

Dear Sir,

Last Thursday (April 20) we heard Hall Greenland and Brian Aarons tell us about the war in Indo China. I agree with their statement that the Yanks should get right out of the whole area immediately and that we support the speedy victory of the Indo-Chinese people for self-determination. But how will this victory come about in reality? The Indo-Chinese people will not stop fighting. We have seen this over decades. But they need military support. We know where this has been mainly coming from – the Soviet Union and China. (According to the recent official Australian Government estimate aid to Vietnam has totalled \$1000 million from the Soviet Union and \$300 million from the People's Republic of China.)

So I felt listening to these student revolutionaries(?), last Thursday, that maybe while expounding left wing ideas on the war, they could not help resorting to that familiar cloak of modern respectability, by attacking the established socialist countries which contribute so much to the national liberation struggles of the world. Socialist countries, like all other phenomena are not above criticism. But here we are dealing with a situation in which the socialist countries are providing selfless and essential aid to countries fighting for their liberation. Why not give COMPLETE support to the Indo Chinese people by wishing them a quick victory and congratulating the Soviet Union and China on giving so much support and hope that this aid will be continued.

Lee Brown

Dear Editors,

Lee Brown's criticisms (*Tharunka*, May 2) of speeches by Hall Greenland and myself at the April 20 Anti-War Rally raise an important issue, although she successfully dodges any real confrontation with this issue. She accuses us of adopting a "familiar cloak of modern respectability" by attacking the "established socialist countries" at the same time as we attacked US aggression in Vietnam. Her reasoning is that, since the Soviet Union and China provide the main military supplies to the Vietnamese people, then we can give "COMPLETE support" to the Indo-Chinese people only by 'wishing them a quick victory' and 'congratulating the Soviet Union and China on giving so much support and hope that this aid will be continued.'

It is interesting that NOWHERE in her letter does she mention the nature of our criticisms of the "socialist countries" – in fact she conveys the definite impression that we must have attacked them for supplying aid! I for one, and I am sure Hall Greenland (would basically agree, certainly support the sending of aid (of all forms) to the Vietnamese people by the Soviet Union China and anybody else, and I certainly hope that SUFFICIENT aid will continue. Whether the aid is or will be as much as the Vietnamese want is a matter for speculation – only the Vietnamese know that. However, there is good evidence that both North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government in the south are far from happy with the present role of the Soviet and Chinese leaders, who have met with Nixon while the most savage bombing of the whole war is being let loose by the US Air Force.

Be that as it may, the main point, carefully avoided by Lee, is that our criticisms were directed largely at the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and similar examples of behaviour that is far from socialist on the part of the leaders of the 'established socialist countries'. Moreover, both of us made this criticism in the CONTEXT of arguing that

everybody should support the right of all nations to self-determination, and oppose any use of big power might, from whatever quarter, to suppress the peoples of small nations who happen to want to run their own country in their own way. Moreover, I stated my opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in replying to specific points raised in a DLP-front leaflet, and 95% of this reply was devoted to the Vietnam issue itself (as Lee well knows). I would further argue that we give MOST support to the Vietnamese PRECISELY by fighting for the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs of other people.

The question is, does our support for SOME actions of the Soviet Union and China mean that we must withhold criticism of OTHER actions. NO. Our support must be critical, not slavish, otherwise we are no better than those who justify the crimes in Vietnam under the slogan "My country right or wrong." It is no answer to "Australia firsters" to become a "Soviet firster" or a "China firster", and it is certainly not honest, rational or revolutionary to do so.

Lee Brown questions whether Hall and myself are revolutionary. She is quite entitled to do so, but she does not state her grounds for doing so (the strong implication is that to be revolutionary you have to completely support the Soviet Union and China). If she will state her criteria for being revolutionary we can continue the discussion. At the same time she might like to tell us whether she supports the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the shooting of the Polish workers and the suppression of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union. Then we can have an honest debate about revolutionary principles.

Brian Aarons

Dear Editors,

In reply to Brian Aarons assertion that there is so-called "good evidence" that the Vietnamese people are not satisfied with the amount of aid (\$1000 million from the Soviet Union and \$3000 million from the Peoples Republic of China) they are receiving from the socialist countries; might I ask what is this "good evidence" (or any kind of evidence) that Brian may supply to support his claim.

Brians's other queries could be answered if he re-read my letter to *Tharunka* 2.5.72. I said that "socialist countries like all other phenomena are not above criticism". Socialist countries naturally do make errors and therefore criticism and self-criticism will be forthcoming. However, I feel that Brian uses his criticism of socialist criticisms in an opportunist, respectability seeking fashion not for constructive improvement.

I think this lack of a constructive approach was shown at the April 20 Anti War Rally. True maybe Brian did have to reply to D.L.P. allegations. But both Brian and Hall Greenland dropped their very trendy cliches on attack on the socialist countries numerous times. It was not the criticism that made me suspect, but the number of times that criticism was voiced, particular considering the meeting was suppose to be a condemnation of U.S. for the increased actions in Vietnam.

I state again that of course criticism of the socialist countries is natural. But it is the way one goes about it. As I stated at the beginning of this letter the point of criticism is to help rectify mistakes, side by side with positive solidarity attitudes towards existing socialist countries. I trust that Brian and I agree that the correct way forward is working to build international unity for socialism and peace. As we know this will only come about through a united international working class movement. International solidarity is the only way the Vietnamese people or any body in the whole world will achieve their goals.

Lee Brown