

ANTIWAR REPORT, by Gus Horowitz, June 13, 1969

The Cleveland Area Peace Action Council (CAPAC) is hosting a major national antiwar conference on Friday and Saturday, July 4-5. The conference has been endorsed by representatives of a cross-section of the important local and national antiwar groups in the country, as well as by some individual antiwar figures. Its purpose will be to call a major fall national antiwar demonstration, set the date and political character for it, and set up a body to organize it.

The objective situation indicates that the time is ripe for another mass mobilization perhaps even larger than those of 1967. Antiwar sentiment within the United States has continued to increase. At the same time, the April 5-6 demonstrations have already indicated that much of the disorientation due to the Paris talks and the elections has dissipated, and that a much larger demonstration can be built.

The Nixon administration has been playing for time, attempting to disarm the antiwar sentiment that exists, while continuing the war in Vietnam at full steam. Another major mass antiwar demonstration is called for to prevent the ruling class from obtaining the time that it seeks, and to mobilize the overwhelming sentiment that exists to bring the GIs home now.

Our goal at the Cleveland conference will be to convince others of this perspective and concretize it in the call for national fall antiwar demonstrations.

With the success of the April actions, the process of fragmentation within the antiwar movement over the past year has been reversed. Many of the local antiwar coalitions have been rebuilt as a result of the April 5-6 demonstrations. The Cleveland conference will be a major step in rebuilding the national antiwar coalition, a necessary task in order to be able to organize the fall demonstration.

The National Mobilization Committee, which lost its coalition character over the past year, now functions as a single tendency in the antiwar movement and is opposed to the perspective of mass antiwar demonstrations. In order to organize the fall antiwar demonstrations, a new co-ordinating body on a national scale will have to be formed out of the Cleveland conference.

The July 4-5 conference was called over the objections of the NMC, which tried to prevent it from occurring. When the NMC was not able to do so, it finally felt compelled to associate its name along with the other endorsers of the conference. The NMC, however, is not the sponsor of the conference, but only one group of many, along with the SMC and the local antiwar coalitions.

The Student Mobilization Committee is calling for a national

student antiwar conference on Sunday, July 6, also in Cleveland. The purpose of the SMC conference will be to mobilize student participation in the major fall antiwar demonstrations and to decide a specific program of student antiwar actions. These include campus actions against ROTC and campus complicity with the war; high school antiwar actions; student support to GI antiwar activity; the possibility of an international student strike associated with the fall action; and general organizational questions related to the SMC.

The SMC conference should be seen as a general conference open to all antiwar youth, with the aim of achieving maximum attendance of antiwar youth in the planning of the fall actions. The SMC conference will be a key part in the continuing process of building the SMC as the authoritative national organization of antiwar youth.

For the next few weeks, our central antiwar work on a national level will be to build the two conferences, to mobilize as many antiwar activists and representatives of antiwar organizations as possible to participate in them, to make the conferences authoritative and broadly representative of the antiwar movement, and to use them to inspire the antiwar movement with the perspective for the major mass antiwar demonstration in the fall. The calls for the conferences should be widely circulated in the short time that there is to build them. Comrades should consider trail blazing to new areas to organize a good cross-section of attendance at the conferences.

While the call to the SMC conference clearly states that it is open to all antiwar youth, the call to the CAPAC-hosted conference is ambiguous. The NMC was able to exert considerable pressure on the official CAPAC leadership, with the intention of keeping the conference small and closed to a specially invited list of delegates. This exclusionary move was not adopted, but the following is the result:

CAPAC has sent out invitations for delegates to an initial list of antiwar groups, national organizations, and individuals. A copy of this initial list was sent to the endorsers of the conference and the initiating steering committee, with a request for suggestions as to other groups that should be invited. In addition, observers are welcome. It is understood by CAPAC that the call to the conference will be widely circulated in order to bring antiwar activists to the conference as observers. Groups that were not initially invited to send delegates may write in asking for delegate status. Others may request delegate status on arrival. We expect that the conference itself will set its own groundrules regarding delegate status, voting, etc., and will repudiate any attempts to exclude particular groups.