

Student Mobilization Committee Roundup, by Kipp, April 19, 1968

Election year activities, particularly the McCarthy campaign have cut more deeply into the adult antiwar movement than the student movement. The absence of an authoritative national adult antiwar coalition has made it more difficult to build April 27 demonstrations on a scale on which they could be built, taking advantage of the many new openings the antiwar movement now has. Nevertheless, in 16 major cities across the country coalitions among adult and student groups have planned demonstrations for April 27. These cities are New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Minneapolis - St. Paul, San Francisco, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Madison, Seattle, Portland, Atlanta, Austin, Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis and Boston. In addition, several smaller cities are planning demonstrations for April 27 (including Carbondale, Lancaster, Pa., Wilmington, Del., and many others) and in many more, groups are mobilizing participation in the major demonstrations.

High school and college students have responded to the call for the April antiwar actions, and particularly the student strike and the April 27 demonstrations, in larger numbers and with more enthusiasm than for any previous antiwar action.

Because of the abstention of the National Mobilization Committee in regard to the April actions, the Student Mobilization Committee has been the sole builder and organizer of these actions on a national level. The publicity it has put out, and the work which has been done by local student and antiwar groups, has carried the antiwar movement onto many new college and high school campuses across the country, and has built the image and influence of SMC.

The SMC national office is now in direct contact with about 800 schools, in every state in the country, almost all of which are planning some kind of activities in conjunction with the strike. In addition, trailblazers around the country have turned up many more campuses which are working on the strike without any direct contact with SMC. A reading of campus newspapers also shows that the strike has been picked up by schools with no visible contact with the national antiwar movement.

Campus coalitions which have been built around the strike are the largest and broadest of any which have worked on similar actions. The YMCA has endorsed the strike nationally, and YMCA coordinators in many places are helping build the strike. Black student groups, many supporting a united antiwar action for the first time, have joined in strike coalitions around the country. In addition, SDS chapters, faculty groups, fraternities, sororities, religious groups, student governments, school newspapers, foreign student groups, and many others are working in many of the strike organizations.

High School students around the country are also working on the strike in greater numbers than ever before. In the New York City area alone, for example, approximately 100 high schools are expected to be involved in the strike activities.

International participation in the April 26-27 actions will be smaller than October 21. The traditional Easter peace demonstrations in Western Europe, and conflicts with school schedules there, are among things which have made it difficult to organize demonstrations at this time. Major actions are being built in Japan (supported by the Zengakuren, the youth group of the Japan Socialist Party, and the Japan Committee for Support of the People of Vietnam) and in Canada. Some actions will also be built at some schools and in some cities in England, France, Belgium, Italy and West Germany. NBAWADU has received some indications that there will be demonstrations in Latin America and Africa, but it is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of these reports. The National Liberation Front of Vietnam has sent out several international communications indicating its support to the April days, and particularly to the strike and April 27 actions. Largely because of pressures like these the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students have endorsed the strike and have promised to help build it. The SMC has received no direct indications of these promises being carried out, other than a message from the Hungarian Peace Committee stating plans to carry out actions on April 26 and 27.

In spite of its rapid growth the SMC now has the worst financial problems it has ever had. Most of the large contributors which have kept SMC going in the past are now giving their money to McCarthy. Because of this it will be necessary for local campus antiwar committees to carry a larger share of the job of raising money than they have in the past. The SMC is urging all groups to include money-raising events in their activities around the strike and April 27, and to contribute a large part of the money raised to the SMC national office. This is of key importance to the future of SMC.

It is important that the SMC national office receive immediate (telephone or telegraph) reports on the strike activities on April 26 so that it can give reports to the press and to the April 27 demonstrations.