

August 21, 1968

TO ALL ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

In several areas young radicals who have been active in the antiwar movement have contacted us about actions in front of Soviet or East European consulates or offices in protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Because of the leading role we have played in the antiwar action coalitions, they will look to us to organize or participate in these actions. Decisions on whether or not to participate in, or help initiate, these demonstrations will depend on the conditions in the various cities. Several general political guidelines should be kept in mind.

1) Our main job in the coming weeks is educating those we have contact with about the nature of Stalinism, socialist internationalism, and the fight for socialist democracy. Extensive use of the Militant, forums, classes and protest meetings called by ourselves will be the main vehicles to accomplish this.

2) In almost any of these protest actions there will be a problem created by the possibility of an anti-Soviet or anti-Communist stamp being put on the action.

a) In some cities with large and well-organized right wing Eastern European and rightist organizations these groups may "participate" in any action protesting the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The presence of any elements of this sort will put a reactionary stamp on any demonstrations they take part in. The correct slogans or leaflets from a socialist group do nothing to change the general anti-Communist character of these kinds of demonstrations and the way they will be reported in the press. We do not participate in any demonstrations that may have this character.

b) The third campers and pacifists will be quick to urge protest actions against the Soviet Union's invasion for their own reasons. A demonstration in which third campers carry their banners demanding withdrawal of Soviet troops, the pacifists theirs, and us ours -- each free to leaflet or sell -- may be useful. But it is important that we agree to no restrictions of slogans, banners or single press spokesmen that would give these demonstrations in the eyes of the public and mass media a third camp or anti-Soviet character for which we would have to take responsibility. This is especially important, as the main effect of our demonstrations will be on those we are

demonstrating in solidarity with: the Czechoslovakian students, workers and peasants. We are demonstrating on their behalf, for socialist democracy.

3) The demonstrations should emphasize two things:

a) Opposition to U.S. troops in Vietnam, as well as Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. This is important as a counter to those who want to substitute the "fight" to get Soviet troops out of Czechoslovakia for the fight to get U.S. troops out of Vietnam, or at least implicitly let it slide, and to differentiate us from those who are against the demand for withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, but for the withdrawal of troops from Czechoslovakia.

b) We should emphasize our solidarity with the Czech workers, peasants and students who are fighting for socialist democracy and our defense of them against the Stalinists. This is part of our struggle against American capitalism and for the world socialist revolution.

4) For the young antiwar activists with whom we have been working, and who will be looking to us to draw the lessons and explain the importance of the events in Czechoslovakia we must point out two things.

a) One of the defenses of the socialist students, workers and peasants in Czechoslovakia is to refuse to allow a moratorium of any kind on actions against U.S. imperialism's denial of the right to self-determination and socialist democracy for the Vietnamese.

b) Secondly, for those youth who are opposed to U.S. imperialism and the reactionary character and actions of the Stalinist bureaucracies of the workers states, they should join the world socialist youth movement and join the fight for the world socialist revolution.

Comradely,

Jack Barnes
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Mary-Alice Waters
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