

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
VIETNAM WAR- ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

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O.H. 1658

Merlin Luce
Interview
By
Mickey Huff
On
December 2, 1993

Merlin Luce

Merlin Luce was born to Moses Henry and Minerva Luce on September 25, 1912, in Ohio. Merlin's parents were farmers, but lost their farm. Merlin and his brother, in their youth, were tenant farmers and worked in a sugar mill in the winters. Merlin finished four years of high school and served from 1942-1945 in the Army during World War II. His brother worked in the school system in Youngstown, Ohio.

After the war, Merlin worked in a steel mill in Youngstown until 1978 when he retired. He married Lois Roth in 1944 and had three children, Charles, Danny and Ruth Alice, all of whom are grown now. Merlin opposed the Vietnam War while working at the mill and attended rallies and meetings, especially at Youngstown State University (which was Youngstown College). He was also active in the civil rights movement. Merlin is still a peace activist and is involved in the Solidarity Club, Youngstown Peace Council, and the ACLU.

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INTERVIEWEE: Merlin J. Luce

INTERVIEWER: Mickey Huff

SUBJECT: Vietnam War Anti-War Movement

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MH: This is an interview with Merlin Luce for the Youngstown State University Oral History Counter Culture Anti-Vietnam War Movement project by Mickey Huff. At his home on December 2, 1993 at a quarter after five in the afternoon. So Merlin, just to start things out could you tell us just a little bit about yourself? Tell us about, maybe your up bringing, when it was and something about your parents, maybe your siblings. Some memories you have from growing up.

ML: I will make that very brief. I was born eighty-one years ago in Paulding County Ohio. My parents were farmers in Paulding County. Prosperous farmers for a period of time until a crisis developed in agriculture after World War I. In which bankruptcy came to many farmers, including them, losing their farm in 1931-32, in the depths of the Depression, and both of my parents dying shortly after that. My brother and I, then worked as tenant farmers for a number of years until about 1940. In the wintertime I would work in the sugar mill that processed sugar beets for sugar, until I picked up enough industrial skills to be able to go out and look for a job someplace else. Since my brother was in the school system in Youngstown, I came to Youngstown and went to work for US Steel in 1942. I was drafted and went into the Army, was oversees eighteen months with an engineering unit, came back in '44. My wife, from Struthers, and I were married then. I went back to work as US Steel, and stayed working there, at US Steel until I retired in 1978. I put in thirty-six years at US Steel. The mill was shut down permanently in '79, so whether I wanted to work after '65 made no difference because the mill was shut down anyways. My activities were always pro union and I became strongly involved in the union struggles that took place at the end of World War II, and continued up until the general strike in steel in '59. Beyond that I was also interested in left-wing politics, I won't go in to that you can broaden out anyway you want to. I became very conscious of international affairs, and particularly what was taking place in Vietnam, after World War II, when the United States was giving the French government over a billion dollars a year to try and reestablish colonial rule over Vietnam, and ended in the defeat of France at Dien Bein Pu in 1954. Then we know the gradual drift into American involvement that

led to the massive call up of Army troops after the Gulf of Tonkin affair and the escalation the protests. To a certain degree the opposition of the war, in the United States, had part of the effect of ending the war with the American pull out in 1973. But for that whole long period, for me, it was a time of almost constant agony and rage over what was taking place in Vietnam. I spent eighteen months in France and Italy in uniform, but there was nothing that affected me to the extent that, what I considered, the major crimes that were being committed in Vietnam against the Vietnamese people, and also against the American-Japanese that were being sent over there. In response to that I was in a number of demonstrations. I think the first major one was in Washington, was about 1965. Several carloads of us went from Youngstown to that demonstration. We also had demonstrations locally in Cleveland. Eventually we even had sizable demonstrations here in Youngstown that brought hundreds of students from Youngstown State University down to Public Square to demonstrate against the war. In the mill, the workers were very cautious about taking any positions on the war. We knew the war was bringing prosperity to the steel industry, we had to work a lot of overtime during most of the Vietnam War, the economic crisis didn't develop in the field until quite a while after the Vietnam War ended. That about covers my activity in Vietnam. I thought at the time, that after the United States evacuated in 1975, that the war was over. But the war that begun in Vietnam in 1942 was still going on, in my opinion, because of the embargo, which is an act of war, and the legacy of the military that had been left behind.

