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'We Are with You, Vietnam': Transnational Solidarities in Socialist Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia

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Abstract
Global solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles – which state socialist regimes in eastern Europe sought to inculcate in their populations from the 1950s onwards – constitutes a little studied form of modern transnational political socialization. This article explores this theme by analysing how three socialist countries – Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia – attempted to build mass solidarity with the Vietnamese in the 1960s and 1970s. First, the article examines the political uses of transnationalism for socialist regimes in the 1960s, as the struggle for socialism in the so-called 'Third World', and support for such struggles in the West, allowed the socialist East to construct powerful images of a world turning towards its own political and moral values. Second, it explores how socialist citizens themselves re-interpreted transnational solidarity for their own ends, turning its language into a criticism of foreign policy, or state socialism at home; or using the opportunities it provided to challenge the state's right to control the public sphere. In doing so, the article suggests that we cannot understand such solidarity movements simply as top-down impositions from Moscow or national capitals; rather, they also reveal important aspects of state-society relations.

Keywords
Hungary, Poland, protest, Vietnam, war, Yugoslavia

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The Vietnam War was a vital component of the political socialization of a generation of political activists across the globe.[1] While its reception by a younger generation in many western countries has been documented, studies dealing with the war in an eastern European context have mainly focused on socialist bloc-Vietnamese relations in diplomatic or high political terms.[2] The emergence of official movements in the state socialist east of Europe, and the popular response to them, has been little addressed.[3] This article – drawing on research into solidarity from three state socialist countries – analyses this impact 'at home'.[4]

The absence of interest in eastern European anti-imperialist activism generally, or Vietnam solidarity specifically, may be due to the fact that 'authentic' transnational activism is assumed to be bottom up and challenging to the status quo. In the West new solidarity committees – established first during the Algerian War but then developing most fully for Vietnam – illustrated a new spontaneous, extra-parliamentary form of political expression amongst a younger generation that challenged the postwar political consensus. Their equivalents in eastern Europe, by contrast, appeared only as appendages to official policy and propaganda – as merely state-driven, controlled, routinized and emptied of meaningful political content. Movements directed from national capitals, in some cases under the influence of Moscow, and lacking extensive physical linkages across borders, could only be inauthentic imitations of supposedly genuine movements elsewhere.

Such assumptions can only take us so far. Studying state-controlled transnational movements in themselves can tell us much about political expression and the relationship between state and society in 1960s eastern Europe, and exploring three different national movements – in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland – enables us to explore the extent of diversity and uniformity across the region. Moreover, we argue that the Vietnam war in the socialist bloc had broader social relevance that went beyond official politics. Its impact was particularly strongly felt amongst a younger generation, where it generated new internationalist outlooks, forms of political participation and critiques of state socialism. As such, it provides an insight into a peculiar and understudied form of transnational identification: one produced by regimes which gave their citizens very limited mobility or possibility to build political connections across borders, but nevertheless

1 On the international reception, see A.W. Daum, L.C. Gardner and W. Mausbach, 'Introduction', in *America, the Vietnam War and the World* (New York, NY 2003), 3–4; C. Goscha and M. Vaïsse (eds), *La guerre du Vietnam et l'Europe, 1963–1973* (Brussels 2003).

2 I.V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago, IL 1996); Z. Szőke, 'Magyarország és a vietnami háború, 1962–1975', *Századok*, 144,1 (2010), 47–97.

3 In Goscha and Vaisse, et al. *La guerre*, on the reception of Vietnam in Europe, only two out of 32 chapters deal with the socialist East. On western Europe, see e.g. Q. Slobodian, *Foreign Front. Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC and London 2012), Chapter 3; on France, C. Kalter, *Die Entdeckung der Dritten Welt. Dekolonisierung und neue radikale Linke in Frankreich* (Frankfurt am Main/M. 2011).

4 More in: M. Klimke and J. Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe. A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (Basingstoke 2008); N. Frei, *1968: Jugendrevolte und globaler Protest* (Munich 2008); M. Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton NJ and Oxford 2010).

furnished them with a very powerful set of transnational images and discourses. These in turn could be used to construct a new political language through which alternative visions could be articulated – ones which critiqued existing state socialism, while simultaneously bolstering their state's own novel use of transnational appeals.[5]

Eastern European solidarity with those who fought against US or western imperialism in the extra-European world developed slowly in the postwar period. Following the takeover of eastern European countries by Communist parties in the late 1940s, state-led movements began in earnest in the early 1950s, to encourage domestic support for the struggle of Korean Communists, and with the Vietnamese in the First Indochina War. For socialist Yugoslavia, after the split with the Soviet Union in 1948, solidarity with global struggles also became part of a quest for international identity free of bloc influence, and was crucial in articulating an independence of action which conferred legitimacy on the regime at home too.[6] This was strengthened with the discovery of non-aligned partners, and states and movements in the 'Third World' fighting what was left of the European empires, or superpower interference, around the time of the Bandung Conference (1955). Visits between leaders became increasingly common: Ho Chi Minh came to Yugoslavia and Hungary in August 1957; Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Münnich visited Hanoi in 1959.[7] Linkages between these regions were reinforced in the late 1950s. These were encouraged and shaped by the synchronous processes of decolonization in the 'global South', and the pursuit of new types of socialist practice in the wake of Stalinism in Europe. As some newly independent states in Africa, south-east Asia and the Caribbean appeared to be choosing socialist or non-capitalist paths of development, so eastern European states stepped up their development of economic and political linkages.[8] Hungary, additionally, looked to new socialist nations of the developing world as a way of establishing trade links and diplomatic relations that followed their isolation after the suppression of the 1956 Uprising. Earlier Stalinist tenets about backward southern regions waiting to be liberated were replaced with a recognition that decolonizing and decolonized countries were capable of producing revolutions of their own, and increasingly heroic images of 'progressive struggles' of the decolonizing world became an integral part of domestic mass culture too. From 1959, Hungarian party leaders began

5 The extent of this of course varied: Yugoslavia was more open to these linkages than Poland and Hungary, as we shall explore below.

6 See R. Niebuhr, 'Nonalignment as Yugoslavia's Answer to Bloc Politics', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 13,1 (2011), 146–79.

7 Z. Szőke, 'Delusion or Reality? Secret Hungarian Diplomacy during the Vietnam War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12,4 (2010), 130.

8 O.A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge 2005), 166–7; A. Hilger, 'The Soviet Union and India: the Khrushchev Era and its Aftermath until 1966' in A. Hilger et al. (eds.), *Indo-Soviet Relations Collection: the Khrushchev Years. Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP)* (February 2009), 1–14. Available at www.phisn.ethz.ch (accessed 17 November 2011)

to appreciate their didactic value in inspiring a new generation towards socialism, and the contemporary anti-colonial struggle became a mandatory part of Communist Youth education for the first time. In Yugoslavia in the early 1960s anti-imperialism became an increasingly important part of the official and popular politics. In February 1961, the first major public demonstrations after the Second World War spontaneously erupted in response to the execution of Patrice Lumumba; September 1961 then saw the culmination of Yugoslavia's new 'Third World policy' as Belgrade hosted the first conference of the non-aligned movement.

Vietnam represented an escalation of these developments. From the mid-1950s onwards, eastern European states increasingly presented the battle between socialism and 'fascistic' capitalism not only in national or European terms, but as a global struggle: the Vietnam War became *the* conflict which demonstrated this. It also represented a renewal of the socialist struggle, providing eastern European political elites with powerful and heroic images of peasant and worker revolutionaries defending their homeland against the greatest capitalist power – this, they hoped, could potentially mobilize a younger generation at home. The Hungarian press, for example, often presented the Vietnamese struggle as an inspiring revival of the Soviet revolution in the jungles of south-east Asia.[9] Vietnamese resistance was considered a useful exemplar in a world where anti-imperialist movements – as in the case of Latin American guerrilla movements or the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) – were often criticized for their abandonment of proper leftist leadership and co-operation with the masses, and their too hasty recourse to violence.[10] The Vietnamese struggle was, by contrast, led by a Communist party who were regarded as reliable and mature custodians of national and popular anti-imperialist sentiment, having embraced responsible socialist construction and sought (unsuccessfully) to avoid conflict.[11]

Campaigns to express solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese were created across eastern Europe. These were both an outgrowth of the earlier anti-imperialist mobilizations by these states, and a significant extension of them. Movements were built that, in most countries, were nationally co-ordinated and penetrated the everyday lives of populations to a greater extent than before, and were much longer-lasting. In early 1965, mass demonstrations began in Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia, primarily as responses to the intensification of US bombing in Vietnam.[12] Unlike the western world, where structures to express solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles were an expression of a new alternative political sphere outside conventional parliamentary politics, these protests developed as part of official initiatives. In Poland, for instance, a

9 See e.g., Editorial: 'Our Common Cause', *Népszabadság* (1 May 1966); 'MG', 'November 7. Ünnepén', *Ifjúkommunista* [Young Communist] (October 1966).

