

(DRAFT OF CALL FOR "INDEPENDENT" POLITICAL "MOVEMENT" --
Circulated by Irving Beinin)

March

Dear Friend,

There is an urgency upon us. Now is the time for effective intervention of the people -- the unconsulted, the unrepresented, the exploited -- into the political life of the country. We are addressing a challenge to you: join us in building a political opposition in our neighborhood, the Lower East Side.

We do not speak of "reform", and we shun the clubhouse atmosphere that marks American politics. We speak of politics which grows out of struggles for a better life, which participates in those struggles, which directly joins in the movements for peace, for jobs, for freedom, for better housing, for decent living conditions. On the operative level, the question of who makes the decisions is fundamental. Our demand is that the people directly affected have the decisive voice.

Three related questions dominate the crisis in the United States -- and on the Lower East Side:

1. Our area, with a population of 200,000, contains the largest poverty pocket in New York State: 49% of the families have incomes under \$4000 a year; 80% of the adults have less than a high school education; more than 3000 youths are unemployed and 700 drop out of school each year; 14% of the adult population is unemployed -- $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the national average.

Negroes and Puerto Ricans constitute the great majority of the human beings who make up these statistics. No one in government speaks for them.

Though our area contains more settlements and "service" facilities than any other, unemployment is not decreasing, the level of school dropouts remains high, the life of the poor is as always. There cannot be a massive assault on poverty so long as 60% of the federal budget goes for the Vietnam war. Poorly paid workers need higher wages. Slum dwellers need decent homes at rents they can afford, the unemployed need work. The struggle of the poor must be placed on this level of direct response to need.

2. U.S. troops are sent across the seas to fight a reactionary illegal war against the people of Vietnam and against their aspirations for freedom and a better life. Whatever the concern of U.S. armaments corporations and other sections of the "power elite" to

dominate Vietnam, the American people has no interest in prolonging the war. Never in U.S. history has there such opposition to a war while it was going on. The popular resistance has been echoed in the halls of Congress. But this opposition will not win the day and the troops will not return from the jungle and the rice paddy till our voice is a great roar. We are at a time of momentous decision.

3. After decades of civil rights legislation and supreme court decisions, Freedom Now remains the goal still tantalizingly out of reach of the great majority of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. Lack of jobs at decent pay, substandard housing and inhuman living conditions the daily buffeting of the black minority in a race conscious, white supremacy oriented society -- these facts overwhelm the token gains thus far won by the struggles of minority peoples.

Till now the only rights Negroes and Puerto Ricans share equally with the majority are the right to be drafted and to be killed in Vietnam in a war against another oppressed people. And because the draft laws favor the more well-to-do whose sons can go to college, a larger than proportional share of Negroes and Puerto Ricans are drafted and sent to slaughter.

The main battle for Freedom still lies ahead and the great majority of Negroes, and their brothers and allies must act now.

We have no confidence that the Republican and Democratic parties, whose leadership has fostered the oppression and injustice we oppose, will be able to change and rebuild our lives and our society. We seek a new movement of political action independent of any political party, whose campaigns will run throughout the year, not just at election time. We seek a new breed of political candidate, a product of the struggles of the people, who is not afraid to disturb the status quo, and will never abandon his responsibility to represent his constituency in favor of timid acquiescence to a political machine or craven allegiance to a war policy.

To achieve these ends, and to consider the formation of a movement for independent political action, we are calling a meeting on Friday, March 11, at _____.

One item on the agenda will be the question of an independent campaign for the Congressional seat in the 19th district. We believe the people here are more than ready for a change. We are not persuaded by the "pro-peace" statements of Congressman Farbstein or the candidates for the reform Democratic nomination. Ours is

not a game of statement-making, but a struggle to organize people. We have seen none of those candidates in that struggle.

If you agree with the above, and wish to actively participate in the effort to launch such a movement and candidacy, we invite you to attend our meeting.

In peace and freedom,

(Hopefully, many signatures.)