

Report on Progress towards November 15 by Gus Horowitz, August 4, 1969

Since the antiwar conference in Cleveland there have been two meetings of the Washington Action Committee, the national working committee for the Nov. 15 demonstration, and one meeting of the New Mobilization Committee steering committee. These meetings have indicated that considerable progress has been made on the Washington demonstration. The meetings of the Washington Action Committee have been attended by representatives from a wide range of antiwar groups who have shown enthusiastic initial support for the Washington demonstration. Compared to previous major national actions, work is progressing at a fast pace for Nov. 15.

A Washington office for the New Mobilization Committee has been set up at 1029 Vermont N.W. Staff members so far are Steve Wilcox of LINK and Don Gurewitz of the Cleveland SMC. Faye Knopp, selected by the Cleveland conference as a co-director of the Washington action, was unavailable for the job and has been replaced by Ron Young of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Plans are underway for fund-raising and some initial publicity. Sub-committees of the Washington Action Committee have been set up to handle some of the specifics of the demonstration. Cora Weiss of Women Strike for Peace has been added as a co-chairman of the New Mobilization Committee, as well as Donald Kalish of the Los Angeles Peace Action Council and one or two others to be chosen from the Bay Area. An additional 50 names from the antiwar movement have been added to the national steering committee. Other important initial decisions will be made in the next few weeks.

The "death march" called by the Quakers has been rescheduled from September to the time of the Washington demonstration. This is conceived of as a single-file march to represent all the American war dead, which will last 36 hours and culminate in the mass rally and march on Saturday, November 15. No conflict with the mass demonstration is expected. The final logistics of the mass march and rally on November 15 will probably be settled within the week.

There has been important new information about the character of the demonstration in Chicago, now scheduled for Oct. 11. SDS has taken the position that the demonstration will be organized exclusively by SDS itself. In "negotiations" with representatives of the New Mobilization steering committee meeting July 30-31, SDS stated that it has scheduled four days of activities under its own sponsorship. Leaflets have already been issued, which indicate that these actions will be adventurist in thrust.

SDS representatives stated their opposition to the New Mobilization Committee having a voice in any facet of the decision-making for the demonstration. SDS opposed New Mobilization Committee having a co-chairman at the October 11 rally, opposed possible rally speakers such as Spock, Zinn, or Gregory, opposed all possible Chicago "conspiracy" defendants as speakers except Seale and Hoffman, opposed New Mobilization Committee having a voice in march policy and marshalling, in negotiating for a parade permit, etc. SDS also stated that defense of the Chicago "conspiracy" defendants would be only a minor aspect

of the demonstrations.

Although SDS has stated that it is organizing its action in alliance with the Black Panther Party and Young Lords, there are indications from these groups that this is not so. The national office of SDS has stated that it will go ahead on its own in any case, since it feels compelled by internal factional considerations to try and organize a major action on its own.

As a result of SDS' attitude, a large section of the New Mobilization steering committee has cooled off towards the Chicago demonstration, while simultaneously showing more enthusiasm for the Washington action. The steering committee passed a motion stating:

"In accordance with the decisions of the Cleveland conference, the New Mobilization Committee:

"1) Will participate in the organization, financing, and other facets of the action (Oct. 11) to the extent that a meaningful form of collaboration can be worked out in which MOBE plays a role in making the decisions on the action.

"2) MOBE will continue probing, not only with SDS, but with the Panthers and other groups the possibility of a coalition for this action."

Dellinger and a few others in the New Mobilization Committee still claim to see an "ambivalent" attitude on the part of SDS to the idea of a coalition demonstration and will continue to seek a formula that will enable them to try and put considerable effort into building it. But a large section of the New Mobilization steering committee is skeptical.

At this time it appears that the Chicago demonstration will be considerably smaller and less significant than had been anticipated at the time of the Cleveland conference. Our tactical approach to the Oct. 11 demonstration will have to be determined when its precise character is more clear.

There are good objective possibilities for building local coalitions for the Washington demonstration November 15 and all areas should gear into that activity without delay.