MH: You said that you were involved with some of the demonstrations and that, where? Just in Youngstown, you said you went to Washington?

ML: We went to Washington several times, and New York, I think several times, over the period between, roughly, 1965 and 1970. Usually it would be a carload, on several occasions there were busloads went to Washington demonstrations from Youngstown. I can't remember too clearly who organized them, might have been SDS and similar groups that had an organization on campus. But if I had an opportunity to go, I would go. But working in the mill didn't give me too many opportunities to go. I think the first major demonstration in Washington was about 1965, I believe. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, and there had been an awful lot of talk about the Kennedy assassination, this year being the 30th anniversary. I remember so clearly, like everybody does, the day Kennedy was shot. I was coming home from work and I heard it on the car radio. To me, just a couple weeks before that, the Premier of Vietnam had been assassinated. It wasn't until later that the CIA's involvement in the assassination of his brother became known. To me at that time, it was something like Malcolm X's remark that the chickens were coming home to roost. Like the article in the last week it points out how disturbed his brother, Bobby Kennedy, was that the public might learn what they had been doing, in trying to assassinate other leaders at the time his brother was assassinated. But that was connected to the Vietnam War because after the assassination of two the war became much more bloodier. The Vietnamese Government became much more garbled that went in place of. I remember one demonstration where several carloads of us went to Cleveland. We were demonstrating against Herbert Humphrey, who was speaking at the school principal meeting in Cleveland. He was candidate for

President, and that must have been 1968. We were demonstrating with a sizable group from Cleveland, and some came up from Columbus too that night. The group called the Captive Nations in Cleveland had a sizable membership. They were refugees from Eastern Europe and refugees from communism. They announced they were going to counter demonstrate our demonstration. So by the time we got there we knew trouble was brewing because the police were making us walk on one side of the sidewalk carrying signs against Humphrey, and these people were walking on the other side of the sidewalk carrying signs against us.

MH: Who were you supporting? Were you supporting McCarthy?

ML: No, we were not supporting anybody politically. We were just opposed to Humphrey for his pro war, that's all. An anti-Humphrey demonstration. It was a pretty good size demonstration. But finally a little bit of trouble had developed on one end. One of my sons was there with some friends. When Mounted Police rode right over top of the demonstration. I remember seeing him and the girl he was with just disappear into the horses. They come out on the other side, they were still holding on to their sign. We had quite a few people arrested that night. That was just one demonstration I remember.

MH: How were the ones in Washington? How were they different than Cleveland? In size?

ML: Well most of the demonstration, in Washington, that I went to were so big that they were left alone. That is they were left alone by the police. The general antipathy of the military toward the demonstration made itself evident in later demonstrations by having its helicopter buzz it all the time. There was one case, I remember, about twenty thousand demonstrators were rounded up and put behind barbed wire. They won a major court case in later years, and they were all paid damages for what the government did on that day. The demonstrations that I remember in New York, Washington too, were not, you didn't feel threatened because of the huge size of the demonstration. I'm sure a lot of those were five hundred thousand people. They were in the hundreds of the thousands, the battle of the numbers always takes place though when you have an anti-government demonstration they will down play it and say there were twenty to thirty thousand people who were there, when it was two hundred and fifty thousand people there. They were big. Of course, the bigger they got the more concerned the military and the government got about their Vietnamese policy. Losing the war on the streets. They didn't mind losing the war on the streets as long as they didn't lose the election. But after Lyndon Johnson refused to run for President, it became evident that the anti-war movement was strong enough to have a political influence in the United States.

MH: How about, you said you were in the steel mill at the time. You were involved with the union at the time. You even said earlier that the steel mills were going pretty good because of the war. Any of the people you work with, did they share some of your opinions about the war or did were you kind of by yourself?

ML: Before the Vietnam War started you had, of you worked in the mill, and you were active in in the various strikes that take place, you had a pretty good idea of how workers lined up.

