

## NCC Summer Project

The National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, developed out of the Congress of Unrepresented People, last August. Its purpose was, and continues to be to coordinate the work of independent Vietnam committees, to stimulate new activity, to conduct peace research, and to raise funds. The NCC does not, however, set policy for affiliated organizations. Having helped in the establishing of many new committees around the country, and worked for the International Days of Protest in March, the NCC is now, with Staughton Lynd, Tom Hayden and others, calling for a summer town meeting on Vietnam. In order to facilitate this work, regional councils have been set up. At a New Haven meeting last month, Dan Raskin was selected New ENGLAND AREA Coordinator.

The idea of a summer project involving community organizing on Vietnam is based on the recognition that if the war is to be ended, it will have to be ended here. I don't want to say that the fate of the world rests on our shoulders, but ending the war in Vietnam is crucial. The kind of movement we need to end the war presents a big task, bigger than our resources allow at present. The answer is that the movement must grow, that it must reach out into the community, both ghetto and suburbia. This summer the movement, and the NCC with it, hopes to accomplish much in this direction. We want to expand; we want to mobilize for peace.

Basically, the summer project would go something like this, as taken from Peace and Freedom News (NCC Newsletter). "With the goal of building a massive democratic peace movement with real political power, the tactics of the summer project will be to build to the greatest possible extent, indigenous peace organizations. Three levels of work are indicated:

- 1) sending people into areas where little or no dissent or peace activity exists. In many parts of the country, such people would be in a position similar to that of civil rights workers in Mississippi.
- 2) supplying the money or other resources to committees so that they can, using one of their own members, have someone work full time in their area for the summer.
- 3) Existing committees that already are strong should endeavor to hire and recruit staff for themselves and for their region as a whole.

Some people may say we tried community organizing on Vietnam and failed, but it would be a mistake to say that and stop there. It's been a year since last summer: THE WAR IS A YEAR OLDER and has begun to affect American society deeply. There has been a national debate on Vietnam, primarily due to the efforts of the peace movement; the movement is much stronger now, and better equipped in terms of men, money and experience, to go into the community. Moreover, the growth in the past year of many off-campus committees attests to the possibility of carrying the movement beyond the university.

In breaking new territory, the following problems <sup>has</sup> ~~exist~~ to be worked out: ~~we~~ we must learn how to spread the peace movement without becoming "colonizers" ourselves. We can't prod people into organizing committees: they must develop indigenously. We will make full time workers available to groups that want help. They will act as catalysts, aiding the committee to become self-sufficient. The first thing we need to know for this is where such workers should go. We need contacts in places like Waterbury, Conn., Pittsfield, Mass., Manchester, N.H., Augusta, Maine, etc.

In those areas where there is already much activity, the job will be to deepen the protest. These areas will probably also supply many of the full-time workers, but there could be some exchange between students from the cities and those from the smaller college towns. In the cities, new communities have to be reached--ghettos, middle class neighborhoods and apartment complexes.



A few more suggestions: trained speakers are essential--- the NCC can supply a few, but you must develop your own as well. Research on local problems will pay off; if the movement is to grow it must be related to the things people feel. For example, find out about the rises in food and clothing prices; see if federal Great Society money has been cut to help pay for the war---then make these things explicit in leaflets. Don't be over-anxious to get people to commit themselves. For someone who has never been involved in protest, getting on a picketline is a big step, especially if she happened to be a lower class housewife, or be a small storekeeper---and you are a student. Most people look upon students as privileged kids with little to bitch about. It is a good idea to encourage people to overcome their reluctance to speak out, but it has to be done carefully.

Community organizing on Viet Nam, and work with labor and religious organizations has already begun. In the NCC newsletter there are some short descriptions of successful work. If there is ~~to~~ to be a national "town-meeting" on Viet Nam, much more of this has to be done. Right now, we need to know where organizing should and can be done: we need suggestions on approaches and techniques, we need to know where people would like to work, and what help they will need.