

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

November 17, 1971

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND ANTIWAR DIRECTORS

Re: NPAC Convention

Dear Comrades,

General evaluations of the November 6 demonstrations, the state of the antiwar movement, and its prospects appear in The Militant and the Young Socialist Organizer. (Take note of the three part series in The Militant by Lew Jones prior to November 6, an article by Dave Frankel in the Young Socialist Organizer dated November 26, The Militant editorial in the November 19 issue, and the series in The Militant beginning with the November 26 issue.) This letter will outline our approach to the upcoming National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) hosted convention, December 3-5, at Cayohoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio.

As a result of the November 6 demonstrations and the fall offensive, NPAC and the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (SMC) gained increased authority as the principal mobilizers of antiwar sentiment in the United States. All areas and most commentators report that NPAC and the SMC were seen as the chief builders of the entire fall offensive. The People's Coalition for Peace and Justice's (PCPJ) reputation suffered due to their token and mostly merely verbal support to the actions.

Moreover, through endorsements, the efforts of the various task forces, and other activities most areas report that the number of individuals and groups that identify with and participate in NPAC has increased. High school student involvement in the SMC has also increased.

The NPAC hosted convention will provide an opportunity to deepen the involvement of these forces. Our aim should be to put together broad delegations from each local area to the convention. This, of course, includes as many of the newly attracted SMC activists as possible.

NPAC has gone to considerable lengths to project this convention as a convention of the entire antiwar movement. PCPJ has been asked to co-host it, participate in it, and help create a single antiwar coalition out of it. NPAC has made clear that PCPJ is perfectly free to conduct whatever other activities it wants. PCPJ's reaction to this proposal is still undefined and probably will not be resolved until their National Coordinating Committee meeting in Chicago over the Thanksgiving weekend, one week before the NPAC hosted convention. It is unlikely that they will endorse the convention, but at the same time they feel great pressure from NPAC's growing strength and the authority of the NPAC coordinators' open letter (see The Militant, November 5). At a minimum we can expect a delegation of the PCPJ leaders to attend the convention.

In any case, there are quite a few individuals and groups which are either part of PCPJ or look to both PCPJ and NPAC that accept the logic of the NPAC proposal for a single mass action coalition against the war which can be formed at the Cleveland convention. In this context, it is important that the convention be built as a convention of the antiwar movement; and, that in addition to mobilizing the NPAC and SMC partisans and endorsers, special attention be given to the forces that now see the need for a single antiwar coalition.

There is one other noteworthy characteristic to the convention. As near as we can tell most of the ultraleft and sectarian groups will mobilize. This includes the Workers League, the Spartacist League, the International Socialists, the Labor Committee, and the Students for a

Democratic Society/Progressive Labor Party. (In some areas SDS encorsed November 6 and managed to behave themselves.) All together this will amount to a substantial bloc of disruptive forces. Thus, broad and sizeable delegations from each area will help maintain the decorum of the convention.

In light of all these factors, each local area will want to launch a special effort to build the convention in the very short period of time remaining. Such an effort involves several tasks:

1. Publicity/Press. Publicity and press coverage prior to the convention in each local area will lend authority to the convention decisions afterward. In addition to leafletting, special attention should be paid to the underground, Black, Chicano, campus, and neighborhood press, as well as the major radio, TV, and newspapers.

2. Outreach. Along the lines indicated in this letter, it is important that all the forces involved in the November 6 actions be contacted and invited to attend. In addition, endorsement of groups and individuals not yet involved in NPAC should be actively solicited.

3. SMC. Many SMCers who became active for the first time this fall will not have attended a national antiwar convention before. Their attendance in Cleveland can be an important vehicle for consolidating SMCs in each area. Thus, special attention to mobilizing the SMCs is important.

4. Finances. Many local coalitions have a debt resulting from the November 6 actions. Special fund raising around the convention can help ease the debt as well as help pay for transportation to Cleveland.

5. Transportation. If not already organized each area will have to pay special attention to this task.

Finally, we are projecting a mobilization of the East Coast and Midwest locals and branches for the convention. Southwest and West Coast areas should concentrate on representative delegations. Further information on fraction meeting times and places will be forthcoming, but each area should try to get as many as possible to Cleveland for the Friday evening steering committee meeting and keynote session.

Comradely,

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