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Resist Board Meeting, Oct. 7, 1979

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Resistance to many forms of illegitimate authority is necessary to bring health to this country and make it a constructive force instead of a terror in the politics of nations.

— from A New Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

Sept. 23, 1979

Dear Resisters,

The next meeting of the Resist board will be in New York on October 7th, at 11 am at George Vickers' house. His new address is 205 W. 19th St., 6th floor, New York City 10011. His new phone # is 741-0545.

If you are planning to attend, please call Frank at the Resist office or call George.

In addition to discussing grant applications, we will also talk about follow-up on Vietnam/Cambodia/boat people, etc.

Grant applications on hand so far:

1. African National Prison Organization (ANPO) -- ANPO is sponsored primarily by the African People's Socialist Party. Included here is a xerox of a newspaper article on their founding conference. They will be sending an application soon; the newspaper was part of a large packet of stuff, mostly position paper things, that has already arrived. (ANPO is based in Louisville).

2. Vietnam Solidarity Committee (NYC) -- VSC is coordinating its founding meeting with a program to welcome the Vietnamese delegation to the UN on Oct. 7. They have asked for both an emergency grant for the "welcome" and a regular grant to help them get started. What is included here is a little ambiguous; more info on the way. The vote on the emergency grant was not unanimous; and George V is checking things out with Dave Dellinger, who has been in direct touch we think with the VSC.

3. Coalition for Basic Human Needs (Boston) -- this had just arrived before the last meeting; and Frank has been checking it out.

4. Families and Friends of Prisoners, Inc. (Boston) -- re-application for Dorchester Youth Alliance.

5. Moncada Library (Brooklyn) -- any sum to help move library, which has been trashed.

6. Women's International Resource Exchange (WIRE) Service (New York) -- up to $800 for general support - distribution; having more one way? -- is not a clean strategy, why need an office, how was it funded? (6th month?)

7. Madame Binh Graphics Collective (Brooklyn) $300 -- $300 to help produce

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poster on Attica.

8. Fight Back GI (West Germany) -- any amount for general support.

9. Service Employees for a Democratic Union (Boston) -- general support.

10. Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP -- San Diego chapter) -- would like loan or grant/front money to help put on play, "War Brides", about second-generation Filipinos in the US.

11. Willie Sanders Defense Committee (Boston) -- would like any amount for community education/outreach on this controversial case about a black man accused of rape.

12. Black New York Action Committee (NYC) -- we funded them two years ago. They would like any amount to cover replacing stolen office equipment.

13. National Black Human Rights Coalition (NYC) -- would like up to $500 to help subsidize transportation for people from the south to the UN human rights demo on Nov. 5, 1979.
Dear Resisters,

At the last meeting we decided to investigate what Resist could do about Vietnam, the refugees, etc.

I asked a local organization, Friends of Vietnam, for some advice about this. They are trying to do two things at once: to re-establish some kind of pro-Vietnamese presence in the old anti-war movement milieu, and to do educational work with perhaps some kind of Congressional focus, or at least to do what they can to keep Kennedy from burying his past support for normalization, refugee and economic aid, etc.

During our discussion several suggestions came up that we might be able to help with:

1. helping to arrange a university tour of one or more Vietnamese now in Canada, which would pressure the State Dept./INS to allow Vietnamese into the US who have expressed support for the present regime, etc.

2. see what we could do to organize or encourage teach-ins around this issue.

3. raise money for publications or other educational work.

4. work on any national petition campaigns. Some of these seem to be in the works. A copy of a statement being prepared by Carol Bragg and some others in included. Apparently some kind of petition is also being prepared by the LA-based U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Society.

The October newsletter has an article on the boat people. I hope the November one will have an article on Kissinger and Cambodia, or perhaps on the famine in Cambodia. The December newsletter could have a copy of the Ex Bragg, et. al. statement, and/or something else.

There are already some indications that support for Vietnam will cause us some financial losses, but nothing serious has happened yet.

Frank

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Dear Tom:

We are enclosing a public statement on Vietnam which we will circulate this autumn for signers and plan to release publicly around Thanksgiving time. We are sending it to you now — before the final text is decided — to solicit your support and suggestions.

We have been distressed over the divisions in the American peace community over issues of human rights in Vietnam and the plight of the refugees. We who initiated this statement feel that while we may disagree on some issues, there is still much which we agree on. Thus, this statement is an attempt at reconciliation with the peace community, stressing those areas where we do agree.*

You will note that the text states frankly that signers disagree about human rights in Vietnam. The statement seeks to explore some of the root causes of problems in Indochina and specifically focuses on ways the U.S. could help alleviate some of these problems.

We have spent weeks carefully preparing this text. We hope that you will feel comfortable signing it in its present form. However, if you have suggestions or changes you wish to suggest, please do so. In mid-October we shall have the text in its final form and we shall then send it to you for your endorsement.

Because we are working with a very tight deadline, we ask that you respond with your comments, suggestions and — we hope — endorsement, not later than Monday, October 8.

Responses may be sent to Carol Bragg at the above address.

Thank you very much.

