

GI Caucus

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

A caucus of anti-war GIs meeting at the Feb. 15 Student Mobilization Committee conference in Cleveland decided to call for a national anti-war GI meeting. GIs at the conference represented bases from Alaska to Texas, and from Ft. Dix, N.J. to Ft. Lewis, Wash.

Some of the thinking behind the call for the GI conference was indicated by Tim Karney of Ft. Bliss GIs for Peace:

“The GI movement is glad to see that the movement as a whole recognizes the strength and powerful position that the GI movement can take in ending the war in Vietnam.

“The GI movement has undergone great growth in the last two years because we have focused on the two main issues: ending the war that is killing our brothers and gaining First Amendment rights for GIs.

“The GI movement is a movement of, for and by GIs—but also an integral part of the peace movement.

“The GI movement needs the support of the peace movement not in the terms of radical rhetoric and slogans but in real concrete support.

“We call for all GIs to join with us in a national alliance of servicemen to end this war. We ask for a national conference of all GI groups and we hope that this conference of all GI groups will aid us in forming a national GI antiwar organization.

“GIs will work to stop this war by taking our brothers into the streets, taking our brothers alive out of Vietnam.”

The GI caucus indicated that such a national conference might be able to establish a national center that could do such things as providing financial aid for GI papers and legal defense.

The GI conference has been tentatively scheduled for either the Memorial Day or July 4 weekend in Chicago, depending on the preference of the various GI antiwar groups. The conference organizers want to know which weekend you would prefer and if you would like to attend such a conference.

Direct correspondence to:

The GI Press Service

1029 Vermont Ave., NW Room 907

Washington, D.C. 20005.

Other proposals from the GIs and Vets workshop were accepted unanimously by the conference as a whole.

One proposal was that the SMC organize a national petition campaign of GIs around the demand of immediate and total withdrawal from Vietnam.

This petition has a precedent in that previous to the November 15 actions in Washington and San Francisco, the SMC compiled a petition signed by 1,365 active duty GIs which called for the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Vietnam; it also demanded that military authorities not interfere with the GIs' rights to participate in the November 15 marches. Appearing as an ad in the *New York Times*, the petition made a great impact, and resulted in a record turnout of GIs to the demonstrations.

A second proposal was that the SMC cooperate with and support the New Mobilization Committee's call for demonstrations in support of GIs at the time of Roger Priests' trial. (Roger is being court-martialed for publishing the GI antiwar paper—OM.) The trial date is not set yet, but it is expected to be in mid or late March.

The proposal specified that the demonstration should not only support Priest, but all GIs who are exercising their first amendment rights and actively publishing antiwar papers.

Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

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