

1972

# Socialist Workers D.C. Campaign Committee

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SIGNERS OF THE JUNE 16 "RING AROUND  
THE CAPITOL STATEMENT."

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

On June 16th you, as members of the Black Community, denounced the antiwar movement as racist and failing to "interrelate domestic issues with foreign affairs." Your statement alleged that the antiwar movement "includes Blacks and other minorities on a token basis, using them only as a drawing card to legitimize the racist goals of the Peace Movement."

This attack comes at a time when the Vietnamese most need an antiwar movement in this country that is united and active in the defense of the right of self-determination for the people of Indochina. It is clear that with the most massive and vicious bombing in the history of modern warfare and the halfhearted support of the Soviet Union and China, the survival of the Vietnamese hangs in the balance.

You, sisters and brothers who initiated and signed the statement claim to be in complete solidarity with oppressed nations, among them Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. You correctly state that "the oppressor abroad is the oppressor in this country and the oppressor of our city." But rather than confront the enemy that wages the war, you attack those who are fighting to end it. You are doing what Malcolm X called "making the victim the criminal." You blame the antiwar movement for the inequalities and ills of capitalist society. You claim that the "cost for demonstrations is paid out of the local D. C. budget which comes from the taxes of D. C. workers. These taxes are used to beef up the police department in lieu of monies used for education, health, nutrition and employment services for D. C. residents." This is more than bad logic and folly. The U. S. Government spends 60% of every tax dollar to kill people around the globe. The U. S. Government is the real criminal, not the antiwar movement. And it is an outrage

to say anything else.

There can be no doubt that masses of Black people are, and have been opposed to the war in Indochina. On April 24, 1971, the Third World Task Force (of which I was a co-coordinator) mobilized over 2,000 Black people to demand END THE DRAFT -- BRING OUR BROTHERS HOME NOW! And Black people have participated in every antiwar demonstration since then. What is needed is the further organization of that sentiment into independent actions in the street, like the African Liberation Day Demonstration and the actions of the Black students of Eastern High School.

Black students at Eastern High walked out of school and held rallies and marches in support of the Vietnamese and against the mining of Haiphong Harbor. The students sought the support of the D.C. School Board. The Board (presided over by Marion Barry) was asked to call, on May 19th (Malcolm X's birthday) assemblies in the schools throughout the city to discuss the war and its relation to the struggle for Black Liberation.

How did the School Board respond to this demonstration of Black solidarity with the Vietnamese and against the U.S. government?

Did they place support for the Eastern students at the top of the agenda? NO!

Did they place the resources of the School Board at the disposal of antiwar Black students? NO!

Did they call on the Black Community to follow the lead of the students and go into the streets against the genocide that Barry denounces in the statement of June 16th? NO!

The School Board did none of these. The School Board was forced to discuss the demands of the Eastern High students because the students refused to allow the meeting to be adjourned! The Board refused to call for assemblies in all D.C. schools, but conceded to the demand for such an assembly for Eastern. Marion Barry, according to the Evening Star, said that the School Board could not organize for the students. The role played by the Board was against the independent organization of the Black community against the the war. How can you, Marion Barry, and Hilda Mason, attack the antiwar movement?

Where were you, brothers and sisters, when the Black students needed your support in their actions against the war?

The independent action of the Eastern High students is an example for the Black community. An example that goes far beyond the question of the war in Southeast Asia.

The real struggle that confronts Black people is the fight for self-determination--the same struggle that the Vietnamese face. Like the Vietnamese people our oppression is caused by the tiny minority of wealthy, white industrialists and bankers who rule the United States and the twin parties of oppression. Like the fight against the war, our battle cannot rely on the actions of any Democrat or Republican--the very parties that use our tax dollars on the genocide in S. E. Asia, the parties that keep over 34% of all Black youth unemployed. The twin parties that deny the residents of D. C. the right to self-government. Rather than attack the unwillingness of the anti-war movement to rely on individual candidates, we should heed its example.

I totally support the antiwar movement and advocate similar forms of independent struggle in the Black community. My campaign for D. C. Delegate is the only campaign that calls for the formation of an independent Black political party, totally independent of the Democrats and Republicans, to challenge and expose their do-nothing policies and lead Afro-Americans in electoral and mass action for Black control of the Black community and total liberation. Brothers and sisters who support these ideas should support my campaign as a positive alternative to the two-party system and as a way to concretely struggle for Black people. I challenge any of the signers to a public debate and discussion in the Black community on the strategy and tactics of the antiwar movement and its relation to the struggle for control of our destinies.

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Socialist Workers Party  
Candidate for D. C. Delegate