10 Che Guevara was particularly singled out for public criticism. His call in 1966 to launch the violence of 'many Vietnams' across the world was criticized in the eastern bloc.

11 For such a representation, see B. Szabó, 'Két hét Vietnamban' [Two weeks in Vietnam], *Ifjúkommunista* (June 1961), 68–70.

12 In Poland, these began on 9 February, in Yugoslavia on 17 February, and in Hungary on 15 March 1965.

vast range of social and political organizations – such as the National Unity Front, the Socialist Youth Association, the Polish Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa and Asia, the National Peace Committee, the Association of Combatants for Freedom and Democracy, and the Central Council of Trade Unions – were mobilized to bring the nation behind Vietnam. Official protests began on 9 February 1965, mostly attended by workers of the largest Polish enterprises to protest against US aggression.[13] In the following two months a wave of anti-US demonstrations swept the country. Urban and rural residents, workers, civil servants, farmers, doctors, teachers, school pupils, academics and university students were all involved in protests. Rallies and meetings were held in factories, construction sites, schools, research institutes, government offices and on public squares.

The Vietnamese struggle also penetrated mass culture. Already in the late 1950s in Hungary and Poland, Vietnam was presented through images of heroic young people who had broken with colonial tyranny, and as a pioneering country which had adventurously begun the construction of socialism. 'Coffee table' travel books, filled with inspiring photography of 'responsible' socialist construction and resistance 'in the jungles of Vietnam', were produced.[14] Alongside this, a broader interest in south-east Asian culture was officially supported: illustrated works exploring the traditions of art and poetry in the region were published.[15] By 1965, this was accompanied by an intensification of propaganda across eastern Europe that focused on the horror of the US bombing of civilians. Stories of children's suffering in particular, alongside the cruel interrogations of POWs by US Army officers, were regularly presented in the press, and in travelling exhibitions. As in the West, the war produced new forms of popular protest music. One of the most viewed Yugoslav TV shows dedicated to rock'n'roll, *Koncert za ludi mladi svet*, featured anti-war songs. These often focused on the perspective of brutalized US perpetrators rather than on the Vietnamese. One of the best known songs featured a Yugoslav and African singer, and told the story of the US soldier Bobby Smith who killed mothers and their children.[16] Numerous songs of Vietnamese solidarity were issued as LP records too.[17] A historical anthology of the Vietnamese poetry (*Druže, tvoja kuća gori*) published in 1968 included contemporary anti-war

13 'Protesty społeczeństwa polskiego' [Protests of Polish society], *Trybuna Ludu* (10 February 1965).
14 See for example I. Patkó and M. Rév, *Vietnam. Fényképekkel gazdagon illusztrált útikönyv* [Vietnam. A Richly Illustrated Travel Guide with Photos] (Budapest 1960); D. Passent, *Co dzień wojna* [War every day] (Warsaw 1968).
15 See, for example, *A víz meg a hal. Vietnami költők antológiája* [The Water and the Fish: An Anthology of Vietnamese Poets] (Budapest 1956); I. Patkó and M. Rév, *Vietnam művészete* [The Art of Vietnam, (1967). The latter was translated into multiple languages, including French, German and Polish (as *Sztuka Wietnamu*).
16 Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz9_UFfJcpQ (accessed 7 October 2012). This focus on the suffering of Americans was also apparent in the Hungarian György Kárpáti's incongruously named film *Teenager Party*, which played across Hungary in 1967 and featured an American mother mourning for sons lost in Vietnam.
17 Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), 142–465, 'Nedelja solidarnosti sa borbom vijetnamskog naroda' (15–22 November 1969). Croatian singer Ivica Percl performed a number of anti-war and protest songs, the most famous of which was '1966'.

works, as national traditions became linked to longer term anti-imperialist histories.[18] In Hungary, Miklós Vámos and Miklós Haraszti, members of the radical music group *Gerilla,* were commissioned by the Communist Youth in 1966/7 to produce such music: they wrote the terror of young US soldiers dropped into the Vietnamese jungles for the first time in 'The Plane Has Gone' (*Elment a repülő*), and explored the politics of US imperialism in 'Johnson's Tour' ('*Johnson kirándulása'*).

Similarities in solidarity across the socialist East have led some to place great emphasis on transnational synchronization from above.[19] The precise level of co-ordination is hard to ascertain, in particular because the state organs charged with organizing such activities were required to represent them as 'organic'. Nevertheless, we know – for Warsaw Pact countries at least – that Moscow would regularly send out instructions to mobilise trade union, youth, women's and student movements for campaigns.[20] Co-ordination often took place at the level of youth organizations too: the resolutions of the 9th IUS Congress, which was held in Ulan Bator 26 March–8 April 1967, called upon all student organizations to protest, organize meetings, marches, demonstrations, petitions, exhibitions and film screenings (e.g. The Mekong on Fire', 'Children Accuse…').[21] At the same time, the Soviet Union was limited in its capacity to exercise control over national responses to the Vietnam War in eastern Europe. This should be understood in the context of the Sino–Soviet split: the Kremlin often withdrew from leadership roles – mediating in peace talks for instance – for fear of further antagonizing the Chinese, who advocated a much more radical approach to the conflict, and were frequently critical of the limited support offered by Moscow.[22] The unusual freedom of manoeuvre this generated enabled Warsaw Pact members such as Hungary and Poland both to establish their own peace initiatives in the international arena and to construct nationally-specific versions of solidarity at home.

There were significant divergences in national solidarity movements established in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia. This reflected these states' divergent

18 Vietnamese poetry 'from the fifteenth century to Ho Chi Minh' was translated and by some of the most famous Yugoslav poets and writers, in 'Poezija Vijetnama na našem jeziku', *Politika*, (21 July 1968), 19.

19 For an emphasis on controlled solidarity from above, see Gaiduk, *Soviet Union*, 64; X. Liu and V. Mastny (eds), *China and Eastern Europe, 1960s–1980s. Proceedings of the International Symposium: Reviewing the History of Chinese-East European Relations from the 1960s to the 1980s. Beijing, 24–26 March 2004*, Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik und Konfliktforschung, 72 (Zürich 2004), especially 56–7, 62.

20 I.V. Gaiduk, 'The Soviet Union Faces the Vietnam War', in Christopher Goscha and Maurice Vaisse (eds), *La Guerre du Vietnam et L 'Europe* (Brussels 2003),195–6; László Nagy, La Hongrie face á la guerre du Vietnam' in Goscha and Vaisse, *La Guerre*, 203–12.

21 AJ, 145–12, 1967, Važnije rezolucije IX Kongresa Međunarodnog saveza studenata koje su donesene prilikom održavanja Kongresa u Ulan Batoru.

22 L. Crump, 'The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered. Inquiries into the Evolution of an Underestimated Alliance, 1960–1969', PhD dissertation, University of Utrecht (2013), 164.

post-Stalinist paths, different attempts at legitimization, and their widely varying levels of openness towards the West. These differences – as we shall explore below – played a significant role in determining their popular resonance: in those places where a younger generation perceived itself to be 'authentically' part of a global movement, solidarity initiatives were able to generate high levels of enthusiasm. Poland stands at one extreme – the most nationally-oriented and least popularly resonant. Here youth participation was largely – although not exclusively – confined to centrally controlled demonstrations. At the other end of the spectrum was Yugoslavia: the most transnational in form, and the most broadly politically engaging. Here elites enabled students and intellectuals to engage extensively with the western New Left and international student organizations, and a highly developed radical leftist culture amongst the young expressed itself in the largest anti-US public protests in eastern Europe. In Hungary, where elites remained loyal to the Soviet Union, this opening up remained more limited. Here mobilization occurred mostly through official youth organizations, although some grass-roots initiatives professing 'genuine revolutionary solidarity', particularly within elite universities, could be observed too.

In Poland, Vietnam solidarity was very national in form. From the early 1960s, nationalist traditions were gaining increasing acceptance within elite circles of the party. A younger wing cemented its rise to influence by attacking the older postwar elite as Jewish and anti-national as they sought to create a party that appeared Polish in form: this culminated in 1968 with the antisemitic purges. This 'turn' also meant that the party reconciled itself with the nationalist traditions of the Home Army – the force which played the greatest role in resisting the Germans in the Second World War, but had nevertheless been sidelined and its members persecuted as 'reactionaries' in the immediate postwar era. In this context, solidarity was primarily presented as an act of empathy between two *nations* who understood each other deeply because of a common experience of suffering at the hands of foreign oppressors. Regular comparisons were made with Poland's misery under German occupation in the Second World War. On 1 September 1966, for example, Stanisław Kociołek, the first secretary of PZPR Warsaw Committee, explained in a speech why the citizens of the Polish capital could directly emphasize with the situation in south-east Asia:

> 27 years ago, Nazi Germany began the creation of 'the new order'. We remember and we'll never forget what happened then .... In distant and heroic Vietnam, under the bombs dropped from U.S. planes, people are dying, people who love their country and independence. We know it well from our own history. We fully understand our Vietnamese brothers who fight for freedom and sovereignty.[23]

23 'Nigdy więcej września 1939 r'. [Never again September 1939], *Trybuna Ludu* (2 September 1966). On a similar argument in the GDR, see G. Wernicke, 'The World Peace Council and the Anti-war Movement in East Germany', in A.W. Daum et al., *America, the Vietnam War*, 318–19.

