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TO ALL BRANCH ORGANIZERS AND ANTIWAR DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The upsurge in antiwar activity that took place in April and May showed once again the explosive potential for mass antiwar sentiment to be expressed in mass action when the ruling class makes clear its aim to continue and expand its aggression in Vietnam. While the recent upsurge did not reach the level of May 1970, its significance should be judged in the context in which it took place. In the midst of an election year, and preceded by a long lull in antiwar activity, there were five nationally called mass demonstrations of varying size in the space of one month. At the same time there occurred two different periods of intense activity on the campuses, unprecedented since May 1970. The first period was dissipated with Nixon's speech after April 22, indicating further troop withdrawals would take place, and after which there was a temporary reduction of the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. The second period, more intense than the first, began with Nixon's speech declaring the mining of the harbors of Vietnam and was dissipated when it became clear that the Moscow invitation stood.

April 22 was the largest demonstration in the series that took place. It occurred at a time when the impact of the escalation of the war had a chance to sink into public consciousness, and before Nixon's maneuvers to appease public opinion. The fact that it had been built for four months also contributed significantly to its size.

The May 21 demonstration had the potential to be massive. However, Moscow's treachery in the face of Nixon's challenge cut across this potential. Although the May 21 demonstration was not as massive as it would have been, it was an important demonstration. It represented an immediate response to the challenge Nixon laid down. Because it took place as Nixon was landing in Moscow it objectively stood as a protest against the maneuvers of both Nixon and Moscow. It was also significant in that it was built on the basis of unity in action between NPAC, PCPJ and other forces in the antiwar movement.

Through the process of building a united demonstration with PCPJ we were able to learn some things about what is happening in their circles that we should be attuned to in our ongoing antiwar work. From the outset it was clear that the CP pushed within PCPJ for a united demonstration with NPAC in the face of Nixon's escalation. Apparently they feared that PCPJ could not pull off a successful demonstration alone, and that if unity were not achieved NPAC might call a demonstration on its own. From the April 22 experience they were aware that NPAC is capable of having a successful demonstration under its own aegis.

Another motive behind PCPJ's willingness to have a joint action was to attempt to cut into the growing authority of NPAC. PCPJ originally proposed that the two coalitions build the 21st and the projected civil disobedience actions on the 22nd under the name of the "Emergency March on Washington Committee," and not

put out any publicity under the name of either PCPJ or NPAC. NPAC raised the question of whether PCPJ now agreed with NPAC in favoring a unified coalition around the single issue of the war. PCPJ made it clear that this was not what they had in mind. Sid Peck explained that they feared that if the two coalitions built the action under their own names, NPAC would get all the credit for May 21 and PCPJ would just be associated with the civil disobedience action on the 22nd.

NPAC's stance in the face of this was to push for unity on everything possible, including joint publicity efforts, but at the same time to build the May 21 action under its own name and through its own organization, thus building itself in the process of building the demonstration.

Preceding the demonstration, it became clear to antiwar activists building the 21st that it was going to be smaller than originally expected because of the Moscow trip. This had an impact on forces within PCPJ. Sid Peck's speech on May 21 attacked Moscow for inviting Nixon. Thus when Gus Hall exclaimed in his May 21 speech that anyone who questions Soviet support to the Vietnamese is an "unmitigated liar," he was attacking not only Andrew Pulley, but also the key spokesperson for the coalition that the CP is a part of. Recently, Bertil Svahnstrom, chairman of the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam (which organized the Versailles conference) sent out an international mailing in which he sharply attacked Moscow for receiving Nixon. (See The Militant, June 16, p. 5.) These incidents indicate the problems posed for the Stalinist movement by the Moscow trip.

NPAC and SMC emerge from the period of upsurge in antiwar activity with increased authority. At its last steering committee meeting NPAC adopted as focal points for the summer, building for the July 22-23 antiwar conference in Los Angeles and for the local Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day actions. While the Moscow trip and the impending elections have cut across the impetus for immediate mass antiwar actions, the antiwar movement should continue to be ready for new shifts in the objective situation that could give rise to new crises for the Nixon administration. In the meantime, organizing for the antiwar conference and local actions will provide an on-going focus for antiwar activity.

Given the debate going on within PCPJ circles over the Moscow trip, it is more important than ever that PCPJ be approached in the local areas, about supporting the summer program of antiwar activity. Those who are upset by the Moscow betrayal in the face of the escalation may be responsive to building antiwar actions. Those who defend the Moscow trip may feel under pressure to support such actions.

As in the past, NPAC will be projecting the upcoming antiwar conference as a conference of the whole antiwar movement. While the bulk of activists are expected to attend from the West Coast, we should help organize representative delegations from other areas of the country. All areas of the country should be actively building the conference, so that the decisions that come out of it will carry maximum authority. This includes gathering endorsements, getting out publicity, and arranging transportation early.

Areas should be laying plans and building for the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day actions if this has not already begun. At its last steering committee NPAC voted to call the August actions internationally. It will be contacting the Japanese antiwar movement about putting out a call for international observance of the dates around Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Building for the July convention and August actions should enable NPAC and SMC to reach out and actively involve some of the new forces that came around the antiwar movement during the upsurge.

Comradely,

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