

Report to the NEC on the Spring Mobilization Committee, Apr. 28, 1967

by Lew J.

The deepening escalation takes place in the framework of a broadening antiwar sentiment and a deepening division among the ruling class. The Spring Mobilization Committee should respond by organizing a large conference to evaluate the April 15<sup>th</sup> action and to chart a course for the future; namely, another and larger action for the autumn. The only progressive basis for the maintenance of the committee is as a coalition on a non-exclusive, mass action-oriented basis.

Several problems have developed recently in the Spring Mobilization Committee (SMCEWV). First, the Bevel May 17 proposal. At the April 15<sup>th</sup> rally Bevel announced his plans for a major action in Washington, to the surprise of the participants, working committee members and other officers, none of whom had been consulted. The plan was a good one: to demand to see Johnson as a representative of half a million citizens, backed by a modest demonstration in Washington, and followed by a conference. However, Bevel's method of procedure was very bureaucratic. A vigorous protest over the lack of consultation was made to the officers by a broad range of working committee members.

Second, an attempt was made by the officers to do away with the broad, representative working committee, and to substitute for it a committee of the officers and a staff selected by Bevel. Some officers were reportedly concerned about the influence of the "marxists." A strong protest was also raised on this issue, and a new administrative committee representing the coalition has been set up and will meet this Friday.

To this point the various maneuvers have not caused overwhelming difficulty. However, their continuation tends to undercut the coalition. The source of these maneuvers lies in several factors. One is just plain bureaucratic incompetence. Also involved is a growth of pressure from the right wing forces to cut down on the influence of the radicals. Finally, some forces in the coalition already have the 1968 elections in the back of their minds and are trying to make the necessary preparations to divert the movement into reformist electoral politics. Besides combatting and exposing such maneuvers, it is important that we begin to discuss the more general questions that lie behind them: electoral politics, the history and nature of the antiwar movement, the need for non-exclusion, and so on.

The May 13-20 week has been designated "Stop the War Week" by the Spring Mobilization Committee: May 13-14, the Student Mobilization Conference; May 17-20, a delegation will try to see Johnson; May 20-21 the Spring Mobilization Conference. Some local areas are also planning actions during this week. For instance, in New York a rally will be held in the garment district.

The May 17-19 action will be primarily for publicity purposes. The officers of the SMCEWV, speakers from the San Francisco and New York rallies, and the officers of the Student Mobilization Committee will try to see Johnson to demand an immediate end to the war on the basis of the mandate received from half a million people on April 15. A supporting demonstration in Washington, of modest size, is planned.

The officers originally projected the May 20-21 conference as purely a workshop conference with no decisions made. However, provisions are now being made for decisions on the future of the SMCEWV. The obvious decision that must be made is to continue to reach out to deepening antiwar sentiment by setting the concrete date, place and character for a fall 1967 mass mobilization.

As with every mobilization, there is a vacuum of perspective immediately following the demonstration. We can expect from the estimated 1000 participants at the conference proposals of various brainstorm and gimmicks. Our job will be to point out the lessons of the successful April 15<sup>th</sup> demonstration and the political significance of mass mobilizations in sustaining and expanding the antiwar sentiment.

It will be necessary for YSA to mobilize both weekends, May 13-14 and May 20-21. We should also urge as many other antiwar activists as possible to attend. If it is impossible to make both conferences, preference should be given to the Student conference. Please let the YSA national office know who will be attending the Washington conference from your area.