Pro union or anti union, pro company or anti company with in between or neutrals would be a great middle that would not concern themselves one way or another as long as things were going alright for them. So you knew pretty well as the discussion and As actions over Vietnam intensified which ones were anti-war, which ones were pro war and which ones gradually shifted their positions towards the war. It seemed like a great deal of the hatred of mill workers, in the early days, was directed, not so much against the anti-war demonstration as it was against the life styles of the young men and women of that time period. They just freaked out completely when somebody had long hair or a beard or something like that. It was almost like and that not coherent In fact, they employing offices of the steel companies had recommended, and they were hiring young men then, that they come in neatly dressed without a beard. Imagine setting standards like that. It didn't really begin to change until the superintendent's son came home with whiskers all over his face. The change in lifestyle was so dramatic that it not only affected the rebels but it also affected the whole middle section of youth that were influenced by what was taking place on the Capitol. Within a couple years, why these guys got accustomed to working with somebody who had hair down to his waist, or whiskers down to his navel, without getting all stressed out about it. In fact, it was funny to see guys working up and down the railroad tracks, you couldn't tell from the rear whether they were male or female, they had a full head of hair. Of course it was the consent decree that brought women into steel mills, took place after Vietnam actually. That's another story. That was part of the Vietnam Era. Most of them would be just didn't want to talk about Vietnam. We knew that Vietnam was bringing us certainly a lot of prosperity to the steel industry with war orders and things like that. Because the war on communism was going on all around the world, not just in Vietnam. It took a lot of steel. Gradually the guys I worked with became anti-war. Just like Youngstown State University became the same way. I remember the guys, when the spray paint cans had came out then, it was fairly new, guys would spray paint the peace sign, you know. One morning I went to work at the 40 inch mill, where they emptied the oar cars. They came down an incline and went through a car dumper, that turned them upside down, dumped down the iron pellets and coasted down the track. Coupled up into a train, now long enough for the train to roll out empty. I went to work one morning and there was about thirty-five of those ore cars, and somebody had painted a big peace sign on everyone of them inside the mill. I though it was hilarious. My turn foreman come out, and he was almost in tears. He thought it was a desecration of company property, to put that peace sign on the company's ore cars. Everybody noticed it, and that was an indication that the enemy had gotten inside the gates too, because that certainly was done by students probably that were hired for some little job or something like that.

MH: Did other people at the mill go to any of demonstration with you?

ML: Oh yeah. Quite a few of my buddies were in Vietnam. I lost two good friends last year. Eddie Mann was a very strong radical demonstrator. Here is a picture of Eddie, right there see? (police photo)

MH: Yep.

ML: With the police running across the street, but that was a different event. John Conroy died too, about two months after Eddie did. Conroy and I went to a demonstration from Youngstown State one night and they were having a coffee klatch and a cook in and a love in, in front of the building up there. So we both went up on the campus, and we were both dressed like steel workers, middle class dressed, with an open t-shirt and good slacks on and so on. We stood there in front of the hall, and everybody went around us. John said you know what's wrong with these guys? They think we are FBI. They probably did. So finally a young fellow I knew, bearded and grimy looking, came around and stared visiting with us. From then on it was alright. That attitude prevailed at almost every demonstration. People thought they could spot the FBI or the CIA, but they couldn't of course. I remember one time Ted and I went to a demonstration in Washington, and we were both wearing a type of print-type raincoat. Just ordinary steel workers, but we were standing waiting for the bus to collect the crowd and bring us home. This woman comes up and says you guys are FBI aren't you? Just because of the way we were dressed. It seemed so ridiculous. Since distrust went through all organizations, because of the police infiltration it was justified and it helped to make organizing difficult. With the amount of money the secret police had and the concern they had about the radicalization of the youth, they had informants every place. Sometimes people would be in a carload going to a demonstration and find out that half of them were on the payroll of some informants. Some very popular cases developed too. One guy up here in New York State at a college up there by the name of Luce, became very well known as an FBI informant.

MH: In the introduction you didn't talk to much about education, you went to high school and that. You said you were a tenant farmer. Where did you get some of your ideas about politics, where did they come from?

ML: Well frankly, I came in contact with a group, a political organization here in Youngstown, called the Socialist Workers Party, which at one time had a great number and was considerably influential. And considered themselves. Staodaton Lynd just gave that to me about two months ago, and it was given to him by one of the professors up at YSU. So I was always interested in politics, even as a young farmer on the farm. After the events that took place, when you're liquidated and your ass kicked out on the street, penniless. I think it sharpens your interest in what's going on. I was very strongly supporting The New Deal. Even on the farm, the farm programs they attempted, help us a little bit. If we could have held on to the home place another year, we never would have lost it. The President put into effect, the mortgage moratorium on mortgage foreclosures. So things like that. You know that political action is very important. My wife and me are able to live in reasonable comfort today, because of political action of the past and Social Security. Us and million like us. It was never passed by the American Banker's Association or the Bar Association or the college professors association, it was passed by the working class. You had the political pressure to put pressure on the government to get something, unemployment, compensation, and social security, medi-care. When I was twenty years old, when I was your age, to talk about things like that was the wildest communist idea you ever heard of. The idea that a worker would sign up and get unemployment compensation, Christ, Phew, how can they afford to pay a guy for not working? That was back in the '30's though, it's unbelievable they have something like

