

## ANTIWAR FRACTION REPORT AT YSA CONVENTION

By Mark Ugolini

The International and Political Reports outlined the effects of the developments in the Vietnamese revolution on the current radicalization and the student movement and the general implications for the activity of the YSA. It pointed to and analyzed the impact that the Vietnam cease-fire agreements are having on American society.

Despite the fact that the treaty has not yet been signed, its impact has become clear. The vast majority of people in this country remain opposed to U.S. involvement in Indochina, yet believe that "peace" is realizable soon.

At this point it appears highly likely that the cease-fire agreements will be signed. Once the treaty is signed, it is quite possible that most of the fighting will end and that the U.S. will withdraw its military forces from South Vietnam and stop the bombing -- thus ending the direct U.S. intervention in the fighting. Once the active military role of the U.S. is ended there will be no basis for a mass antiwar movement against U.S. involvement.

As the Political report pointed out, this changing situation in the war requires a shifting of gears in our antiwar activity.

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Before going into the specific implications for our activity in the antiwar movement, I want to make some general comments on NPAC and the SMC.

The National Peace Action Coalition and the Student Mobilization Committee since their founding have been the leading organizers of mass antiwar actions. NPAC and the SMC are antiwar coalitions that have been oriented toward the deep antiwar sentiment that exists in the U.S. Their central task has been to directly oppose the U.S. government by giving visible expression to that sentiment through mobilizing the largest possible numbers of people in action.

NPAC and the SMC are action coalitions whose job is to convince as many people as possible to march down a particular street at a particular time for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. All the activity of NPAC and the SMC has been directed toward building such specific mass actions.

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Over the last two-and-a-half years since NPAC was founded there has been a continuity in NPAC's activity. NPAC has called major antiwar conventions (generally in the summer and in the winter) and through these conventions has attempted to pull together the most authoritative call possible for a national series of antiwar demonstrations the following spring or fall.

The latest developments in the Vietnam negotiations are causing a shift in this continuity. NPAC and the SMC have already begun on a national level to carefully and realistically assess what the implications are for the antiwar movement.

At a steering committee meeting held in Boston on October 7, NPAC laid plans for a national convention on January 13. However, due to the recent developments with the war, NPAC has decided to hold off a final decision on whether or not to call a national convention until a joint NPAC-SMC steering committee meeting can be held in New York on December 2.

Unless there is a drastic change in the situation between now and December 2, it is our opinion that NPAC should not call a major national convention at this time. As outlined in the Political Report, the basis simply does not exist for NPAC to commit itself to such an undertaking. Because of the likelihood that the treaty will be signed, it seems clear that very few independent forces could be brought to a national convention. Also, if the treaty is signed, NPAC would most likely have no demonstration to call for the spring -- and without a demonstration to call an antiwar convention would be of no value.

In fact, trying to hold a national convention without major demonstrations to project could well be a very demoralizing experience for serious antiwar activists attending the conference. With very little that such a convention could project, it could well turn into nothing more than an ideological debate between various political tendencies on the meaning of the 9-point agreements. The YSA and the SWP could conceivably have something to gain from such a debate, but the SMC and NPAC simply do not. Such an occurrence would tend to undermine the united front character of the SMC and NPAC, and thus undermine their ability to respond to any real opening for action if this were to happen.

We think it would be a serious mistake for the most conscious, dedicated, and committed people in the antiwar movement to attempt to substitute ourselves for the antiwar movement. Today the people of this country feel that the war is nearly over. And if the agreements are signed and carried out, which is very possible, direct U.S. military intervention will be ended. We can't ignore this. We must recognize it and understand that.

We should also not exclude the possibility, although it is very unlikely, of an abrupt change in the situation. It is possible that the proposed agreements could be blown wide open before they are signed, which would obviously bring about a totally different situation for the antiwar movement. In this case what may be called for are emergency demonstrations as opposed to a convention. This is another variant, although it would be unrealistic to gear our antiwar work towards it.

We should think out and fully realize the implications if NPAC decides not to call a national convention at this time. What does that mean? Without a major national action to build, the activity of NPAC and the SMC would be limited. This would not mean that NPAC and the SMC would go out of existence. However, what it would mean in

our opinion is that NPAC and the SMC would need to shift gears and remain functioning on a rather low-key basis.