This comparison was embedded at an everyday level. Vietnamese delegations were taken to sites that had been central to the Warsaw Uprising against the Germans;[24] workers at the 'Warsaw Ironworks' were encouraged to make such connections at public meetings in 1966;[25] elsewhere, the Polish press reported that wartime commemorations could 'spontaneously' became demonstrations of solidarity for the Vietnamese struggle.[26]

Polish solidarity was also the least transnational. Polish elites certainly presented their solidarity movement as part of a broader global phenomenon – state mouthpiece *Trybuna Ludu* suggested that Poles took part in an international anti-US movement that brought east and west together, and to make the point synchronized Polish protests with those of Western youth. However, there was virtually no official attempt actually to link up movements across the Iron Curtain. Poland was much less open than either Hungary or Yugoslavia before the early to mid-1970s, and far fewer links with the western New Left or supporters of the Vietnamese developed amongst a younger generation.[27] Nor did the Polish sections of the western anti-Communist Radio Free Europe seek to educate Poland about western student movements, focusing on domestic Polish issues rather than trying to 'pierce the Iron Curtain'.[28] Amongst students at elite universities, supporting anti-US protests and the Vietnamese struggle was much more commonly taken to imply that one was 'pro-Soviet' than was the case in Hungary or Yugoslavia.[29] Indeed, this may have partly been due to the fact that in Poland activists could be suspicious of their state's claim that the Vietnamese struggle had a great resonance amongst progressive western youth. Adam Ringer – a prominent student protestor in 1968 at Warsaw Polytechnic – recalled that he had disbelieved reports of large anti-war movements in the West. It was only when he was forced into exile that he discovered that such large 'authentic' protests had actually existed:

> I emigrated, and one of the biggest shocks for me was that the war in Vietnam really existed and was really important. Because, of course, in '68, on Poland's TV, radio and in the newspapers Vietnam was talked about all the time, but . . . we thought that this was one big blatant lie.[30]

24 'Poparcie i pomoc dla walczącego Wietnamu' [Support and help for struggling Vietnam], *Trybuna Ludu* (27 February 1968).

25 'Społeczeństwo polskie protestuje przeciwko bombardowaniu miast DRW' [Polish society protests against the bombardment of DRV towns], *Trybuna Ludu* (18 December 1966).

26 'Manifestacja antywojenna na polach historycznej bitwy' [Anti-war demonstration at the field of the historical battle], *Trybuna Ludu* (15 August 1966).

27 The children of socialist elites – such as Karol Modzelewski or Adam Michnik – could travel westwards in the early 1960s. However, the average number of people who were allowed to go to the West ('capitalist countries') 'privately' was very low, below 50,000 per year in 1965–9. There was a tenfold increase after 1971; D. Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski 1949–1989* [The Country with no exit? Migration from Poland 1949–1989] (Warsaw 2010), 486–7.

28 This was the policy of Jan Nowak-Jeziorański (1914–2005), who, in the period 1952–76, was the director of Polish section of Radio Free Europe.

29 Interview with Jerzy Diatłowicki, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 16 November 2009.

30 Interview with Adam Ringer, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 25 July 2009; Interview with Władysław Bibrowski, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Toruń, 14 October 2009. Bibrowski only began to

Nationalist interpretations of solidarity could be found elsewhere in the region: supporters of anti-imperialist movements in the decolonizing world often argued that eastern Europeans were capable of a special empathy given their own earlier experience of national liberation from Habsburg, Russian or Ottoman Empires. Yet such strongly nationalistic official interpretations found in Poland were absent in Hungary and Yugoslavia. In Hungary, for instance, a new popular anti-imperialism from the late 1950s was instigated primarily to counter the inward-looking anti-Communist nationalism which elites believed had precipitated the 1956 Uprising. When protestors did make links between Hungarian 'freedom struggles', particularly those of 1848 revolution, they were clamped down on.

Solidarity in Hungary was shaped too by a partial cultural and economic opening up to the West (its 'Windows to the West' policy) from 1966 onwards. The National Council of Hungarian Youth were instructed to develop links with western organizations,[31] and local solidarity committees could be twinned with local activists in the USA. Some Budapest groups were twinned with those in Wisconsin, for example.[32] The Hungarian Communist Youth League also sought to forge a leading international role for itself, presenting socialist civilization as committed to peace and humanity in a manner that imperialist and capitalist countries could not claim – thus asserting their moral right to shape a transnational solidarity.[33] In April 1966, for instance, the National Committee of Hungarian Student Organisations held the conference 'We Accuse Imperialism!' which brought together students from 54 countries, including those from Western Europe.[34] In November 1972, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Hungarian Scientific Peace Council organised an international conference on US war crimes, which sought to remind the world about the eastern bloc's commitment to peace, and the further inhuman militarization and barbarization of the United States of America that Vietnam had brought.[35]

Hungary also opened up in cultural terms – but mainly to expose socialist youth to a new progressive generation whose radical anti-imperialist politics demonstrated that even the West was now turning towards the ideals of the Soviet camp. In the Hungarian youth press, the influence of anti-imperialism at

take Vietnamese solidarity seriously after emigrating to Australia and becoming involved with the anarchist movement there.

31 *Ifjúkommunista* (July 1967).

32 See for instance, the links between the Wisconsin committee for ending the war in Vietnam and Budapest-based Vietnam Solidarity, in 'A Szolidaritásért', *Közgazdász. A Marx Károly Egyetem Közgazdaságtudományi Egyetem lapja* (26 March 1966). By June 1968, the GDR National Vietnam Committee was establishing contacts with solidarity committees in Belgium, Britain, Japan, Netherlands, Scandinavia, West Berlin and West Germany. See Wernicke, 'World Peace Council', 309.

33 For this appeal across the Iron Curtain by Soviets, see the English language *US Aggression in Vietnam – Crimes Against Peace and Humanity* (Novosti 1968).

34 Also note that in January 1967, a joint seminar to discuss 'Coexistence and the Third World' was held in Prague with members of the university committee of the Czechoslovak Youth Union and the West German SDS attending.

35 The conference followed the publication of the report of the Commision of Enquiry for war crimes in Indochina in October of that year. The proceedings were published as *Des Savants sur le Vietnam* (Budapest 1972).

universities, or in new protest music, was often reported on.[36] Readings of anti-war poetry by Western authors were organized by the Communist Youth League. The lyrics of Bob Dylan were published with guides that translated their complex imagery into Marxist or anti-imperialist terms.[37] Yet this 'opening up' also revealed a part of radical western anti-imperialism of which socialist states were very critical – they were often presented as politically irresponsible for their abandonment of Communist leadership. Moreover, the presence of hippies in the anti-war movement was often highlighted to emphasize the supposedly dissolute and self-centred individualism of western protest.

Yugoslavia was the most open. Unlike Warsaw Pact members Poland and Hungary, its non-aligned foreign policy had opened it up to 'both Wests' – the capitalist one, and a new leftist one. Indeed, the majority of westerners who visited in the mid-1960s did not arrive as part of this common anti-imperialist world, but were rather movie stars or jazz musicians – even the Apollo 11 crew visited Belgrade.[38] Nevertheless, the Vietnam War played its part in creating links with progressive Western artists and intellectuals too. Western (mostly American) anti-war culture became central to a growing anti-imperialist mass culture on TV, film and in museums.[39] Joan Baez visited Belgrade on her European tour, with the support of the Yugoslav ambassador to the United States of America,[40] appearing on television, and ensuring that her and Bob Dylan's radical songs influenced Yugoslav musicians. American avant-garde theatres (La Mama, Living Theatre, Bread and Puppet Theatre) performed anti-war works at the annual International Belgrade Theatre Festival (BITEF) in the late 1960s.[41] Here even western hippies were celebrated in influential daily newspapers for their fierce devotion to the Vietnamese cause.[42]

In Yugoslavia, the Vietnam issue played a particularly important role in that it enabled elites to assert a different solidarity to that encouraged by Moscow, and in doing so stress its own role as a global leader. On the world stage, Tito used his position as one of the most prominent figures in the non-aligned movement to play the role of mediator and peace maker between the US, Soviet and non-aligned leaders.[43] At home, elites encouraged the image of Yugoslavia as a progressive

36 See e.g. 'Diákmozgalmak a fejlett tőkésországokban', *Ifjúkommunista* (July 1968); 'Az ifjúsági mozgalmak fellendülése a tőkésországokban', *Ifjúkommunista* (October 1968); 'Rudi Dutschke és a nyugatnémet ''nyugtalan ifjúság''', *Kritika* (June 1968).