that. So you can see how important politics are to how people live. I became convinced that the system of Capitalism, in the long run it has to be reformed, it has to be changed to a Socialist system. That's not going to happen in my lifetime, Socialism is in a bad state today in a worldwide basis. It's in a bad state and it's peculiar how many times the United States, regards to a Socialist solution for a Capitalist problem. I mentioned Social Security and Medi-Care, now they are talking about further extending health care, and when a couple hundred million dollars is lost by the banking system from bad banking and just plain crooked banking in the last couple years. The government stepped in, and pure Socialism, paid every depositor off in full. If you could just stop and think a little bit of what would happen in this country had they not had that, bank deposit insurance. It slowed probably stopped the worst financial panic this country ever had, but the way it was nobody, especially the small investors, up to a hundred thousand or so saved it didn't lose any money at all. It was a tremendous step forward and the Socialist method for solving a Capitalist problem.

MH: Well how did your Socialist politics tie in during the '50's and '60's with Vietnam?

ML: Well the United States was at war with any country, after World War II, that attempted to establish Socialism in any form. The general line was that any country that established a Socialist government was automatically in league with the Soviet Union, and therefore became an enemy. You can count, almost individually, where the wars took place, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, China, and all across Africa, and all across the Middle East. Wherever the national struggle for independence was combined with the struggle to establish Socialist property, that where the United States was, with military power. Most recently, of course it's been in the countries in Central America, right next door; El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba is under the grip of one of the tightest embargos that the United States has ever enforced. You can see it every day, the refugees from Cuba welcomed with open arms, the refugees from Haiti sent back to an almost certain death. It was obvious that Socialism was up against a mortal enemy, naturally. Capitalist owners are not going to permit the loss of their power or property, because that is where the power lies.

MH: You said earlier something about your kids were drafted?

ML: Yeah.

MH: They didn't go.

ML: They had student deferments.

MH: Yeah.

ML: That's enough on that though.

MH: Yeah you don't want to....

ML: Personally, personally any student that would have approached me for money, to help them

to go to Canada or something like that. I would give it to them, so they wouldn't become a criminal participant in what I considered a criminal war. That's the way I felt about that. It was one long holocaust, that even today it takes lives by the thousands in Vietnam, with the huge number of square miles poisoned with Agent Orange and Herbicide. The last report I had was three of four people are killed every week by unexploded land mines and ordnance left behind by the United States. Another dozen or so are injured. The embargo is still in effect against Vietnam, so the United States is still carrying on war against them. It has been a long holocaust comparable, in my estimation, almost to what the Hitler government did against the Jews. And not only the Jews of course, the first victims of the Hitler- Nazi machine or the Communist Party. They went to the concentration camps before the Jews did. The only forces to stand between Fascism worldwide have been the labor movement. And crushing the labor movement is a prerequisite for establishing Fascism, whether it is a Socialist labor movement, Communist labor movement, or a labor movement like we have in the United States today.

MH: When was your peak of protesting or demonstrating Vietnam? Because you said you had been against it from very early on, the '40's '50's, then you said you attended some demonstrations in D.C. and New York. When was it?

ML: I would say the peak probably came around the same time as the killings at Kent State. The United States invaded Cambodia and then the word came out that the United States had been bombing Cambodia for two or three years secretly, and Laos. The whole thing was due to a lot of secrets about the war came out, and massive demonstrations appeared all over the country at that time. I would guess the peak was about 1970. I think the Kent State killing was May the 4th 1970. The United States began deploying troops out about a year after that. They abolished the draft a year after that. They didn't abolish the draft, but they made it a volunteer Army. But that did an awful lot to take the heat off the younger generation, to abolish the draft. But they had already decided, the government, the United States government, had already decided to pull out of Vietnam. Although I don't think at the time they did, that the South Vietnamese government, they left behind, would overturn the visa, it was 1975.

