

# STUDENT MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE

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Dear Friend,

On December 28, 1966 a very important event took place in the history of the student anti-war movement. Two hundred and fifty seven students from college and high school campuses across the country and in Canada and Puerto Rico met for a 3-day conference in Chicago in response to a call to discuss a national student strike. Recognizing that a national strike was not feasible at this time, the conference called for a national Student Mobilization to organize for a Vietnam Week, April 8-15. This is to be a week of intensive campus anti-war activity, culminating in the transportation of students and faculty to the mass demonstrations scheduled for April 15 in New York and San Francisco.

The participants at the Chicago conference represented over 37 different student groups -- religious, political, pacifist, and civil rights -- as well as 17 local independent committees to end the war. Reflecting the different attitudes and approaches of these organizations, the conference devoted much of its time to discussing some of the major questions confronting the movement at this time. Despite the differences in belief and tactics the conference issued the enclosed call. The call represents the desire of the participants to redirect the campus peace movement outward, away from the frustration and inner questioning many of us have felt in the last few months, and toward the goal of winning greater numbers of students to a stand which opposes our government's aggression in Vietnam. Toward that goal the call suggests an emphasis on the direct effect that the war has had on the campus community.

The peace movement is presently at a new stage. The potential exists to draw in large sections of people never before involved in anti-war activity. The letter of 100 student leaders to Johnson, stating their opposition to the war, is just one indication of greater anti-war feeling on campus. There are similar signs of the beginning of anti-war sentiment in the trade union movement and among religious organizations. Civil rights leaders are becoming ever more vocal and active in their opposition to the war.

Students have an especially important part to play in the coming activities, not only by organizing campuses, but as a spark to set other sections of the population into motion. There is now real potential to reach out and broaden our base. Now is certainly not the time for frustration or despair, especially from students who have always been in the forefront of the movement. Rather, we must view the issues with a fresh perspective, a new unity, and increased determination to end the war.

We call on all students to join in Vietnam Week, April 8-15. Please fill out the enclosed blank and let us know how you can help -- financially, in helping to obtain new sponsors for the call, or in campus organizing.

## A CALL TO VIETNAM WEEK

The following is the text of the call to Vietnam Week as passed by the national student conference in Chicago, December 28-30. It incorporates the amendments and stylistic changes that were proposed.

"They have made a desert and called it peace." - Tacitus

It is two years since the U.S. government began bombing North Vietnam. For two years the U.S. government has continued to escalate the war and spent ever increasing sums of money. In Vietnam the war is being paid for by the increased shedding of the blood of American and Vietnamese soldiers, and the ever increasing killing of Vietnamese civilians. At home the war is being paid for by increased food prices, increased tuition, and the ever increasing disruption of the lives of American youth. This poses a challenge to those Americans who for the past two years have been striving to bring the horror of the war to the attention of their fellow Americans: for now large segments of America can be reached with the message that the war is a barrier both to their own individual happiness and to the fulfillment of the American dream of a nation with liberty and justice for all.

We must respond to this challenge by confronting our fellow students and our professors with the truth about the war and its perverse effects upon our society:

We must face the true nature of the war. It is first of all a war of aggression against the people of Vietnam, who seek only to exercise that right of self-determination for which Americans fought in 1776. It is a racist war, a murderous war against a colored people. It is an illegal war fought in our name but without our consent. It is but one symptom of a diseased society, a symptom that must be ended if it is to be possible to begin treating the disease itself.

We must face the true nature of the draft system. It is that system by which the war machine is nourished by the blood of young men. It is that system which makes the war possible. It further perpetuates a system of racism in the United States. It calculatedly penalizes the poor. It is used by the government to crush the aspirations of American racial minorities. It converts the classroom into an arena in which the losers are sent out to kill and be killed and the winners must live with the knowledge that their "success" in school may mean another's death on the battlefield.

The war in Vietnam makes it clear that the administration of this country with the complicity of the colleges and universities prefers to train Americans to become instruments of war instead of enlightened human beings.

We, the Student Mobilization Committee, urge all those students who wish to oppose the criminal war in Vietnam to dedicate themselves anew to the task of ending the war. Specifically we propose that April 8-15<sup>th</sup> be designated as Vietnam Week. We urge national student action during Vietnam Week which will culminate in the transportation of as many students as possible to New York and San Francisco as part of the general Spring Mobilization of the antiwar movement on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Finally, we propose that the focus of End the War in Vietnam Week be on: (1) Bringing the GI's home now; (2) Opposing the draft, and supporting the right of individuals to refuse to cooperate with the military system; and (3) Ending campus complicity with the war effort.

