

Uptight Over Anti-War March

Fifth Estate Collective

1967

Dave Dellinger, Chairman of the Mobilization Committee, predicted that the response of the American people would be to speak out even more forcefully against the war and to insist on their democratic rights to do so. He reported that the Mobilization office had already received a flood of phone calls from persons who indicated that they would go to Washington on October 21. In a number of cases, people not previously planning to go to Washington on that date have phoned in to say that now nothing can keep them away.

On learning of the government's ultimatum, Dr. Benjamin Spock confirmed his determination to speak at the Lincoln Memorial rally. Monsignor Charles Owen Rice of Holy Rosary Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reiterated his intention to participate in the civil disobedience.

The Administrative Committee of the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam—an organization comprising representatives of more than one hundred freedom and antiwar groups—met on Saturday, October 7 and rejected an ultimatum presented to it by Mr. Henry Van Cleve, a spokesman for the General Services Administration and for other police and Pentagon authorities in the District of Columbia and the Pentagon areas of Virginia.

In effect, the ultimatum stated that permits for the Mobilization's October 21 march and rally in Washington and at the Pentagon would not be issued unless the National Mobilization Committee publicly renounced that portion of its program under which some persons plan to engage in peaceful civil disobedience at the Pentagon.

Mr. Van Cleve also informed the Committee that under no circumstances would the government allow picketing of the Pentagon. He indicated that the ban on picketing would apply even if the Committee issued a public statement disavowing civil disobedience.

The Committee is seeking further negotiations with the Washington authorities in the hope that they will issue the required permits as rapidly as possible. Members of Congress are being asked to appeal for a reversal of the authorities' ultimatum.

The officers of the National Mobilization Committee were instructed by the Administrative Committee to retain legal counsel for the purpose of taking all legal steps necessary to prevent the Administration and its representatives from interfering with the rights of American citizens to assemble peaceably in the nation's capital.

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