37 'Merre van Vietnám?', *Ifjúkommunista* (April 1968).

38 R. Vučetić, 'Komadić Meseca za druga Tita (Poseta posade Apolo 11 Jugoslaviji)', in R. Radić (ed.), *1968 – četrdeset godina posle* (Belgrade 2008), 313–38.

39 On the welcome for western anti-imperialists, see e.g. N. Abrams, 'An Unofficial Cultural Ambassador. Arthur Miller and the Cultural Cold War', in P. Romijn, G. Scott-Smith and J. Segal (eds), *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam 2012), 25.

40 R. Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam. Amerikanizacija jugoslovenske popularne kulture šezdesetih godina XX veka* (Belgrade 2012), 217.

41 For more, see ibid. 268–91.

42 On hippies in Yugoslavia, ibid., 344–50.

43 The Belgrade conference of the 15 non-aligned ambassadors, held on 15 March 1965, was designed to sure up support for this Yugoslav policy, and assert the country's leadership role.

country where Cold War divisions could be transcended. In this context, Yugoslav artists were able to contribute to a transnational anti-war counterculture. In January 1968, for instance, the Student Experimental Theatre from Zagreb put on the premiere of *Viet Rock*, a rock musical by Megan Terry[44]; in May 1969, the musical *Hair* opened in Belgrade – the fifth national premiere after New York, London, Paris and Munich.[45] Here international student bodies and other western solidarity organisations were welcomed and new networks formed. This stands in stark contrast to other parts of eastern Europe, where western initiatives were viewed as undermining state socialist-led solidarity, and were usually rebuffed.[46] In Yugoslavia, the Marxist journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School became important spaces for prominent new leftists and intellectuals (such as Ernst Bloch, Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas). Although best remembered for its participants' condemnation of the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet, GDR, Hungarian, Polish and Bulgarian troops, the School also provided an important international platform to express transnational solidarity with Vietnam: in 1967, for example, US participants organized panel discussions on the war.[47] The most important student conference was held in Ljubljana on 25 August 1968, organized by the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace (ICDP) and the German SDS as a 'working meeting of leading student and youth activists who wish to cement their links of solidarity with their comrades in other countries'.[48] Representatives from West Germany, France, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Canada and the USA came together to discuss the 'Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Capitalist Struggles and Student Revolts', and draft an international action program.[49]

Solidarity efforts were most commonly directed at the young. In Hungary, for instance, the Communist Youth claimed that in 1966 alone it had mobilized 800,000 youths (out of a population of 10 million) to participate in solidarity in over 120,000 demonstrations and events. It also reported that their travelling exhibition ('We Are with You, Vietnam!') was visited by over 100,000 young people in 10 counties.[50] Yet this was not only done to heighten an appropriate transnational

44 'Zagreb: Vijetnam na pozorišnoj sceni', *Politika* (20 January 1968), 8.
45 Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam,* 270.
46 For example, when in February 1968 Rudi Dutschke tried to set up International Congress on Vietnam, the GDR rejected it as they feared the influence of western activists, that solidarity committees would become covers for challenging socialist countries and because the US New Left – in the form of the SDS – and the Cubans were sending delegations; Wernicke, 'World Peace Council', 312–13.
47 They were Norman Birnbaum (New York), Arnold Kaufmann (Ann Arbor), Albert William Levi (St. Louis), Steven Marcus (New York) and Robert Tucker (Princeton); see: http://osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/77-2-39.shtml. (accessed 18 November 2014). For more on Praxis and the Korčula Summer School, see: D. Olujić Oluja and K. Stojaković (eds), *Praxis: društvena kritika i humanistički socijalizam* (Belgrade 2012).
48 Klimke, 'West Germany', in Klimke et al. (eds.), *1968 in Europe*, 100.
49 Ibid., 100.
50 *Adatok és tények a Magyar Kommunista Ifjúsági Szövetség tevékenységéről: 1964–1967* (Budapest 1967), 9. Thanks to Bálint Tolmár for this information.

sensibility: it also signalled a concern amongst elites that a new youth internationalism – influenced by the western New Left or by anti-Soviet sentiment at home – needed regulating. Indeed, authorities regularly carried out surveys, targeted most commonly at universities – where, it was believed, these sentiments were most commonly incubated – to determine whether appropriate forms of internationalism were being expressed. In Hungary, these revealed a clear anti-Americanism and identification with anti-imperial struggles abroad amongst a younger generation, alongside a strong dislike of Soviet influence closer to home.[51] Below, we will explore these states' desire to regulate the solidarity of the young through official initiatives, and the new spaces and languages that these anti-imperialist movements in fact provided for alternative political expression. The conflicts these developments generated were central to the story of eastern European states' anti-imperialist mobilizations in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Socialist states attempted to control these movements very closely, and asserted their right to restrict political expression in the public sphere. The public demonstration of solidarity had to take place at state-sponsored events: in Warsaw, for example, the annual First of May parade – to which Vietnamese students in Poland were invited to contribute from 1967 – was viewed as the appropriate place.[52] On an everyday level, it was a commitment to a responsible solidarity in professional settings that was most widely encouraged. Simply by working in a factory in Budapest, Belgrade or Warsaw one could be contributing to the anti-imperial struggle: this idea was made most explicit in so-called 'solidarity shifts', where workers would contribute extra hours and 'voluntarily' donate their extra wages to the Vietnamese people. During 'Solidarity Week' in 1967, over a million Yugoslavs made donations, and many workers gave 2 per cent of their earnings to the 'Vietnam fund'. The workplace was often the space for actual physical encounters: in the late 1960s, twinning between Hungarian and Polish enterprises and Vietnamese 'sister factories', was established. Exchanges took place, for instance, between the workers of Budapest's 'Red' Csepel works and Hanoi's Trang Hung Dao machine plant in 1968 and 1970.[53] Schools also sought to encourage direct empathy. In Yugoslavia, numerous children's literary competitions promoted composition on topics such as the 'People's Struggle in Vietnam', while children were encouraged to write to Vietnamese pen pals[54] and raised funds by

51 See, e.g., *Élet és Irodalom* (7 January 1967). For a Yugoslav equivalent, see HU OSA 300-10-2-493; see also the all-Poland survey from 1967 entitled 'Poles on themselves and other nations' Archiwum Ośrodka Badania Opinii Publicznej [Archive of the Center for Public Opinion Polls], 1967, m.0005.
52 Polska Kronika Filmowa [Polish Film Chronicle],18b/66; 'Wielotysięczna manifestacja mieszkańców Warszawy' [Thousands of Warsaw Inhabitants Demonstrate], *Trybuna Ludu* (2 May 1966).
53 HU OSA 300-40-2-Box 53.
54 AJ, 142–457, Informacija o nedelji solidarnosti sa borbom naroda Vijetnama održanoj od 13. do 20. decembra 1967.

selling commemorative stamps to their peers. In Hungary, schools cultivated sympathies through poetry writing about Vietnam.[55]

These states' international responses to the Vietnam War demanded that they encourage a 'tempered', responsible solidarity at home. The leaders of all three countries saw themselves as important peacemaking global go-betweens who could mediate between superpowers, prevent a further intensification of the conflict and potentially bring about a peaceful settlement. Hungary, for instance, as a Warsaw Pact member supported the Soviet line on détente and nuclear disarmament, did not believe a decisive ending to the war possible, and saw an opportunity to play a global role.[56] Foreign minister János Péter, wishing to restore Hungary's international standing following its isolation after the suppression of the 1956 Uprising, presented himself as an important international player, and in autumn 1966, acted as intermediary for US initiatives to maintain good relations with the USSR despite the war.[57] Tito's role as a negotiator in the Vietnam conflict was mostly visible in early 1965, as he sought to convince the US president of the necessity of a peaceful negotiated settlement. For this reason, he did not initially condemn US aggression.[58] Polish diplomats took part in 'Operation Marigold' (initiated by Johnson's administration), playing the role of secret negotiator, with Moscow's approval, between the USA and North Vietnam, communicating the conditions for US withdrawal and Hanoi's responses until December 1966 when talks suddenly collapsed.[59] After the 1973 Peace Accords, Hungarians and Poles, alongside Canadian and Indonesian representatives, took the leading roles in

55 AJ, 142–457, Informacija o političkoj aktivnosti u SR Srbiji u toku ''Nedelje solidarnosti sa borbom naroda Vijetnama'', January 1968. See also an interview with Géza Takács, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, 10 November 2008, where he recalls his own school composition which clearly signalled he had learnt the values of official soldarity: 'The land of Vietnam is in flames, the guns still thunder, but the day is already not far away, when there will be peace once again'. In the GDR, Christmas 1968 saw school solidarity concerts and children donating presents to their comrades in Vietnam: Wernicke, 'World Peace Council', 316.

