

Report on Hayward YSA Intervention in Conference of the California State College Student Presidents Association, by Steve Chainey
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On September 4-7 the CSCSPA held a quarterly conference near San Jose, Calif. The overall topic of the conference, was "Direction 70". On the third day of the conference a resolution was adopted condemning the war, racism, and legislative interference in campus affairs. The conference also resolved to actively help build the October 15 moratorium and November 14 strike on their campuses. This report gives some background on CSCSPA and the conference, followed by some prospects for YSA intervention in the state colleges.

The CSCSPA was formed about ten years ago, following the formation of the California State College Board of Trustees. Up until this last year, the association served primarily as a lobbying agent for students' rights, disseminating information to all the state college student body associations about college related legislation from the State Senate and Board of Trustees. To a lesser degree, CSCSPA also provided services to the students such as discounts and entertainment programs.

With the elections of new student body officers in the Spring, CSCSPA was plagued with internal divisions which almost dissolved the organization at a prior meeting. (½ for, ½ against.) The reasons for this are threefold:

1. The state colleges at Hayward, Sonoma, San Diego, and Dominguez Hills acquired radical student presidents while some colleges maintained a conservative leadership.
2. Following the wave of campus revolts in California, the state legislature and the Trustees enacted an overwhelming wave of restrictive laws and policies for the campuses and their student governments.
3. The general surge in radicalization among students has placed expectations of student governments which heretofore didn't exist.

To point out the obvious, CSCSPA was being polarized around the question of continuing as a service organization and information "paper mill" or of becoming a political tool which dealt with social crises as well as with students' rights on campus. Within this context, Hayward State catalyzed CSCSPA to the latter alternative.

Before the conference the Cal State Hayward Student Coalition (YSA'ers, blacks, chicanos, Asians) discussed how we would intervene in CSCSPA through our position in student government. The coalition agreed that the war was a central issue and therefore uniting all the state colleges around the Fall Offensive would be worth the try. Since many chicanos and blacks were either on vacation or preoccupied with their college recruitment programs, four YSAers were sent to represent Hayward student government -- myself, Caryl Towner (ASB Vice-President), Gary Sommer, and Phil Conner, a black comrade and last year's ASB V.P.

The first day of the conference amounted to endless discussion of how the colleges will be affected by the new reactionary legislation, particularly Senate Bill 19 which takes away the control of

student body funds from student government and places it under the supervision of the college business manager, later to be replaced by a state government employee. Between sessions YSAers exchanged our ideas with those of the more receptive college presidents, winning them over. Particularly helpful was a black president whose position was rooted in campus struggles, and one president who was an army veteran of Vietnam and Cambodia who was also deeply radicalized by the People's Park incident (as were many other student body presidents here).

Two of the most radical student presidents were unable to attend. San Diego's business manager wouldn't sign the student president's travel expense check and Sonoma's student president (a black militant active in the S.F. State Outside Strike Support Committee) was fighting an attempt by the administration to remove him from office. S.F. State did not send a representative since it has not yet resolved the problem of two separate student body slates, one genuine and one S.I. Hayakawa's concoction. S.F. State's student body fund is now under the supervision of the state judicial court and the Bank of America.

During a break midway through the second day of the conference, Hayward called a caucus meeting with about ten other college representatives who were more action-oriented than the others. (At this point, the YSA Program for Campus Revolt provided valuable ideas.) The consensus of the caucus was that CSCSPA should relate to Third World students and the war and informally adopt the Fall Offensive as a course of action. When the next session began, the other college representatives and the present officers of CSCSPA felt a tremendous pressure to conform to our ideas or be left in the dust.

From that time until the end of the conference, the Vietnam war and its effects became the central focus of discussion. After heated debate, with 11 of 18 colleges present, the CSCSPA unanimously adopted the following resolution proposed by Hayward State: "We the CSCSPA,

- "1. oppose the war in Vietnam and support the immediate withdrawal of all the troops from Vietnam now!
- "2. oppose the racist institutions that exist in the colleges and in the military.
- "3. oppose the interference of partisan politics in the internal affairs of the state colleges."

This resolution is doubly important in that CSCSPA is recognized by the trustees and State Senate as the only official representatives of 18 campuses and 240,000 state college students.

In the evening of the second day we held a special caucus for those interested in discussing ways and means of coordinating and building the moratorium and strike. For many, our concrete plan of action was a refreshing alternative to the amorphousness of previous discussion.

On the morning of the third day the delegation began once more to discuss the Vietnam war, this time with no instigation from the Hayward delegates. Hayward then introduced a motion that CSCSPA formally support the moratorium and strike and set up special committees, preferably SMCs, on the respective campuses to carry out said objectives. Except for two abstentions, all voted in favor of the motion. The two who abstained later said they would try to build the Fall Offensive on their campuses anyway.

Elections took place that evening, ending the conference a day early. The structure of the CSCSPA also went through radical change after the old constitution was discarded. The three elected officers of CSCSPA are a) Coordinator of Information (who has promised to coordinate all information on the Fall Offensive), b) Representative to the Board of Trustees, c) Representative to the State Legislature. Unlike before, all major decisions and calls to action must have the agreement of a majority of the members, either by phone or a special conference. The term "united front" on specific actions was adopted by the conference as the best policy. It was also resolved that more research should be done on complicity of the state colleges and the trustees with the Vietnam war and racist practices. The few copies we had of G.I. Press Service and The Student Mobilizer received enthusiastic response.

We are arranging a meeting with the staff of CSCSPA, representatives from Hayward student government, and an SMC representative. CSCSPA will send invitations to the SMC conference in San Francisco on September 28 to all the state colleges and on-campus organizations along with tips from Cal-State Hayward on how to organize an SMC and the Fall Offensive.