It is especially appropriate that we American students, fighting for the right to determine our own future, support the right of self-determination throughout the world and call for international opposition to the war in Vietnam, which denies the right of self-determination to the people of Vietnam.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS

The following motions were passed by the student conference in Chicago, December 28-30. They refer to the procedures to be followed in implementing the decision to hold a national student Vietnam Week, April 8-15.

1. The groups involved in the conference are urged to send a staff person to the New York April Spring Mobilization office to immediately begin organization and mail out the proceedings of this conference.
2. That the immediate major task of this staff be to search out major figures in the academic community, the civil rights, peace, and student movements to be included as sponsors of the national call that emanates from this conference. That sponsors be initiated by local committees as well as the New York staff.
3. That upon accomplishment of this broadening a Continuations Committee be composed of a representative from each organization that composed the steering committee of this conference, plus one from any organization or individuals who volunteer to participate in Vietnam Week and agree to the call. That this Continuations Committee make further plans.
4. That all this be done in cooperation and consultation with the Spring Mobilization Committee officers, but that the continuations committee also maintain a separate identity oriented toward the involvement and organization of the campus and youth in the national student Vietnam Week and the April 15 mobilization and other anti-war actions. That the question of whether or not the full Student Mobilization Committee remain in New York or be located in some other place be decided by the student Continuations Committee on the basis of future development of the mobilization.
5. That this conference direct the Continuations Committee to encourage solidarity actions with the April 15 Mobilization particularly in the Midwest and South, and that they urge the Spring Mobilization Committee to join in encouraging those solidarity actions.
6. That this Continuations Committee convene a conference on as broad a basis as possible following the Spring Mobilization to evaluate the national student antiwar week and mobilization and consider plans for future action.

## OTHER MOTIONS PASSED TO DIRECT THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN ITS ACTIONS

- a. This conference suggests that the Student Mobilization Committee publicize the convening of a war crimes tribunal by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in February, 1967.
- b. That the Continuations Committee assign topics relating to campus organizing to various campus groups with experience in these areas (i.e. Berkeley -- a strike) and have them prepare a report on the topic which they or the national office will distribute nationally.
- c. That the Continuations Committee investigate to find 4 or 5 campuses where it may be possible to hold a strike during Vietnam Week.
- d. That local activity must be emphasized in relation to the national action -- i.e. national call supplemented by local calls, local organizers try to reach out into new campuses in their area, etc.

## PROPOSALS FOR CAMPUS ACTION

The following are some of the proposals for campus action that were discussed in the workshops during the Chicago student conference, December 28-30. We hope that anyone else who has suggestions for possible campus activity will send them to the Student Mobilization Committee office and we will publish these ideas for the information of other areas of the country. We hope that some of these ideas will be appropriate for action on your campus.

### Student Strike:

The idea of holding a student strike was one of the major proposals under discussion at the conference. The conference, in fact, had originally been organized to discuss the possibility of holding a national student strike. While it was generally agreed that a nationwide student strike was not realistic at this time, it was thought by many that there were a few campuses where the idea might be feasible.

One of the important motives for such action is recognition of the crucial, even fundamental role that universities have played in carrying out the war. It is the universities which trained the police of the Vietnam dictatorships, which carry out the research in ever more horrifying methods of waging war, which train the young people of our nation to become the policy-makers for destruction, and which set the ideological climate to justify the war.

A necessary prerequisite for organizing a strike on campus would therefore be a thorough exposure of the role of the university in the war effort. This would make the responsibility of students evident and provide the basis for organizing a large-scale action. Another necessary condition would be the involvement of a broad range of campus groups in the strike effort, a range going far beyond the traditional antiwar and radical groups. Thirdly would be a climate of commitment to action on campus sufficiently large to make a strike successful.

We will shortly be publishing a longer article on the proposal for a student strike.

### Campus War Crimes Tribunals:

Almost all colleges and universities in the country contribute in some way to the war effort. The forms of complicity range from permitting easy access to university facilities by Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, and even CIA recruiters to conducting secret research on chemical and biological warfare. The idea of holding campus "war crimes tribunals" could be used to expose and attack this complicity.

