

## Secretariat Statement on Kirk Letter

Comrade Kirk's letter of December 13, 1965 to the Political Committee represents the opposite of a constructive attempt to grapple meaningfully with the complexities of the anti-war campaign in which our movement is involved. To begin with, the Washington events around which he focuses his letter involved problems of a tactical nature that had to be worked out on the scene by the comrades present. Basically, the occasion marked a clash by our comrades with Communist Party forces who-- with the help of centrist muddleheads -- were maneuvering organizationally to capture the politically unaffiliated militants in attendance and bind them to the CP line of peaceful co-existence and popular frontism. Our comrades deserve credit for shaping a tactical course in the heat of battle that kept the way open for continued effective struggle in the campaign to win anti-war militants to our program in the fight against war. They also deserve something better from any critical comrade than Comrade Kirk's smear attack made from afar with indecent haste and without any semblance of truth to his allegations.

Almost every line of Comrade Kirk's letter contains wrong assumptions as to the facts, or a twisting of party policy out of factional spleen, or outright political slander of party comrades. He opens with dire warnings of "political catastrophe" on the premise that the party is conducting "an unprincipled, disruptive and politically reformist struggle against the entire left wing of the anti-war movement." We are told that the Washington episode "will render the party and youth as contemptible among honest militants as was the CP during its worst days." Such unbridled invective against the party marks a new low in the polemical style that has become characteristic of Comrade Kirk and it is of a piece with the rest of his nine-page diatribe.

His document is a contrived attempt to make rejection of his views tantamount to crass political ignorance. Thus he accuses the PC of having "the totally false impression that the capitalist class has no fundamental stake in this (Vietnam) war. . ." and he purports to reduce party policy down to a simple notion that the imperialists "would pull out of it in response to a little more pressure." He charges that the party and the youth "leave it to others who are bolder to be partisans of the NLF. . ." and, to heap slander upon slander, he

accuses the comrades of aping the capitalist press in telling Negroes to stick to civil rights and not take positions on other social problems.

His letter depicts opponents of our movement as paragons of political virtue in contrast to the party and youth. Concerning efforts to help anti-war militants reach anti-capitalist conclusions, he writes: "This task was undertaken by the left wing of SDS, PL, the May 2nd Movement and other non-Trotskyist currents, but especially by the Spartacists and Bulletin forces." Our comrades, who stand condemned before the Kirk tribunal, are held to have become "in fact the right wing of the (Washington) conference, in objective programmatic alliance with the established peace addicts. . ." The CP maneuvers, conducted through stooges in the National Coordinating Committee, are given an accolade as "the essence of the principle of the united front." Our comrades, who fought the CP attempt to hamstring the movement politically through organizational maneuvers, are branded "splitters" simply for organizing a caucus within the NCC setup.

The youth, who have carried the biggest load in the whole anti-war campaign, are insolently accused of renegeing on an alleged "pledge" at the last convention to swear off "sectarianism." The old pre-convention garbage is raked over about the youth being "conservative," about their "childish-sectarian nature," about their lack of "ideological or political equipment." Then, with typical Kirkian pomp and bombast, their self-appointed ideological and political mentor reveals to them that party and youth policy in the anti-war campaign adds up to -- "Peoples Frontism!"

What lies behind all this nonsense, these vicious charges against comrades, this factional hysteria? It appears to stem from blind frustration over the party's rejection of the line Comrade Kirk presented to the last convention. He seems to find it increasingly hard to live with a policy other than his concept of a "new fused and regrouped revolutionary party" for which he has unsuccessfully argued in our ranks. His letter calls for "an abrupt change of policy and a public repudiation of the course followed by the party and youth in the anti-war movement during the past three months."--that is to say, since

the last party convention. He requests an immediate poll of the National Committee on the holding of a special January plenum.

Prior to the receipt of Comrade Kirk's letter the Secretariat had decided to recommend that a plenum be scheduled for February 11, 12 and 13, 1966. These dates were proposed for several practical reasons, including the problems of preparing a plenum when the National Office is in the process of moving to new quarters. Therefore, the Secretariat has recommended and the PC has concurred in the recommendation that the plenum be held on February 11, 12, and 13. These dates will allow needed leeway for the preparation of the NC gathering which will have considerably more to take up than Comrade Kirk's factional protests against the carrying out of established party policy.

December 23, 1965