We in the YSA realize that there will be no real peace in Indochina if the cease-fire is signed, and that there remains a real need for anti-Vietnam-war action coalitions to respond to every opportunity that presents itself to get out the truth to the American people -- that the U.S. has no right meddling in the affairs of the Vietnamese and U.S. involvement will not end until all U.S. forces and materiel are out of S.E. Asia.

Although we realize that these opportunities will be limited, we want NPAC and the SMC to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself to agitate for immediate withdrawal.

On a local scale certain opportunities may present themselves for various types of low-key activity. For example, the San Diego Peace Action Coalition and the SMC carried out activity before Nov. 18 relating the racist treatment of the sailors on the USS Constitution to the racist nature of the Vietnam war. They may be able to continue to use this opportunity in the future to get across the Out Now position.

One side point on that. In our opinion, in statements and position papers that they put out, NPAC and the SMC can say very little on the real meaning of the 9-Point agreements. For example, NPAC and the SMC could not put forward a position on the role of the Soviet Union and China. NPAC has no ideological position on the role of Stalinism as well as on a lot of other questions. NPAC is not an ideological tendency with a political program on a whole series of issues.

Also, SMC campus chapters may be presented with opportunities to participate in various campus struggles which can be related to U.S. involvement in the war -- for example actions against war criminals past and present or recruiters.

In addition, we think the SMC and NPAC will want to continue to take every opportunity to get press and media coverage for the Out Now position. Statements should be released to the press on major developments in the war and related issues.

The joint SMC-NPAC National Steering Committee meeting scheduled for December 2 in New York will be an opportunity for leading NPAC and SMC activists to get together to realistically assess the latest developments in the war and to carefully evaluate what is possible on a national scale.

NPAC coalitions and SMCs in local areas may want to hold similar meetings to evaluate the November 18 actions and assess possible future low-key activities.

In these discussions, however, it is important that we convey a clear conception of what NPAC and the SMC are and what they are not. As stated earlier, NPAC and the SMC are coalitions based on and built around agreement on a specific action for immediate withdrawal -- and the activity of NPAC and the SMC revolves around building for such specific activities. Understanding this fact, and the fact that NPAC probably will not be projecting a major action, we have to avoid gimmicks which ignore the objective situation. If such gimmicks are turned to, this poses the danger of blurring the nature of NPAC as an antiwar coalition. NPAC and the SMC are not pro-amnesty organizations, they are not organizations to convict war criminals, they are not organizations to educate on the Stalinist betrayals -- NPAC and SMC are coalitions to build antiwar actions for immediate withdrawal.

We can expect that the cutback in antiwar activity will make it absolutely necessary to cut back on the sizes of office staffs considerably in a very short period of time. This will mean that most areas will have no full-time paid staff people.

The cutback in activity in some areas will necessitate coalitions and SMCs to move to less expensive or free office space. This decision, however, is a judgement that will need to be made based on the specific situation in each area.

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Despite the fact that the SMC and NPAC will be scaling down their activity in the next few weeks, we should not be under the illusion that our antiwar work is over.

The perspective outlined in the International and Political Reports point out that the struggle of the Vietnamese people is far from over, and this being the case, the work of the YSA in defending the Vietnamese revolution is also far from over.

The Vietnamese liberation fighters are under tremendous pressures, and the job of revolutionary socialists must be one of continuing to do everything possible to defend the Vietnamese struggle. The YSA has an important role to play in getting out the truth -- in explaining to people the real meaning of the latest developments in the war.

We should be aware of the fact that the antiwar activists we have worked with over the last years -- active participants in the struggle -- are looking for answers to the questions they have about the meaning of these developments.

Discussions are taking place on campuses and high schools around the country and the YSA has an important role to play in them -- particularly in exposing the treacherous roles of the Soviet Union and China and the callous attempt of the Communist Party and the YWLL to cover up Moscow's betrayals.

We have to be looking for every opportunity to seek out and discuss with YWLLers across the country the meaning of these agreements and the role of the Soviet Union.

By taking an aggressive approach to answering these questions and participating in these discussions we are going to be able to win young people to our perspective and recruit to the YSA.

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