This project would require a well-organized and systematic researching of every possible way in which the university supports the war effort. Then hearings could be held, establishing the guilt of the U.S. in Vietnam, and the complicity of the particular university in carrying out the war. Faculty members and administrators should be called to give evidence about their university's role in the war. (Of course, there may be friendly witnesses as well as witnesses who are unwilling to appear) A verdict of guilty or innocent could be made on the basis of the evidence presented to the tribunal.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of this project it is important to conduct the tribunals in a serious manner with as much impartiality as possible. This will be important in obtaining faculty assistance

and broad support and enable an effective publicity campaign to be waged. The educational side of the project will bring many more people into opposition to the war and can be a big help in carrying out an effective student mobilization in the spring.

#### Anti-Draft Activities:

(1) Support and publicity for Senator Gruening's proposal that no draftees be sent to Vietnam. Activity around this issue could be used to publicize opposition to the war. In addition, if it could pass, the proposal would make the war effort impossible.

(2) Opposition to the system of 2-S deferments for students. 2-S perpetuates the undemocratic nature of our society since the poor, the racially oppressed, and others who could not go to college are the ones who do not get deferments and are sent to die in Vietnam.

(3) Campaigns of support for the right of students to refuse to cooperate with the military system. Students would be urged to give serious consideration to the position of non-cooperation with the military in accord with individual conscience.

(4) Circulation of "We Won't Go" pledges. This could be a starting point for other action too.

(5) Women could make things difficult for draft boards by the following procedure: Women could write to the draft board in their local area saying that they were of draft age and could not in conscience cooperate with the selective service system because the draft was being used to carry out the war in Vietnam. This would generate a good deal of confusion, require investigation, and clog up the draft system. (Names, of course, should be signed with first initial only and last name.)

#### Civil Disobedience:

Discussion centered around various suggestions for civil disobedience that would not only gain widespread attention, but would also disrupt the war machine. Among the suggestions were activities similar to the Port Chicago actions, sit-ins at draft boards and recruiting stations, acts of civil disobedience to prevent government agencies from functioning, and civil disobedience by prominent individuals. It was suggested that leaders of the movement declare their intention to protect non-cooperators with the war after the fashion of the French intellectuals during the Algerian war.

#### Opposing Recruitment for the War Machine:

Placement offices at campuses make available the dates when recruiters from the Army, the CIA, and war-related industries come to interview graduates or to publicize the "benefits to be derived from working for them. Campus groups can mobilize on these dates to expose the role of these war agencies or corporations, holding demonstrations and using civil disobedience if appropriate.

#### Student Refusal to do Research:

As part of the general exposure of war-oriented research on campus, students should make clear their refusal to participate in physics, chemistry, or other research where this research lends itself to war purposes.

**Aid to Victims of Napalm:**

In addition to opposing and exposing the use of napalm in Vietnam, it was suggested that some campuses undertake money-raising projects to provide medical aid for the victims of napalm.

**Boycott War-Related Companies:**

A compilation of all companies involved in the production of war materials should be made. Boycotts against them could then be initiated. There is already boycott action being undertaken against the products of Dow Chemical, a major producer of napalm.

**Tax Refusal:**

Any federal tax we pay is used to implement the war in Asia. It was suggested that people withhold all or part of their federal taxes as a means of showing that they oppose the war. One example of this idea is participation in the national campaign to refuse to pay taxes on telephone bills.

**Representatives of the Unrepresented:**

All people who feel unrepresented on the issue of Vietnam could 'elect' their own representatives who would then negotiate a peace treaty with the NLF. This could be used as a rallying document for mass action at a later time.

**ACTIONS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO BRING PEOPLE TO NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO ON APRIL 15th.**

Besides buses, trains, and motorcades a few other ideas were suggested. These included a pledge -- a variation of the "Oxford Pledge" in which students can pledge to go to New York or San Francisco as a means of showing their opposition to the war. Another idea was for a "Coxey's Peace March" to New York and San Francisco. We will need many more suggestions in the course of organizing for April 15th.

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- You may list me as a sponsor of the call to Vietnam Week and use my name in advertisements.
- I will be available to work for the Student Mobilization Committee.
- I would like more information about the Spring Mobilization Committee. Please put my name on your mailing list.
- I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help finance the work of the Student Mobilization Committee.

Name.....Address.....  
City.....State.....Zip.....  
Organization.....

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS BLANK AND MAIL IT TO US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!!!

#### RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO

The following resolution was adopted by the national student conference in Chicago, December 28-30. The resolution was introduced by a Puerto Rican student in attendance.

We resolve to condemn the colonial imposition of the draft onto Puerto Ricans, the conversion of the island territory into a military base for aggression against the people of this hemisphere and of Vietnam, and the military, political, and economic domination of Puerto Rico by the United States. We further call upon the people of the United States to give their wholehearted support to the national liberation of Puerto Rico.