56 See Z. Szőke, 'Delusion or Reality? Secret Hungarian Diplomacy during the Vietnam War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12, 4 (2010), 119–80; for an insider's (and some claim misleading) account, see J. Radványi, *Delusion and Reality: Gambits, Hoaxes, and Diplomatic One-Upmanship in Vietnam* (South Bend, IN 1978); J.G. Hershberg, 'Peace Probes and the Bombing Pause: Hungarian and Polish Diplomacy During the Vietnam War, December 1965–January 1966', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 5, 2 (2003), 32–67. For the equivalent position in Romania, see M. Munteanu, 'Over the Hills and Far Away: Romania's Attempts to Mediate the Start of U.S.-North Vietnamese Negotiations, 1967–1968', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 14, 3 (2012), 64–96.

57 For Hungary's role as intermediary between the US and USSR, see Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union*, 86–7. On aims, L. Nagy, 'La Hongrie' in Goscha and Vaisse, *La Guerre*, 203–12. For Hungary's claim to be restoring the values of peaceful co-existence that had withered since 1963, see János Péter's speech on 14 July 1967 to the National Assembly, reported in *Magyar Nemzet* (15 July 1967).

58 By the time of the non-aligned conference organized in Belgrade on 15 March 1965, however, Tito pressed for such a condemnation; D. Bogetić, 'Početak Vijetnamskog rata i jugoslovensko-američki odnosi', *Istorija 20. veka* (1/2007), 95–8.

59 For an account, see J.G. Hershberg, *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam* (Washington, DC and Stanford, CA 2012).

what would become a failed two year mission to implement the accords' terms on the ground in Vietnam.[60]

The tempering of anti-western and anti-imperialist rhetoric was also a product of growing economic co-operation with, and the necessity of technological transfer from, capitalist countries.[61] From 1949, Yugoslavia had been supported by US aid, loans and economic assistance.[62] Hungary's diplomatic and trade links with the USA started to increase dramatically from 1963, partly out of the need to import western technology. From 1965, the USA threatened to disrupt their export of grain and cotton at subsidized rates to Yugoslavia to put pressure on elites to soften anti-US and anti-war rhetoric.[63] In Hungary, economic elites in Budapest were critical of their country's propaganda excesses, fearing that such combative rhetoric would impede their attempts to obtain access to western technologies necessary to modernize the domestic economy.[64]

Given this international context, authorities often reminded the younger generation of their obligations to demonstrate only a tempered solidarity that paid heed to the requirements of 'peaceful co-existence' and economic development. Hungarian elites called on students not to view the confict in terms of radical politics, irreconcilable difference and inevitable escalation, and were clearly concerned by the widespread perception that the Soviets and Hungarians were withholding proper military support and prolonging the war.[65] In January 1967, an international seminar in Prague was convened to present Vietnam in terms of non-radicalization and co-existence to a student audience.[66] In Yugoslavia too, elites made it clear that the necessity of good relations with the United States of America meant that only a 'responsible anti-Americanism' would be tolerated and excessive anti-imperialist sentiments suppressed, violently if necessary. Only in Romania in 1965–6 did socialist elites encourage radical anti-US and pro-Vietnamese

60 For a brief account of the Hungarian role, see Z. Szőke, 'Magyar békefenntartók Vietnamban', *Külpolitika* 5,3–4 (1999), 149–75; *''25 éve kezdődött…'' A magyarok békeküldetése. A Vietnami háborútól napjainkig* (Budapest 1998); J. Davola, 'Magyar rendfenntartók a világban', *Rendvédelem-történeti Füzetek (Acta Historiae Preasidii Ordinis)* 23 (2011), 29. For the Polish case, see R.C. Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland, and the International Commission* (Edmonton 1984).

61 On the imperatives for technological transfer in the bloc, see S. Autio-Sarasmo, 'Co-operation Across the Iron Curtain. Soviet Transfers of Technology from West Germany in the 1960s', in M. Kohlrausch et al. (eds), *Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe. Transnationalisation of Knowledge and the Transformation of Nation States since World War I* (Osnabrück 2010), 223–39. In Poland, trade with the USA only begins to grow in the 1970s.

62 From 1950 to 1964 the United States of America covered 60 per cent of Yugoslavia's account deficits: J. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge 2000), 274–5.

63 FRUS, 1964–1968, Vol. XVII, Eastern Europe, 178, Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), Washington, 22 July 1965, available at http://state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xvii/v.html (accessed on 13 January 2009); AJ, KPR, IV-7, Pregled spoljno političkih informacija 3/67.

64 On softening one's line on Vietnam as a quid pro quo for greater economic integration into the US market, see M. Gasiorowski and S.W. Polachek, 'Conflict and Interdependence: East–West Trade and Linkages in the Era of Détente', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 26, 4 (1982), 713.

65 For these fears, see KISZ mood reports, e.g. Hangulatjelentés. KISZ Agitprop Osztály (Budapest 20 November 1965): PIL (Politikatörténeti és Szakszervezeti Levéltár, Budapest) 289. f. 13./1965/23. őe.

66 'Coexistence and the Third World' conference, Prague.

demonstrations in public, to demonstrate their support for Chinese criticism of the allegedly limited support offered by the Soviet Union, and in so doing encourage their population to identify with a struggle that echoed their own attempts to assert independence from the major world power in their own backyard.[67]

Across the eastern bloc – albeit to varying degrees in different countries – student groups, intellectuals and young workers challenged the limitations of their states' official solidarity movements. This may have been partly the result of unintended encouragement: official solidarity often gave the impression of urging youth to 'exceed' the movement's institutional forms. Although states wished to control these initiatives from above, they also wanted to promote the idea that they were genuine bottom-up expressions of internationalist sentiment that had in fact required little official encouragement. The Polish Department of Propaganda of PZPR Central Committee, for example, recommended that, 'we should avoid such actions that could be construed as a form of pressure' to present solidarity as 'the spontaneous reactions of the population'.[68] The instinctive nature of citizens' generosity was supposedly commonplace: the Yugoslav Coordinating Committee for Aid to the People of Vietnam suggested in its report from 1967 that over a million citizens had voluntarily contributed blood.[69] In Hungary, the youth press claimed that over two million signatures had been collected in protest and presented at the US embassy.[70] Communist Youth organizations encouraged students to exceed 'solidarity quotas'. In Hungary, for example, they kept totals of plasma volumes collected at different educational institutions in order to exhort others to greater acts of support: in 1967, students at ELTE in Budapest were celebrated as the most generous, offering 250 litres of their own blood.[71] University newspapers often reported – in positive terms – those students who had been inspired to take the initiative and raise money for the Vietnamese. In this way, the authorities encouraged the young and politically committed to believe that their own anti-imperialist initiatives would be tolerated, or even welcomed.[72]

67 Crump, 'The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered', 179.

68 Współpraca z Partią Pracujących Wietnamu i Frontem Wyzwolenia Wietnamu Południowego. Notatki i wytyczne, Archiwum Akt Nowych, Notatki i wytyczne, Archiwum Akt Nowych, KC PZPR, 237/VIII/968. Theorist of Kádárism Melinda Kalmár referred to this late socialist approach as evidence of a 'simulated public sphere', that is heavily centralized political movements which strictly control the limits of political expression, but nevertheless publicize the idea that contemporary politics contained a genuine democratic content. M. Kalmár, *Ennivaló és hozomány: a kora kádárizmus ideológiája* (Budapest 1998), 64–78.

69 AJ, 142, A470, 'Over a Million Yugoslav Donors'. A Hungarian–Vietnamese health co-operation agreement, for instance, was signed in December 1967, and led to the funding of hospital building programmes in Vietnam. HU OSA 300-40-2-Box 53. On the relationship between medicine and solidarity in the Communist bloc, see Y-S. Hong, '"The Benefits of Health Must Spread Among All" International Solidarity, Health, and Race in the East German Encounter with the Third World', in K. Pence and P. Betts (eds), *Socialist modern: East German everyday culture and politics* (Ann Arbor, MI 2008), 183–210.

70 *Ifjúkommunista* (January 1967).

71 KISZ Intéző Bizottság, 4 September 1967; Adatok és tények felsőoktatási intézmények KISZ szervezeteinek 1966-67.évi munkájáról: PIL 289/3/220.

