15.
9. IPC/NYC non-RU letter on RU "ripoff", dtd May 30.
10. Minister of Wash. Sq. Church letter on RU people, dtd June 10.
11. ISC/RU people's reply to Martha and Walter's statement.
12. List of major items taken from ISC office (Page 9)
13. Summary of proposal for FRIENDS OF INDOCHINA organization approved at National IPC conference July 12/13
14. WORKING PAPER OF CRIR ON RU RIPOFF.
15. ISC/RU NEWSLETTER (4 PAGES) JULY, 1975

PARTIAL LIST OF ITEMS TAKEN FROM

Page 9

ISC OFFICE MAY 26

1. Vietnamese books and pamphlets in English, approx 500 gathered from 1964 until the present.
2. Vietnamese Documents, many large files, gathered from 1965 until the present.
3. Vietnamese films, in English, Fr. and Viet., over 50, gathered from 1966 until 1974.
4. Cambodian and Laotian books, pamphlets and films, many
5. Vietnamese artifacts - some held in trust for others.
6. Indochina art work and display items.
7. Display on Indochina - part belonged to IPC.
8. Indochinese flags and poles and demonstration equipment.
9. Information files of many kinds. Very important to ongoing work.
10. Film scripts for Vietnamese films...
11. Boxes of ISC buttons.
12. Files of ISC and USCANLFSVN published literature.
13. Photo files of ISC activities.
14. Correspondence files with Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Movement, and Individuals in the U.S. and outside of the U.S.
15. Tapes and records of Vietnamese and anti-war movement activities, etc.
16. Many other political items.

Material goods taken:

1. IBM Selectric II typewriter, ½ bought by Walter, remainder by Gina and ISC.
2. Mimeograph, Rex Rotary, bought by John B.
3. Press Type file, extensive,
4. Office equipment, extensive,
5. Amplifier, donated
6. 8 foot movie screen
7. Large shortwave radio, loaned by Ivan B.
8. * Three microphones
9. \$ on bank account
10. Wash. Sq. Church Projector valued at \$1750. (was returned eventually)
11. Wash. Sq. Church folding machine (also returned later)
12. Stereo Tape deck, Walter's, (finally returned)
13. Many other personal and organizational items.
14. (NOTE: They also left various debts to the church which Martha and Walter had to pay, totaling over \$300.)

When we briefly discuss what had been taken by them, during the four days they held onto the ISC office, they tried to claim other items not theirs and would not give up anything they already had with the exception of offering a few minor things and offering to split some of the less important items left in the office. There are undoubtedly many items they took which we could not determine so this list is incomplete.

P.S. Please feel free to request any additional information or documents you need!
W.T.

Letter from

R.U. CADRE EFFECTS ON VVAW-WSO

10 THIS AND
REVERSE
PAGE 11

One of the longest working members of our chapter gives these thoughts on the more personal effects of the crisis in VVAW-WSO. It speaks for all of us:

"After being a member of VVAW-WSO for four years, I have seen great changes in the organization and great changes in myself. These changes have included personal, as well as political, change, which, to me, must coincide. I started out as a veteran who was against the war in Vietnam. I was strictly an anti-war advocate. My viewpoint wasn't yet developed into seeing the Vietnam War in a larger context. I really saw it as a "mistake to be corrected". Through my contact with other people who viewed the war as I did, and especially through the contact I had with people in VVAW-WSO, I began to expand my viewpoint of the world. In the organization, I ran across people who were very concerned with questions such as racism, sexism, and imperialism. The meaning of these words wasn't very clear to me, and at times I was even threatened by the concepts; but through the respect and trust which I found in people in the organization, and their willingness to educate me in a thoughtful and respectful way, these concepts became something real that touched my own life. This trust and respect enabled me to carry on in my own life with these real concepts and enabled me to fight against the racism and sexism within myself and in conjunction with others.

"In the past year within VVAW-WSO, the concepts have remained (racism, sexism, imperialism) and the idea of fighting against them, but a new dimension has been added or, I think I should say, a dimension has been lost. The dimension is trust and respect that we held for each other and our differing opinions on these various issues and how we should go about combatting them. This loss of respect and trust is in direct correlation with R.U. members joining VVAW-WSO.

"I first heard of the R.U. at the Buffalo NSCM. People started introducing themselves as R.U. My only alarm came when someone from New England began to criticize the conduct and practice of R.U. members he had had contact with in Boston. What alarmed me was the vehemence with which this criticism was answered. There is the possibility that the criticism from the member from Boston was unprincipled. The criticism from members of the N.O. who answered it was unprincipled. All that I heard in answer to the member was that he was a slime and other things about what a nasty person he was. I criticized the N.O. for their conduct and it was not accepted. At this same meeting, the N.O. position paper on the united front strategy against Imperialism strategy emerged. A paper, I learned later, was exactly like the Revolutionary Union strategy for a United Front.

"From this paper put out by the N.O. another interesting thing emerged that would come to a head later on. The thing that emerged was something called the "two-line struggle". That is, there are two ways or two areas that political struggle can take place in, either bourgeois or proletarian. You are one or the other. Adversaries or allies; good or bad. This same adversary relationship also emerged by the time of the St. Louis NSCM as a principle by which political struggle is viewed. This adversary viewpoint is also well documented in just about every R.U. publication printed. You are either in the bourgeois camp or the proletarian. In light of this two-line struggle business, the unfortunate thing for VVAW-WSO is that viewpoints that fall outside whatever line or strategy is being pushed are not

allowed for. Other viewpoints are stifled; who wants to be labeled an "agent of the bourgeoisie" or "Trotskyist" or whatever? This simplistic viewpoint of the world (two lines) doesn't exactly contribute to an atmosphere where learning and constructive understanding can take place. This affects the democracy of the whole organization (by eroding the basis for democracy -- respect and trust for the value of different ideas and viewpoints).

"Another dimension of the erosion or downgrading of democracy in VVAW-WSO by R.U. cadre is the method by which the cadre operate within VVAW-WSO. R.U. cadre come into a meeting with a solid block or line on one position and that position is strictly adhered to, given cadre discipline. That is fine for the R.U. but it puts those without that preordained line in a reactive position; and instead of people coming together and learning from each others' experiences, we find ourselves constantly reacting to the cadre (R.U.) position."

Many have pointed out that the R.U. cadre in VVAW-WSO can always be recognized by their forthrightness in putting out their line. We can also recognize them by their language. We are disgusted with the introduction into our discussions of words like "scum", "slime", "bloated toad", "trash", ad nauseam. Is it VVAW-WSO or R.U. that has constituted chapters in New Jersey, Texas, Washington State, Oregon and Detroit? What sort of cadre comes new to the organization and introduces and presses an expulsion motion against a long-standing member, as happened at the Ohio regional with the Detroit chapter? In Southern California, B.R. did not serve VVAW-WSO in his leadership position by participating in the travesty of 30 people expelling 150 members of the Northern California sub-region. These examples of R.U. cadre contributions to VVAW-WSO indicate to us that they have been destructive.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT. WE CRITICIZE R.U. CADRE, NOT BECAUSE THEY CLAIM TO BE COMMUNIST, BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE HYPOCRITES. IT IS THEIR PRACTICE WE REJECT.