MH: Did you take part in any protests for Kent and Jackson State? Did you organize anything around here after that happened?

ML: About Kent State or Jackson State?

MH: Yeah.

ML: I can't remember. There probably were some here. Certainly, I had been to meetings concerning the plan of action to take after Kent State and after Jackson State, but participating in the demonstration, I don't remember doing that. I remember going to some demonstrations against the Ku Klux Klan around that same period, they were burning crosses outside of town. Sort of indirectly connected. Usually the Ku Klux Klan was, and still is, was more directed at blacks over whites than anything else.

MH: Are you involved in that too?

ML: Against the Klan?

MH: Yeah, how involved were you in Civil Rights movement?

ML: Well... I was a member of the Local 1330 Civil Rights Committee. The union was involved in the sense that they had an awful lot unfinished work to do in the mills. Even after the union became the majority representative with the workers, there were still many departments in the union that were all white. The unions had a responsibility, some of them took it very seriously, some of them didn't. But then generally on the political level of the union leadership to breakdown is all white on clave within the mill. By the time the mills were destroyed and shut down, they had pretty well accomplished that. The unions had brought a great deal of equality and, you could call it Civil Rights, to the non white working force. Within the process it was difficult. The workers may talk liberal, but when their jobs are threatened, and they think they might have to give up their job to somebody because of some dirty deal, he got because of his race twenty years ago. He'll put up a hell of a fight to save his job. That's what they call reverse discrimination. Finally, with a consent decree about 1972 or '73, the steel union nationally, at least got a major change in contracts and that was eliminated, by large units seniority agreements. If you have worked in a mill or anything like that, you'll understand what a step forward that was. For example, if somebody worked in the open hearth then his seniority was on the open hearth, and he wanted a job in the rolling mills. When he left the open hearth and went to the rolling mills, he became a new man, even if he had twenty years in the open hearth, because that's where his seniority was. With the silent content decree, if you had your plant seniority, which now counted, it opened up departments to minorities that were not previously opened before. Because, even a black worker is not going to give up fifteen years in the labor gang to get a chance at a better job in a rolling mill or something like that, if it means he's going to start there as a new person, and be the first one laid off when the business goes down or something like that. The consent decree was a great Civil Rights victory actually, very bitterly resisted by whites, because they had something to lose, a privileged tradition. We had, in our department, we had little sub-departments, little sub-seniority units. I think one was the guys that supplied carbon gas for the scarfers, there were only about twelve guys working that. When things got tough, some of the guys on the engines, or something like that, would pop back into that department, and they wanted to be in there if that one filled up. It had a little different seniority and you couldn't be bumped in from the outside. Well all at once the company found a way to scarf steel with natural gas instead of carbon. Meanwhile, out went the carbon generator and these jobs go. Then these same guys come out and they want to broaden the seniority, because they were losing their jobs and they wanted to write themselves in some place. So you could see how the struggles took place. In the course, of the struggle generally, the black workers, had a progressive influence on union leadership. They forced them to take up their responsibilities, and try to make at least more equality.

MH: Was there, since you were involved in both the Civil Rights and the Vietnam Anti-War protests was there overlap?

ML: Well it's a funny thing. Politically, it seemed like people who were opposed to the war, were also opposed to discrimination. It's just almost automatic. If you're opposed to the oppression of poor people in the distant world, than you would be opposed to the oppression of poor people next door.

MH: How about the vets? How did you feel about people that went there, Vietnam, and came back?

ML: Oh the vets?

MH: Yeah.

ML: Generally they didn't get... I was a veteran and when we came back we were all heroes you know? I remember I came home on rotation in December, or the last of November, 1943. Just before the Battle of the Bulge broke out, I left the unit and came home on rotation. There were three of us on our way home from Camp Atterberry in Indianapolis. We came from the ship to Indianapolis, then we got new uniforms and our travel papers. We were walking through the Cleveland terminal, in those days, in the railroad days, they had huge crowds in there in the morning. We were changing trains, because I was coming to Youngstown, I forget where the other guys were going, but we had on our combat uniforms and we were carrying our duffel bags and stuff like that. We walked through the crowd that morning, and without even thinking about it, the people stopped and all applauded, applauded you were a hero you know? Well the Vietnamese veterans didn't get that kind of treatment. A lot of them were blamed for being baby killers and assassins, and possibly they were. As a group they were, I consider them victims of the war just as much as the Vietnamese were. The people that demonstrated the war, and lost jobs or went to prison, or had a police record. I consider them just the same as the Vietnam veterans, victims of the war. The war had millions of victims, not all of them were killed.