72 See e.g. 'Vietnámi vasárnapok' [Vietnamese Sundays], *Egyetemi Lapok* (13 January 1966), 4.

It should be stressed that these less official movements did not reject anti-imperialism per se, but were rather expressions of frustration with the limitations of its state-sponsored forms. Unlike later dissidence, this was a form of protest which for the most part worked within the political language provided by these regimes. In particular, the tension between the full blooded representation of the violence of the Vietnamese struggle in domestic propaganda, and the seemingly half-hearted practice of socialist states' solidarity in the international arena, encouraged some groups to consider official solidarity insufficient. To a far greater extent than most previous solidarity campaigns, socialist states exposed populations to the horrors of war, and celebrated the violence perpetrated on the Americans. In Hungary, for instance, elites had previously been reluctant to represent the violence of the Cuban revolution, not wishing to introduce positive visions of conflict into a society scarred by the 1956 Uprising. This attitude changed with Vietnam in 1966. Everyday accounts of brutal combat, a commemoration of martyrdom, and in particular the struggle of guerrillas against aerial power became common in the public media.[73] Official propaganda highlighted the anti-aircraft guns built for the north Vietnamese in Hungarian factories.[74] A May Day Student demonstration outside the US legation by Budapest students on 1 May 1966 sent a telegram to Vietnamese People's army congratulating them on shooting down 1000 US planes.[75] A Communist Youth delegation visiting Hanoi in June 1966 presented their League's banner and a machine gun as their symbolic gifts.[76] Moreover, solidarity often adopted a martial and combative tone: the so-called 'patrollers for Vietnam' (*vietnami őrtűz*) posted thousands of predominantly young men with torches on strategic heights of towns and cities across Hungary that summer.[77]

Nevertheless for some groups, state-led solidarity was insufficient: it neither provided sufficient support on an international level, nor did its domestic institutional forms allow the real expression of anger that exposure to the horrors of the Vietnam conflict had generated. Some radical youth responded to these contradictions by offering to fight in Vietnam. Indeed, at the time this seemed set to become bloc policy. On 6 July 1966, Warsaw Pact countries issued a joint declaration in Bucharest stating their preparedness to send volunteers to Vietnam – but this was never put into practice.[78] Across eastern Europe, in Belgrade, Budapest and Berlin,

73 'Puskával a F105D ellen', *Ifjúkommunista* (July 1967). I. Csatár and G. Makai, *Dél-Vietnám katonai szemmel és egyéb cikkek* (Budapest 1965); G. Máté, *Fények a dzsungelben* (Budapest 1964). This was also true in Poland, see e.g. D. Passent, *Co dzień wojna* (Warsaw 1968).

74 Rings painted on the guns' barrels to denote successful strikes were publicized to demonstrate the Hungarian contribution to saving the Vietnamese people from US bombing. HU OSA 300-40-2-Box 53.

75 Anti-US May Day Student Demonstration, Budapest Domestic Service of FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service), (1 May 1966).

76 L. Pataki, E. Lakatos and R. Bognár, 'Jelentés a KISZ delegáció vietnámi útjáról' (6 July 1966). PIL 289. f. 8/868. őe.

77 'Tájékozató a Gyarmati Ifjúság Napjának megünnepléséről' (29 August 1966). PIL 289.f.8/857.őe. Nevertheless, radical supporters of the Vietnamese struggle were often reminded that violence in the decolonizing world had no place in a peaceful European context.

78 Gaiduk, *Soviet Union*, 62–3.

however, there is evidence of young people wanting to fight.[79] Some of these were attracted to Maoist China because of its promises of a more radical support for Vietnam: in Hungary there is evidence that official solidarity movements partially grew out of the need to control Chinese influence of foreign students and Hungarian youth, who used Maoist arguments about the bloc's insufficient military support for the anti-American struggle.[80] In Yugoslavia, where Maoism had some following amongst so-called 'anarcho-liberals' and students, many of those who wanted to fight felt they would not be well received by their own equivocating state, and hence went to the Chinese Embassy to offer themselves, where it is recorded that they were politely turned down.[81]

Yugoslav youth protest was particularly striking here for its preparedness to go beyond the state's encouragement to peaceful anti-Americanism in the workplace. Here there was a longer tradition of aggressive public anti-imperialist protest which stretched back to 1961, when, in the first big public demonstrations in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, in response to the execution of Patrice Lumumba in February 1961, an official rally of 150,000 people on Marx-Engels Square developed into a aggressive mob which threatened violence in front of the embassies and libraries of Western countries. Eventually, they succeeded in breaking through the police line in front of the Belgian embassy, burning cars and then wrecking the building.[82] Then, after the Bay of Pigs Invasion on 18 April 1961, a group of students in Belgrade broke the windows of the American Library, which brought about an official protest from the US Embassy. In 1962, the very same windows would be smashed by students during the Cuban missile crisis.[83] In the context of the Vietnam War, this 'tradition' of popular anti-imperialist violence manifested itself again first in Zagreb, on 20 December 1966, as a Yugoslav Student Association (SSJ) protest of 10,000 students attracted locals whose presence raised numbers to 20,000. Seemingly provoked by the Yugoslav media which had stoked anti-war feelings that week with a number of extremely anti-

79 *Ifjúkommunista* (January 1967), 9. The magazine claimed that the Communist Youth was mobilizing effectively, and that 'hundreds' had volunteered to go to Vietnam. Activists from east Berlin's radical scene tried to volunteer for Vietnam; see J. Mark and A. von der Goltz, 'Encounters' in R. Gildea, J. Mark and A. Warring (eds), *Europe's 1968. Voices of Revolt* (Oxford 2013), 161. Some of the interviewees quoted here – notably Révai and Szaljfer – remembered volunteering. The Soviet authorities reported that they received 750 requests to fight in Vietnam; Gaiduk argues that this was itself a propaganda ploy to threaten the USA, and provide a smokescreen for introduction of Soviet advisors into Vietnam. Gaiduk, *Soviet Union*, 64.

80 'Jelentés a diákifjúság eszmei-politikai, világnézeti és erkölcsi arculatával kapcsolatos néhány problémáról' (3 February 1964). KISZ Középiskolai és Iparitanuló Egyetemi és Főiskolai Osztálya: PIL 289. f. 13/1963/33. őe.

81 Interviews with Borislav Stanojević, conducted by Radina Vučetić, Belgrade, 2 November 2012; and Anonymous, conducted by Radina Vučetić, Belgrade, 26 October 2012. Nevertheless, a poll conducted in 1969 discovered that Mao – alongside Lyndon Johnson – was one of the most unpopular political figures amongst Belgrade's students. John F. Kennedy, Indira Gandhi and Lenin were the most popular; 'Zastati znači zaostati', *Borba* (10 May 1969), 7. HU OSA 300-10-2-49.

82 P.J. Marković, 'Najava bure: studentski nemiri u svetu i Jugoslaviji od Drugog svetskog rata do početka šezdesetih godina', *Tokovi istorije*, 3–4 (2000), 59.

83 Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam*, 67–8.

American articles that focused on the brutalization of children,[84] the demonstrations turned aggressive. Violence in the following weeks was directed at symbols and institutions of US power; in Zagreb, protestors attacked the US Consulate throwing bricks and stones, breaking windows, pulling down the US coat of arms and trying to burn the US flag.[85] A peaceful demonstration by the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade on 23 December planned to end with the passing of a protest letter to the US ambassador. Instead, it became heated, with slogans that attacked the economic rapprochement with the US: 'We don't want American grain', 'All Americans out of Yugoslavia', and ended up with the calls of 'To the [American] library!' and 'To the [American] embassy!' The police then prevented the demonstrators from moving out of the grounds of the university. When they emerged the police assaulted them using truncheons, cavalry, water cannons and tear gas.[86] The wave of December 1966 street protests continued in Novi Sad, where the demonstrators broke the windows of the American Library there.[87]

These violent forms of protest were not reproduced in Poland or Hungary. Nevertheless, elite universities, which were becoming sites for the incubation of alternative politics across eastern Europe in the early to mid-1960s, provided spaces where dissenting forms of solidarity could be generated.[88] At the University of Warsaw in the mid-1960s, politically active students, many of whom who had been raised by parents who had been Communist activists since the interwar period, formed student circles in which they criticized the socialist system for having betrayed its left-wing ideals. One of these groups was known as the 'Vietnamese': it was centred around Henryk Szlajfer, a student of economics since 1966, who drew on the internationalist tradition of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War – which members of his friends' families had volunteered for.[89] His group invoked their claims of radical international solidarity, and on 1 May 1966 used the May Day commemoration to demand that the Polish state give meaningful support to the people of Vietnam. The following year his group arranged pickets at US and Greek embassies – in protest against the dictatorship of the Colonels.

84 On the day of the scheduled protest of 23 December in Belgrade, the Party daily *Borba* published an article 'The Terrible Vietnam War – 250,000 Children are Killed' on the front page (*Borba*, 23 December 1966), 1.

85 AJ, KPR, II-4-a, Informacija o demonstracijama u Zagrebu, 23 December 1966.

86 Istorijski arhiv Beograda (IAB), UK SKS Beograda, F-84, Hronologija događaja.

87 DASMIP, PA, SAD, 1966, F-176, 444349.

88 On recovering the importance of the university as a site of intellectual ferment that played an important tole in the lead-up to the Prague Spring, see Z. Nebrensky, 'Early Voices of Dissent: Czechoslovakian Student Opposition at the Beginning of the 1960s', in M. Klimke, J. Pekelder and J. Scharloth (eds), *Between Prague Spring and French May. Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York, NY and Oxford 2011), 32–48. On the importance of intellectual clubs and committees in generating alternative politics in Poland and Hungary, see Gildea et al. (eds), *Europe's 1968*, esp. 53–4, 174, 176. On the student movement in late 1960s Budapest, *Lustrum* (Budapest 2011): available at http://cseri.web.elte.hu/lustrum/DenesIvan_Diakmozgalom.pdf (accessed 1 October 2013).

