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MINUTES OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF RESIST held at the New York office of Ramparts, 250 East 65th Street, on Sunday, December 17, 1967. Committee members present: Sondra Silverman, William Davidon, Noam Chomsky, Robert Zevin, Richard Mumma, Paul Lauter, Richard Ohmann, Dan Stern, Mitchell Goodman and Louis Kampf. Others present: Florence Howe, Herschel Kaminsky, Bob Freeston, Sol Stern, David Caplovitz and Alan Silver.

The meeting was opened at 1:45 p.m. by the national director, Paul Lauter.

Herschel Kaminsky reported that, as of Dec. 17, 80 persons had made monthly pledges totalling \$969 to RESIST and that there was \$2,246.78 in the New York bank account.

Paul Lauter gave a brief report on the operations of the national office. There is now a staff of six full-time workers who are being assisted by several volunteers. Louis Kampf, Wayne O'Neil, Bob Rosenthal, Paul Lauter and Florence Howe have attended organizational meetings of RESIST groups in New York, Washington, D. C., Western Massachusetts and Chicago. The national office has received some contributions and a bank account has been opened in Cambridge. There is a balance of about \$1,200.00 in the account. It was decided to transfer all but \$500.00 in the New York account to the Cambridge account.

The first part of the meeting dealt with a proposal by Professors David Caplovitz and Alan Silver of Columbia University. They urged RESIST to endorse and implement a national campaign of draft resistance based upon the conditional pledge. The conditional pledge would allow potential resisters to indicate the minimum number of persons they are prepared to join in resisting the draft. The campaign would also link persons ineligible for the draft in actual complicity with individual resisters through a variety of means, including checks and letters of encouragement. Caplovitz and Silver maintained that the device of the conditional pledge would enormously enhance the possibility of winning large numbers of persons to the Resistance.

Alan Silver explained the premises upon which the tactic was based. First, any attempt to interfere numerically with the flow of working class manpower into the armed forces is utopian due to the low level of resentment against the war among lower class groups. There is not much potential to organized that resentment before the U. S. invades North Vietnam.

Secondly, the exemptions granted to middle class youth are a critical device for the conduct of the war, and the government fears middle class ideological backlash if it is forced to draft the sons

of the middle class. During the Korean War, public sentiment started shifting against the war late in 1951 when the SSS was forced to start drafting college students.

A successful campaign for conditional pledges will make it a political liability for the government to refrain from drafting college students. The government could not afford to ignore defiance on so vast a scale. Either it would have to put thousands in jail or else acknowledge that militant opposition had succeeded in rendering the law impotent.

Noam Chomsky, William Davidon, Sondra Silverman, Dan Stern and Bob Freeston expressed reservations about the conditional pledge.

Noam Chomsky and William Davidon expressed a preference for "We Won't Go" statements which they said were probably as effective politically as another draft card return. Sondra Silverman said she felt a psychological abhorrence for the "numbers game" which the conditional pledge seemed to involve. Questioning Alan Silver's analysis, Dan Stern said students do not pose a threat to the functioning of the SSS and urged adult groups to begin to formulate an organizing perspective that goes beyond the campus and that rests upon something more substantial than a moral appeal. He said that the response to December 4 seemed to indicate a declining interest in the draft card return. Bob Freeston pointed out that 15,000 persons went to jail in World War I without appreciably weakening the ability of the government to conduct the war. He argued that only those persons who are committed to the conditional pledge as a tactic should work on it.

Mitch Goodman strongly supported the conditional pledge. Sol Stern said he saw no inherent conflict between "We Won't Go" statements and another return of draft cards. He suggested RESIST organize persons 26 to 35 to return their draft cards. ^{ed}

Dick Mumma observed what he thought was an unfortunate polarization of views. He said it is necessary to continue campus work, and it is equally necessary to organize working class youth against the draft.

Regarding the impact of the war upon the middle class, Paul Lauter said that as middle class youth are drafted their parents grow increasingly dubious about the war. However, it would be a mistake to think their questions ~~translate into a desire for~~ can be translated into a desire for social change. Their questions result in votes for Republicans. He suggested we try to develop a strategy which occupies a middle ground between the Resistance and We Won't Go. In building a movement of resistance, he said, one is trying to organize a sufficiently large number so the government will hesitate to prosecute because the political ante might be too high.

Lauter suggested airing the Columbia proposal in the RESIST newsletter and considering the proposal again after we have received some feedback.