MH: What about, you were peace counseling?

ML: Well the peace council was a fairly new development here in Youngstown. The peace council sort of sprang into existence, actually Youngstown State, a group from Youngstown State, and the churches had a lot to do with developing the peace council here about, well I would say about the time of the Catholic liberation theology movement reached a height in Central and South America. A great many revolutions were taking place at that time, and at the same time Regan took office in 1980, won the election in '80, took office in '81. With a program to speed up the building of nuclear weapons and double the size of the military and so on. There was a very real concern among, especially among the very educated middle class here, that this country was headed for nuclear war. Then a great deal of sympathy too for the Catholic people, the Catholic nuns and brothers who came up from Central and South America, from El Salvador and from Nicaragua and Chile and places like that. They had a tragic and terrible story to tell and a lot of film to go with it. The meetings were well attended and the peace council just started spreading up voluntarily, and became a substantial organization and remained that

way until the fear, the dominant fear, was the fear of nuclear war. It is pretty well evaporated now, even though the United States is still making three nuclear bombs every day. I don't know what the hell for, but they are doing it. Just trying to keep people working I suppose. The peace council though was a timely movement.

MH: How about some of the other major figures in the anti-Vietnam war movement? Did you have any contacts, since you were against the war from early on, people like Spock and Hayden? What about the SDS? Did you get involved with any of the things these people were?

ML: No, no, in recent years I've come to know Staughton and Alice Lynd quite well. Did you interview them or not?

MH: No.

ML: Did you ever give them any consideration to doing them, because they were not only in the work, they were leaders in the work. So I've gotten to know Staughton and Alice quite well. But anybody else that had prominence, no.

MH: When do you remember protests dying off? When were you a little less active toward the end there?

ML: Well I would say within six months after Kent State a great deal was done to ease the tension here. Mixing it up in Vietnam, start pulling all the American troops out. They didn't eliminate the draft, but they made not such an urgent affair hanging overhead that the draft was taking place. The thing about that, demonstrations dropped off quite rapidly after that.

MH: Major ones as well as locally?

ML: Yeah.

MH: Looking back on it, is there anything you would change about it? Would you have done more?

ML: No, I don't think I would have done any more. I never felt the fate of the world depended on whether I was present, or whether I sat down and wrote a certain article or not. I doubt I would have done any more.

MH: Anything else you want to add about anything that I didn't ask you about that you participated in?

ML: No, I guess that's enough, that's enough for Vietnam. As I said the war started in '42, and the war is still going on here in '93. So who knows?

MH: Have you done anything recently, or since the war ended? Since we left in '73 or '75

when we finally pulled people out of Vietnam what have you done? Since you still seem active.

ML: Well one of the most shocking things that happened after that was the invasion of Vietnam by China. Locally, the political movement there was quite a bit of hostility and activity directed at China, but the feeling that China was acting as a segregate from the United States. There hadn't been a whole lot. The story of the massacre by the Khmer Rouge have kind of tarnished the picture of Vietnam and all in establishing a peaceful Socialist state. Although Cambodia had a much different history and story than Vietnam itself, it was still a hard thing to deal with. The victorious Communist massacred, unnecessarily, an enormous number of people.

MH: Have you done anything since '75 concerning Vietnam?

ML: No, the international interest has been on different things, for example a peaceful demonstration shortly after the military government overthrew Haiti. The demonstration protesting the military dictatorship of Haiti. Right now various peace groups are active in trying to get the United States to lift the embargo against Cuba. Important things like that. This country should not become a victim in the collapse of the Soviet Union, and be forced into starvation. Generally it's viewed in the Socialist movement and the Communist movement, whether you were affiliated with the Soviet Union or not, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was not only an enormous defeat for State but was an enormous defeat for the working class too. In spite of the nature of those regimes, to some degree, the workers had power in those states. All you have to do is to read some of the literature of some of the things that has happened to the workers in East Germany for example since it has been taken over by West Germany. Loss of employment, loss of day care centers for women, the loss of jobs for women, subsidized housing and all that stuff. So in general the current period is one of conservative reaction, you see that in the United States too because of the military action.

MH: Nothing else on Vietnam you can think of?

ML: Not now.

MH: Okay.