89 Interview with Henryk Szlajfer, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 27 September 2012.

Anti-imperialist movements provided the young, progressive and politically engaged with a new language of critique through which, and new spaces for activism in which, frustrations with contemporary state socialism in eastern Europe could be articulated.[90] Such was the position of ultra-leftists at elite universities whose unofficial activism emerged within Vietnam solidarity committees at Eötvös Loránd University and the University of Economics in Budapest. They soon came to organize unofficial demonstrations, which were eventually cleared by the police. These took place outside the US embassy on 20 July 1966, and in front of the American pavilion at the Budapest international fair in the same year, where leaflets were distributed and signs stuck up announcing 'Hands Off Vietnam'. Images of the US President Johnson were daubed with paint.[91] These leftist demonstrators were not merely criticizing the USA. Influenced by both Maoist critiques of Soviet revisionism, and their readings of original Leninist and Marxist texts, they not only attacked the absence of a sufficiently committed solidarity in the bloc, but connected this failing to the lack of domestic revolutionary endeavour. For them, the failure to support Vietnam was also a consequence of the introduction of capitalist economic mechanisms, and the embrace of 'petty bourgeois' consumerist values at home. As one former radical recalled, the expression of official anti-US anti-imperialist solidarity provided space in which unofficial threatening protests could develop:

> We took advantage of this official, torch-lit parade they had on – the name sounds awful – Revolutionary Youth Days – on 15 and 21 March . . . it was at the end of one of these marches to Gellért Hill, and we came back from this before the other demonstrators. We paraded through to the end of Váci street [the main shopping street in Budapest] . . . we had the first spontaneous and non-officially sanctioned protest in central Budapest since 1956, which gave me a certain feeling of pride, however absurd it was that we were on Váci street protesting about Vietnam, for anti-imperial solidarity, for the Third World – but there was also the motivation that we were against the new economic [market-based] reform mechanism . . . .[92]

Unlike their compatriots in Yugoslavia, they did not try to express their solidarity through violent protest. The group remembered in interviews that they had not wanted to provoke the system, fearing both a backlash from the state, and the threat of Red Army intervention after the invasion of Hungary in 1956.[93] Rather, their unofficial activism remained for the most part within semi-official settings: they worked within Vietnamese solidarity committees to bring large numbers of students out for so-called 'Vietnamese Sundays', where they would work and contribute their wages for Vietnam. Unlike official 'solidarity shifts', they donated the

90 For example of radical unofficial anti-Vietnam protest in the GDR, see Mark and von der Goltz, 'Encounters' in Gildea et al. (eds), *Europe's 1968*, 146.
91 Interview with Ferenc Erős, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, 9 October 2008.
92 Interview with anonymous, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, 5 October 2008.
93 Interview with György Pór, conducted by James Mark, Brussels, 13 March 2009.

money directly to the North Vietnamese or Chinese embassies, trusting them to make better use of funds.[94]

It was striking that the call to support struggles for 'national liberation' also provided a language of anti-imperialism that could be directed against 'oppressors' closer to home.[95] In both Hungary and Poland, which were bound to Moscow as part of the Warsaw Pact, solidarity with Vietnam could also be used as a way to criticize Soviet control in eastern Europe. For Hungary, it can be argued that official solidarity itself emerged out a need to control inappropriate nationalist sentiment. On 15 March 1965, the first major demonstrations for soldarity with the struggle of the 'Vietnamese people' were organized. Reports suggest that these started out as a call for solidarity meetings from the Communist Youth League, but enthusiastic youngsters went beyond what was officially prescribed, and began to demonstrate publicly across the country. In Szabolcs and Hajdú-Bihar country 400–500 people protested, Nyíregyháza sent telegrams of solidarity and a protest letter to the US embassy, and the Kossuth University, Medical School and Agricultural Training College in Debrecen arranged events which linked 15 March ceremonies with Vietnamese protest rallies.[96] Local Communist Youth organizations were troubled by them; often started by foreign students, who were perceived as a disruptive influence, they also seemed to echo the public demonstrations in front of the US embassy in Moscow which the Soviet authorities had deemed excessively provocative and clamped down on. Citizens – mainly from the younger generation – were also going beyond officially prescribed activities and claiming public space as they had done for the last time in 1956. Moreover, through demonstrating on 15 March, the anniversary of the 'freedom fight' of 1848, officials feared that demonstrators were linking the Vietnamese war with the previous struggle for Hungarian independence against Austria and Russia. As such, these protests were potentially linked with nationalist anti-Soviet feeling too. In the months that followed these demonstrations the Communist Youth began to plan a more official programme for solidarity with Vietnam that would attempt to capture the clearly demonstrated anti-imperialist energies of the young, but would channel it into more acceptable forms.

In Poland, Vietnam solidarity could give space for anti-Soviet sentiments too. Here the leftist 'Commandos' group – some of whose members would play a pivotal role in the opposition to the state socialist regime which was to break out at Warsaw University in March 1968, used the Vietnamese struggle against US

94 Ibid.; and Interview with Gábor Révai, conducted by Péter Apor, Budapest, 8 October 2008.
95 On identification with Vietnam as a struggle against 'great powers' for Romanian elites resisting Soviet pressure, see Budura, Romanian ambassador to Peking, in Liu and Mastny (eds), *China and Eastern Europe*, 70.
96 KISZ Agitprop Osztály, 'Információ az Észak-Vietnamot ért amerikai dél-vietnami agresszió elleni tiltakozás megnyilvánulásairól az ifjúság között (a megye bizottságok tájékozatása alapján)' (Budapest 17 March 1965): PIL 289.f. 13./1965/23.óe.

imperialism to critique Soviet imperialism.[97] Activists such as Karol Modzelewski, Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik scattered leaflets around Warsaw University. The text reflected their continued belief in the possibility of an independent socialist Poland, and combined contemporary anti-imperialism with appeals to an older anti-fascism of the pre-war period. This reflected the fact that some of the Commandos had formerly been part of the *Walterowcy*, the independent (and legal) scout organization devoted to upholding the internationalist traditions of the Russian Revolution and Spanish Civil War:

> This is not the first time that . . . the tanks of the world's superpowers shape the existing social order. . . . Vietnamese fighters struggle for the cause which is our cause as well: they struggle for the right to carry out a revolution which is going to abolish . . . national bondage; they struggle for freedom from exploitation, from internal dictatorship and from dictatorship of superpowers over small nations . . . We can't keep silent because we remember the consequences of [the] Munich Treaty . . . because we remember the foreign intervention which suppressed the Hungarian revolution . . . because of the cause for which Che Guevara gave his life, for which thousands of people are dying every day in Latin America and in Vietnam, is the cause of freedom of every small country confronted with a superpower – the struggle for an independent and socialist Vietnam is the struggle for an independent and socialist Poland. To all those who are going to trample on the sovereignty of working people, in whichever country, one should respond with the slogan of Spanish anti-fascists: No pasarán.[98]

Other participants, in later oral history interviews, refuted the leftism found in such texts. Rather, they argued that they simply used Vietnam to express their anti-Soviet feeling. According to one, the 'Vietnamese flyer [didn't mean] I was engaged in Vietnam cause . . . the anti-American aspects I didn't fancy at all . . . it was about the Soviet Union'.[99]

Vietnam solidarity as a mass phenomenon capable of inspiring widespread political action was clearly in decline as early as 1968. To a certain degree, pro-Vietnam student campaigns were victims of their own successes; in Yugoslavia, for instance, the anti-Vietnam demonstrations from December 1966 were widely considered to be a vital turning point in the development of a more open and public student

97 Reports of the Security Service cite various student meetings 1966–8 in which the speakers, 'drew almost direct parallels between the struggle against the "American aggressors" in Vietnam and against the party and the government of the People's Republic'; F. Dąbrowski, P. Gontarczyk and P. Tomasik (eds), *Marzec 1968 w dokumentach MSW. Tom 1: Niepokorni* [*March 1968 in the documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, v. 1: The rebellious ones*] (Warsaw 2008), 332.

98 Ibid., 822. See also A. Friszke, *Anatomia buntu. Kuroń, Modzelewski i komandosi [The anatomy of rebellion. Kuroń, Modzelewski and the Commandos]* (Kracow 2010), 492–6.

