A Call to

VIETNAM WEEK

(APRIL 8-15)



"They have made a desert and called it peace."

-- Tacitus

It is two years since the U.S. government began bombNorth Vietnam. For two years the U.S. government has
continued to escalate the war and spent ever increasing
sums of money. In Vietnam the war is being paid for by the
increasing shedding of the blood of American and Vietnamese soldiers, and the ever increasing killing of Vietnamese
civilians. At home the war is being paid for by increased
food prices, increased tuition, and the ever increasing disruption of the lives of American youth. This poses a challenge to those Americans who for the past two years have
been striving to bring the horror of the war to the attention
of their fellow Americans: for now large segments of America can be reached with the message that the war is a barrier both to their own individual happiness and to the fulfillment of the American dream of a nation with liberty and
justice for all.

We must respond to this challenge by confronting our fellow students and our professors with the truth about the war and its perverse effects upon our society:

We must face the true nature of the war. It is first of all a war of aggression against the people of Vietnam, who seek only to exercise that right of self-determination for which Americans fought in 1776. It is a racist war, a murderous war against a colored people. It is an illegal war fought in our name but without our consent. It is but one symptom of a diseased society, a symptom that must be ended if it is to be possible to begin treating the disease itself.

We must face the true nature of the draft system. It is that system by which the war machine is nourished by the blood of young men. It is that system which makes the war possible. It further perpetuates a system of racism in the United States. It calculatedly penalizes the poor. It is used by the government to crush the aspirations of American racial minorities. It converts the classroom into an arena in which the losers are sent out to kill and be killed and the winners must live with the knowledge that their "success" in school may mean another's death on the battlefield.

The war in Vietnam makes it clear that the administration of this country with the complicity of the colleges and universities prefers to train Americans to become instruments of war instead of enlightened human beings.

We, the Student Mobilization Committee, urge all those students who wish to oppose the criminal war in Vietnam to dedicate themselves anew to the task of ending the war. Specifically we propose that April 8-15th be designated as Vietnam Week. We urge national student action during Vietnam Week which will culminate in the transportation of as many students as possible to New York and San Francisco as part of the general Spring Mobilization of the antiwar movement on April 15th. Finally, we propose that the focus of End the War in Vietnam Week be on: (1) Bringing the GI's home now; (2) Opposing the draft, and supporting the right of individuals to refuse to cooperate with the military system; and (3) Ending campus complicity with the war effort.

It is especially appropriate that we American students, fighting for the right to determine our own future, support the right of self-determination throughout the world and call for international opposition to the war in Vietnam, which denies the right of self-determination to the people of Vietnam.

STEPHEN RATNER

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