Robert Zevin described the financial situation of RESIST as "disastrous" and proposed that the next newsletter be accompanied by an appeal for monthly pledges signed by three or four of the most prominent signers of "A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority." Ben Spock, Bill Coffin, Noam Chomsky and Dwight Macdonald had signed a previous fund appeal for RESIST. This was approved by the committee.

Dan Stern urged that future fund raising be closely related to our program.

A detailed report and discussion of the functions of the national office followed.

Paul Lauter said a letter asking about local activity and what services the national office could provide had been sent to 46 contacts. There are between 50 to 70 adult support groups across the nation varying tremendously in level of activity and political sophistication. Maintaining contact with these groups has been given top priority by the national office and a staff person is working full-time as correspondent with local groups.

Richard Ohman asked what constitutes an adult support group. Lauter said the answer would vary, depending upon the local situation. In some places, perhaps the group could only raise money. In other places, groups might engage in a wide range of activities.

Dan Stern said there were three adult support groups in Chicago and asked what their relationship to RESIST is. Lauter said we are not so much interested in formal ties at this point as we are in establishing working relationships with local groups.

Henceforth, the newsletter will be 8½x11 inches in size. It will include reports from the field as well as proposals for action like the conditional pledge campaign and occasional articles of analysis on such subjects as university complicity. William Davidson requested that news items be given highest priority and that a bibliography of recent articles related to resistance be a regular feature.

Florence Howe reported that 11 letters have gone to 90 signers of the Call who ordinarily do a great deal of public speaking. The letters ask them to notify the national office about their schedules, so that RESIST can arrange additional engagements for them to talk resistance wherever they travel.

At this point, the committee heard a request for funds from Liberacion, a group engaged in community organizing and draft resistance in Puerto Rico, presented by Sylvia Boone of Hunter College. Action on the request was postponed until a written request for

for funds with an itemized account of needs is received from Puerto Rico and ~~xxxxx~~ inquiries about the project's work are answered.

Publication and distribution of several pieces of literature was discussed. It was decided to distribute to local groups copies of the guide to legal aspects of the Resistance prepared by a group of Yale Law School students. If there is a substantial demand, the committee will consider publishing the guide in large quantity. Louis Kampf suggested a handbook on high school organizing. A group in Washington, D. C., and Dick Magidoff in Cambridge are working on guides to high school organizing. Sondra Silverman assumed responsibility for revising the guide to political counselling. The committee agreed there was an urgent need for a brochure on what adults can do to support resisters and to resist themselves. It was mentioned that Staughton Lynd was writing a position paper on support groups which might prove useful in this respect.

Paul Lauter reported that he had begun discussions with John Pemberton of the ACLU about the establishment of a resistance legal defense fund. It was agreed that the January 14th event at Town Hall should raise funds for RESIST to help draft resistance organizing, ~~and~~ not for legal defense.

The latter part ~~of~~ of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of program. Six projects were outlined: a campaign for conditional pledges, Frederick Crews' proposal for a Vietnam commencement which would have resisters sign We Won't Go statements and hold special commencement exercises, Bill Davidon's suggestion for more concrete programs which move persons towards a resistance position, a "confrontation" with the section of the Justice Department recently established to handle draft resistance cases, high school organizing, and, finally, mobilizing as wide support as possible for those who have already turned in their cards.

Robert Zevin proposed that if the Resistance adopts the conditional pledge as a tactic, RESIST ~~will~~ should support it to the extent that it is able. This was approved by the committee.

It was decided to request an appointment with John Vandercamp, the head of the new Justice Department division.

Speaking to the question of RESIST's ability to move quickly in the event of a crackdown, Paul Lauter said we still are not in a position to respond strongly since we simply don't yet know where our people are. The problem is, in large measure, a bureaucratic one, and the national office is giving highest priority to contacts and communications. To maintain the necessary momentum in the national office, Lauter proposed that Louis Kampf be named associate national director with the responsibility of overseeing the operations of the office. He also proposed that Kampf serve on the steering committee. The committee approved both

proposals.

In other business, Mitchell Goodman, Grace Paley and Frederick Drews were added to the steering committee, and it was reported that Hans Königsberger would be pleased to serve on the committee once he returned to the U. S. from abroad. A committee composed of Paul Lauter, Louis Kampf, Grace Playe and Herschel Kaminsky were given authority to decide the future of the New York office.

The next steering committee meeting was scheduled for January 14, 1968, at the apartment of Sondra Silverman, 175 West 12th Street, New York.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.