

SMC draft center for the people

Fifth Estate Collective

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Recently, the Warren-Forest Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) chapter established a program for itself. The people felt that the anti-war movement in Detroit can and should go beyond the demand "U.S. Withdraw From Vietnam Now" to programs and demands which relate to the existence of American imperialism as a system which is oppressing people in other parts of the world as well as in Vietnam.

It was felt that the way to generate mass consciousness about imperialism to ordinary people's lives. One of the areas where Americans are most visibly oppressed by imperialism is the draft.

The total effect of the current "reforms" in the conscription system (the new lottery system, the ending of deferments for fathers and for certain jobs) is to put all draft age men up against the wall on or about their nineteenth birthday. For most of us this is the first encounter (except for the police) that we have with the American political system.

Warren-Forest SMC will set up a community center which will serve the people confronted with the question of what to do about the draft, This community center will differ from present draft counseling centers in several respects.

In the first place, most draft counseling centers serve white people from middle-income groups. They work out of churches; they bring the kids in, service them, and send them out the door without ever involving them in struggle against the system that is fucking with them.

The new community draft center will operate on the assumption that people respond to the draft in different ways. Some will go in. Some will go in to organize resistance in the service. Some will want to get out once they're in. Some will want to stay out.

The community draft center will provide draft counseling for those who want to stay out, in-service counseling for those who want to get out, and it will coordinate civilian support for those who want to organize on the inside.

Rather than encouraging the individualistic "just get me out of this" response to the draft, the community draft center will attempt to involve people in ongoing struggle against the draft and the system behind it. It will engage in education about the politics of the draft and the war.

Rather than catering to the suburbs, the center will relate mainly to the inner-city, an area where many people are not aware of alternatives to the service. Black draft counselors will be available at this or a separate center to deal with the specific problems that black people face with the draft and in the service.

Hopefully as more people decide to go in and build the insurgent movement in the armed forces, the center can 'serve to build the civilian support for this movement. It will co-ordinate publicity for the struggles going on in the service and will help expose the military's abuse of inductees and the military repression of GI organizers.

Those interested in building this project should come to the weekly meetings of the Warren-Forest SMC. Call the Fifth Estate office, 831-6800, for info on time and place.

Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

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