



photo by tom coffin

MARCH MAY 21 IN WASHINGTON

A "massive, emergency, united march on Washington" to protest the latest US escalation of the Indochina war has been called for Sunday, May 21, by the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ), the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and representatives of almost every major national antiwar organization in the country. The May 21 action will be "of a legal, peaceful character."

The united announcement, the first joint action initiated by the two major peace coalitions in more than two years, also includes a call for demonstrators "to stay over for sustained actions on May 22 in Washington and other cities throughout the country."

It is expected that the continuing activities in Washington, starting on the 22nd, will include both massive civil disobedience and Congressional lobbying. The action marks the first time that NPAC has associated itself with "extra-legal" protests.

The planned Washington actions are the outgrowth of an emergency meeting of antiwar activists held in New York City May 10. Information on the forthcoming demonstration is available through the office of Al Evanoff of District 65, Distributive Workers, in New York City, (212) 673-5120. Inquiries can be directed there to Evanoff, Sidney Peck of PCPJ or Jerry Gordon of NPAC.

NEW COALITION

Nixon's announcement last week of the mining of the Vietnamese harbors forced many of us to face the inadequacies of the antiwar movement in Atlanta. There was no clear way to organize a response that could mobilize quickly all the antiwar forces in town—including people belonging to political organizations and individuals not in any organization.

The response did come however. A small group of independent radicals began calling everyone they knew to gather their friends and come to a meeting Tuesday, May 9. Some political organizations were also contacted. The objective of the meeting was to bring together a coalition of organizations and individuals who were opposed to the war in order to plan and carry out antiwar activities.

At the same time, the Atlanta Peace Action Coalition (APAC) had begun planning a picket at the Federal Building for Saturday, May 13 and the Stu-

dent Mobilization Committee (SMC) had gotten together some activities at Emory.

Besides unaffiliated individuals at Tuesday's meeting, the following groups were represented: APAC, SMC, Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), socialist Workers Party (SWP), Georgia Communist League (Marxist-Leninist) (GCL), Students for a Democratic Society/Progressive Labor Party. Although these groups probably represent a minority of radicals in Atlanta, and for sure a minority of all people opposed to the war in Southeast Asia, they were able to set the tone of the meeting because they were sure of their politics, had a pretty good idea of what they wanted to do, and could act in a disciplined manner, with individuals from any given organization supporting their fellow members in the discussion. Individuals, on the other hand, were weaker in the discussion because of not being able to act together with others.

In the past, all these organizations and individuals have had difficulty working together. Partly this has been because APAC/SMC/YSA/SWP, which organized antiwar activities, wanted to limit the activities to one or two slogans, leaving no room for individuals with different points of view who wished to shout different slogans against the war. Partly it has been because some groups and individuals felt they could not work, even against the war, with groups and individuals who had different politics. The beautiful thing about this coalition is that this sectarianism has not yet appeared. The various groups have learned something about the importance of uniting around issues that they agree on, without being afraid that their total political identity will be submerged.

The coalition decided to begin with the picket line that was already planned and expand on that idea. Eventually it was agreed to have a march through downtown and a rally at Plaza Park. A couple of the organizations and individuals made a strong point that working people should be included in all the plans. A steering committee was set up to plan for the march and to set up a mass meeting some time

after the march for the purpose of organizing a larger coalition—some groups and a lot of individuals were simply not contacted for Tuesday's meeting due to the short time and poor communications. The meeting succeeded in laying the groundwork for Atlanta's first real antiwar coalition since the Atlanta Mobilization Committee folded three years ago.

The steering committee met the next night, Wednesday. APAC dominated the meeting because its members had already done so much work organizing the picketing and because it insisted on being regarded as a separate coalition, whose decisions had been made which their representatives couldn't change. This made real discussion and struggle impossible and other people could only choose to agree to their plans or withdraw. But because maintaining unity was the position of everyone else there, and because it was a remarkably disciplined meeting, unanimity was reached without much trouble. The discussion turned to planning march routes and a mass meeting. **The mass meeting was called for Thursday, May 18 at 7:30 pm at the People's Place, 433 Moreland Ave. NE.**

The two meetings released an incredible amount of energy. People left to go into their own organizations, work places, communities, schools, etc., to build for the march. A group called The Women's Community of Little Five Points drew up and printed a leaflet which they distributed in their area. The Institute for Southern Studies issued a list of the war contractors and their shares in the profits of the war, which they distributed at the march. Georgia State and Emory students planned actions on their campuses and leafletted for the march. GCL leafletted workers at factory gates. Individuals signed up to help with leafletting. In spite of the rain and the short amount of time for publicity, the march was very encouraging to the people who organized it.

It's important now that people plan a way to work out a coalition in this mass meeting Thursday (as the *Bird* hits the streets). One group of unaffiliated radicals have gotten together and defined themselves as a unit to work in the coalition through representatives, and to do projects and have political discussions. They identify their membership as anti-imperialist, viewing the war from a broadly-based socialist analysis, but not belonging to any party or pre-party organization. They have drafted proposals for the larger coalition and begun work on the communications network to serve the coalition. (For more information, call Nancy Jones, 688-6222.)

Other individuals and organizations need to plan for the meeting, to give it direction, to prove that a coalition of all people opposed to the war can work and have effect in Atlanta.

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