In Peace,

Don Luce (Clergy & Laity Concerned)
David McReynolds (War Resisters League)
John McAuliff (American Friends Service Committee)
Doug Hostetter (United Methodist Office at the UN)
Carol Bragg (American Friends Service Committee)
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We were particularly encouraged by the very positive reaction we received from I.F. Stone and Noam Chomsky to the first draft.
We are Americans of diverse views and backgrounds, united in our concern for the people of Indochina, whose fate has been intimately linked with our own for a generation.

We are deeply saddened and alarmed about the plight of the Vietnamese "boat people." According to United Nations statistics, there are 350,000 Indochinese refugees in camps in Southeast Asia awaiting resettlement. Many others have perished at sea. The refugee situation in Southeast Asia is a human tragedy of enormous dimensions-- one to which caring people and nations around the world must respond. Many Americans have sponsored refugees, and we encourage others to do the same.

We are equally concerned about the 50 million Vietnamese who remain in their country-- whether for family reasons, cultural ties, or political sympathy with the present government. The hunger and poverty which these Vietnamese have endured for the past several years, though less dramatic than the plight of the "boat people," also deserve our attention.

During this Thanksgiving season, we call on our government to seek effective ways to reduce the flow of refugees and to alleviate the suffering of those who remain in Vietnam. To do so requires an understanding of the underlying causes of these two problems-- namely, the state of the Vietnamese economy and the imminent threat of another war with China.

Today, the Vietnamese economy is in a state of near collapse. In part, this is a legacy of 30 years of war; in part, it is the result of disastrous weather and unsuccessful economic experiments.

By the time the Vietnam war ended in 1975, two million Vietnamese had been killed and 12 million made refugees. In the course of the war, the agricultural base of the economy was destroyed-- bombs impacted the earth, making the tilling of fields and rice paddies difficult; the 300-500,000 tons of unexploded land mines left in the fields posed a serious threat to people and livestock; irrigation canals were ruined. The destruction of Vietnam's agricultural capacity, coupled with the complete dependency of the South's industrial sector upon foreign assistance, left the economy in a shambles at the end of the war.

Reconstruction efforts since the war have been undermined by 2 years of severe drought, followed by the worst flooding in 4 decades. Flood waters last fall drove 4½ million people from their homes and destroyed 3 million acres of fertile cropland.

The tragic wars and invasions involving Vietnam, Cambodia, and China created an additional drain on the faltering Vietnamese economy. Fear of another invasion by China has prompted a continuing diversion of resources and people away from reconstruction.
We see the precariousness of the Vietnamese economy and the external military threat (real or perceived) posed by China as the two major reasons for the "boat people" exodus and the suffering which exists in Vietnam today. Some refugees are leaving to join families in the West. Others, especially the ethnic Chinese in the South, are leaving because of rigorous new economic policies which have hurt Vietnam's merchant and trading class. Many ethnic Chinese have left northern Vietnam because they were confronted with the unpalatable choice of emigration or forced relocation inland away from the Chinese border. Those who remain in Vietnam face hunger, the hard labor and regimentation associated with reconstruction, and the threat of another war.

Those of us signing this statement have differing views on the human rights situation in Vietnam, but we are united in our support for the full range of human rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—civil and political, economic, social and cultural. We believe that, in the case of Vietnam, the human rights situation is more a product of events and circumstances than of intent or ideology—that historical events have produced conditions which would sorely test any government, whatever its political ideology. We are convinced that the social unrest which accompanies economic instability and the security measures adopted in response to military threat constitute obstacles to the achievement of human rights. Serious U.S. efforts at stabilizing the Vietnamese economy and securing peace between China and Vietnam would help create a climate in which Americans might effectively raise and confront questions of human rights in Vietnam.

Despite our differing views on the status of human rights in Vietnam, we all agree that this issue and the plight of the "boat people" must not be used to justify past American military intervention in Vietnam. We affirm once again that American intervention in Vietnam was illegal and immoral, and caused extreme and unnecessary suffering to the Vietnamese people. This question is crucially important to future American foreign policy, for if the American war in Vietnam can now be justified in the public mind, the way is paved for U.S. military intervention in other Third World countries.

We believe that, in addition to providing refugee relief, our government should take several actions to promote economic stability in Vietnam and foster an improvement in Sino-Vietnamese relations. These actions would help reduce the flow of refugees from Vietnam, relieve the suffering of those who remain in their country, and have a positive influence on human rights. We, therefore, call upon our government to:

---Normalize diplomatic and trade relations with Vietnam. As the U.S. learned
in the case of China, diplomatic and economic ostracism serve as impediments to peace by generating unnecessary tensions in a world always on the brink of war. Normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam would be a clear signal to the People's Republic of China that this country would not tolerate a second invasion of Vietnam. It would also facilitate the establishment of safe and orderly emigration procedures, thereby eliminating the need for flight from Vietnam in unsafe boats.

---Provide emergency food aid to Vietnam. The United Nations predicts a __________-ton food shortage in Vietnam during the coming year. It is only appropriate that a nation with an abundant food supply should share with a nation in such desperate need.

---Provide long-term development assistance. In addition to stabilizing the economy of Vietnam, this would encourage a future of good relations between our two countries, as did American post-war assistance to Germany and Japan following World War II.