

LOCAL DBC ACTIVITY AND VIET NAM COMMITTEES

It is now apparent that YSA is going to continue to push to build its narrow, national, co-called "independent" committee. From what we can gather here in California, it looks as if they are encouraging individuals to join so as to build a national membership organization. This is what they originally were pushing for some months ago. However this issue is raised by YSA, local DBC people should be prepared to deal with it.

The following deals with problems which local DBC's may encounter within local Viet Nam committees after the Washington N.C.C.

It is the feeling of the DuBois N.C.C. that these problems best be approached by (1) pushing for the broadest possible program within local committees; (2) urging strong support for the National Co-ordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam by all local committees, and urging participation by local committees in the programs it will help to co-ordinate; (3) avoiding, whenever possible, a replay of the struggles which divided the Washington Conference by urging, on the merits of the issues involved, for broad programs and support of the N.C.C.

The truly independent committees, those free of any decisive YSA influence, will probably not be affected by the negative aspects of the Washington conference. They may, however, have other organizational problems which local DBC's might help them to overcome. The DBC must have a few members active in every independent committee, and must give all possible organizational support to the activities of the local committees.

Many independent committees, in which the majority of the membership has no formal political affiliation, have been dominated in the past by YSA. This has occurred because YSA people have been active in forming the committees, have volunteered to do whatever work was necessary to carry out committee program, or because they have stood for election to committee offices or steering committee positions. The problems of working within these committees are great, but every effort should be made to steer these committees along lines which can allow for broad participation by the masses of the American people who oppose the war. It must be constantly pointed out that the war in Viet Nam is not in the interests of the American people. Massive opposition to the war can be mobilized, but this will be done by meeting people at their own level and making them aware of what the war means to them, and how it effects their lives as workers, wives, students, tax payers, etc., and not by forcing discussions about the war into the framework of radical politics or restrictive, narrow slogans. If efforts are made through forced discussion to encourage these committees to join the YSA national organization, it should be pointed out that this will cost the independent committee its representation on the existing N.C.C. nationally and locally also, if another group forms. The major contradiction in YSA's argument for their independent national organization" is that the local committees by virtue of affiliation with it sacrifice the independence they now enjoy in

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the existing N.C.C. This should certainly be pointed out.

There do exist a few committees which were established by YSA as fronts, or which are dominated by YSA to such an extent to make broad programmatic activity meaningless. If efforts to broaden the activities of these committees fail, it may be possible for DBC people to work to establish another local committee independent of YSA control. It should be noted that the N.C.C. policy encourages separate committees in any geographical area, such as neighborhood committees, trade union groups, groups on different campuses, etc. To allow for anti-war activity of a broad nature DBC may undertake the formation of new committees. This is an action requiring much consideration, as our primary responsibility is not to build Viet Nam committees, and such an action does not necessarily build the DBC, although it does gain it good will. In several areas where YSA dominates a local committee, many people should be sought out and may aid in the formation of a new, independent committee. Care must be taken not to sacrifice growth of the local DBC which must continue to function as a multi-issue organization. In areas which have several local committees, YSA influence in one may be lessened by forming area coordinating committees and attempting to draw out groups together for broad, area-wide activities.

In committees which YSA attempts to use as recruiting grounds for its national membership organization, DBC people should raise the obvious questions. What is the program of this organization? Is this organization going to conduct activities paralleling those of the existing N.C.C.? Few really independent people will be attracted to this body if any substantive discussion of its program, goals, etc., is conducted as recruitment pitches are made.

The problems raised by YSA and the S.W.P. must be seen more as an irritant than an obstacle. The fact that they were able to disrupt the Washington conference was due not to the dubious merits of their proposals and stratagems, but to the lack of preparation of program and planning by those who are sincerely interested in talking to the masses of the American public and building an effective peace movement. The thousands of sincerely motivated people active in the peace movement will not be swayed from their tasks by the efforts of one left group which seeks to use the movement to build its own organization. The DBC must locally work in support of the independent committees to insure the continued growth and success of the peace movement.