99 Interview with Seweryn Blumsztajn, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 5 January 2010. For similar sentiments, see also the interview with Jan Lityński, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 25 November 2009.

movement in Yugoslavia.[100] Nevertheless, other issues soon took over paramount importance. Mass student demonstrations that started with the occupation of Belgrade University in June 1968 were made up of many of those who had taken part in earlier anti-imperialist protests – drawn in large part from the Yugoslav 'New Left'. Now, however, they rather demonstrated about the system's betrayal of its promises at home. Moreover, the widespread appeal of this protest – it soon spread to other university centres, and was sympathetically received by both cultural elites and workers – meant that repression was harsh. The League of Communist Youth started a campaign against the student movement and its supporters immediately after the occupation ended. In July 1968, the entire party organization at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade was expelled from the League.[101] These protests not only marked the displacement of anti-imperialism with issues of domestic importance, but also meant the end of even a limited tolerance for unofficial anti-war demonstrations. This fear of public protest only hardened after the Prague Spring, and the Soviet-led intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Those anti-imperialist demonstrators who had initially exposed the system's fragility continued to be dealt with harshly: as late as 1975 the 'Belgrade Eight' were dismissed from the University of Belgrade because of their dissident activities, which for most of them included taking part in anti-US Vietnam protests in December 1966 and the critical student demonstrations of June 1968.[102]

In Poland too, 1968 marked a turning point, as the student campaign in defence of North Vietnam broke down just as it had gathered organizational momentum. Here students began to protest about other issues from 8 March 1968 –for freedom of speech, against censorship and (after the first rally) police brutality. Official public protest – even when organized and monitored by the authorities – was considered too dangerous because of the opportunities to ferment dissent that it provided.[103] In Budapest, a number of those who had been involved in organizing radical unofficial Vietnam solidarity and small public rallies were placed on trial as Maoists in spring 1968, warning off others from challenging the state's right to control political expression.[104] Attempts of activists to demonstrate independently faced repression. Former ultra-leftist, and later dissident, Hungarian Miklós Haraszti remembered one of the best-known attempts to suppress unofficial

100 M. Arsić and D. Marković, *Studentski bunt i društvo* (Belgrade 1985), 36; B. Kanzleiter, '1968 u Jugoslaviji – tema koja čeka istraživanje', in Đ. Tomić and P. Atanacković (eds), *Društvo u pokretu. Novi društveni pokreti u Jugoslaviji od 1968. do danas* (Novi Sad 2009), 41.

101 B. Kanzleiter, 'Yugoslavia', in Klimke et al., *1968 in Europe*, 223–4.

102 These were university professors Mihailo Marković, Svetozar Stojanović, Ljubomir Tadić, Dragoljub Mićunović, Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, Miladin Životić, Trivo Inđić and Nebojša Popov.

103 Cf. J. Eisler, *Polski rok 1968 [The Polish Year 1968]* (Warsaw 2006); D. Stola, *Kampania antysyjonistyczna w Polsce 1967–1968 [The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland 1967–1968]* (Warsaw 2000); P. Osęka, *Marzec'68 [March'68]* (Kracow 2008).

104 On the trial, see G. Murányi, 'Tévelygők, avagy a maoista összeesküvés', in S. Révész (ed.), *Beszélő évek. A Kádár-korszak története 1957–1968* (Budapest 2000), 578–81. The sentence was reported in *Népszabadság* (9 June 1968).

public protest, that took place in front of the Vietnamese embassy in the Bulgarian capital during the World Youth Congress in 1968:

> In the summer of 1968 I went to the Muscovite, 'sub-Comintern', pro-Soviet World Youth Congress, specifically for the purpose of making contacts with the Western left-wing movements . . . but the essence was, I went there, and there was a protest in front of the Vietnamese Embassy in Sofia, in which all the westerners took part, and, on the basis that 'in the fog everyone is a grey donkey', everyone from the east was there too. I wouldn't have dared to do it back at home. It was on a closed off street . . . we went in – in 'the American style'– it was from them we had learnt these techniques – at one end of the street there were mounted policemen, and at the other end the street was shut off with a lorry – we couldn't get out. And the horses pulled up, a row of ten in grey workers' uniforms – with gigantic flags in their hands shouting 'Druzhba! Druzhba!', and, as they went, smashed the bones of people who were lying on the ground. So in fact, they had been sent to punish us. People were bleeding. The Western student movements then went to their headquarters – I went with them, and watched what they were doing. They got out the mimeograph, and the next morning a lot of leaflets protesting against this demanded that the organizing committee of the World Youth Congress also protest against it. They also tried to collect signatures. Naturally the participants from the east were already removed from the frame.[105]

Those who had been involved in Vietnam protests started to reflect on their commitments. Some activists still felt sympathy with the north Vietnamese, although they increasingly reflected on their complicity with official solidarity. In Budapest, the lead singer of *Gerilla* soon disowned his solidarity songs, arguing that they had become ideological parodies; rather, he argued, real radicalism lay in protest songs which addressed domestic politics, in the manner of Bob Dylan, Peter Seeger and Joan Baez in the USA.[106] Polish activists who became involved in the protests for greater freedom of expression and democratic rights in the 'Polish March' often speak of anti-imperialism as an illness from which they were cured in 1968. Teresa Bogucka participated in a demonstration at the US embassy in 1967:

> then Jan Józef Lipski took me for a coffee and said: 'I understood when you wanted to speak about Hungary [i.e. the suppression in 1956] but then you did a silly thing. Do you really wish [by expressing solidarity] Bolshevism upon those poor Vietnamese?' And it got me. It got me, I thought it over and started to read because I had to check everything, had to listen to Radio Free Europe, ask questions . . ..[107]

105 Interview with Miklós Haraszti, conducted by Péter Apor, Vienna, 10 April 2009.
106 Interview with Miklós Vámos, reproduced in T. Szőnyei, *Nyilván tartottak. Titkos szolgák a magyar rock körül 1960–1990* (Budapest 2005), 281.
107 Interview with Teresa Bogucka, conducted by Piotr Osęka, Warsaw, 21 January 2009.

Official solidarity continued until 1973, although it was clearly in decline. In Yugoslavia, it was left to smaller 'socio-political organizations' and to the Yugoslav Coordinating Committee for Assistance to the People of Vietnam. Reports suggested that popular support was in decline from 1970.[108] The last 'Solidarity Week' was organized in 1973. In Hungary, annual Communist Youth congresses still invoked solidarity in the early 1970s, although Vietnam began to be displaced by Chile as an object of revolutionary fascination.[109] Nevertheless, it is striking that some of those who had been involved in less official forms of Vietnam solidarity – such as Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń in Poland, or Miklós Haraszti and Tamás Bauer in Hungary – would later become prominent figures in oppositional dissident movements in the late 1970s and 1980s. Activists who had taken part in Vietnam solidarity movements had gained experience in non-conformist, grass-roots politics that took solidarity against oppression and exploitation seriously, while also coming to new conclusions about the very strict limits that the party placed on democracy or broader social participation. The form of dissent which developed in the late 1970s was very different, however in many cases it gave up on the party state as an instrument for political or social change and refused to work within the political structures or languages of the regime anymore. Moreover, it no longer took its inspiration from leftist anti-imperialism and the struggles of the 'global South'. Rather, dissidents increasingly turned to liberalism, and looked to return their countries 'to Europe'.

The war in Vietnam had a powerful impact on many eastern European societies. This was not only because solidarity movements were promoted by socialist states in ways that touched the everyday lives of citizens, but also because their anti-imperialist messages were embraced by groups with a variety of political beliefs. Socialist states themselves used solidarity both to assert their responsible and progressive engagement in a divided world, and to claim a broader legitimacy for their own domestic political project whose values now supposedly echoed across the world. To this end, they emphasized not only the struggle of the Vietnamese, but also used the explosion of solidarity movements in the West to illustrate how a new progressive generation were turning to the values of the socialist East. Yet the Vietnamese war was also capable of generating new dissenting cultures and forms of political expression. These were particularly prevalent amongst a younger generation who had, variously, grown up with a more global anti-imperialist education than their parents; were the main object of their regime's solidarity efforts; found liberalized spaces in solidarity and other committees in schools and universities from the early 1960s that allowed a greater freedom of expression; and

108 Report of the meeting of the Yugoslav Coordinating Committee for Assistance to the People of Vietnam in July 1970 AJ, 142, A470, Potsetnik za sednicu Koordinacionog odbora za pomoć narodu Vijetnama.

109 See J. Mark and B. Tolmár, 'Connecting the 'Responsible Roads to Socialism'? The Rise and Fall of a Culture of Chilean Solidarity in Socialist Hungary 1965–1989', in K. Christiaens, I. Goddeeris and M. Rodríguez García (eds), *European Solidarity with Chile* (Frankfurt am Main 2014), 301–328.

sometimes saw themselves as part of a broader generational revolt across the Iron Curtain that jointly took inspiration from the struggles of the 'Third World'. Moreover, Vietnam provided a language which the young could use to express their frustrations with the political project 'at home'. For some young leftists, the lack of a sufficiently committed solidarity was used as evidence of the absence of revolutionary ambition in 1960s eastern European socialism. For nationalists of a variety of political colours, the story of a small country challenging a world superpower had substantial relevance to a region under Soviet domination. Official solidarity movements themselves emerged to channel and control independent popular anti-imperialist sentiment, seeking to contain it within official political structures, or ensure that it remained expressed in the workplace rather than on the streets. Yet, for a few years, Vietnam solidarity helped to open up institutional, semi-official and public spaces where alternative forms of politics could be expressed.

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