

Rally Speakers Call Dissent In Best American Tradition

By Peter Osnos

Washington Post Staff Writer

The official voices at yesterday's mass antiwar demonstrations harkened to what they said was the best American tradition in defending the right to oppose the policies of the President.

With words that went largely unheard or ignored in the splendors of the cold fall day, the speakers couched their attacks on the Vietnam war in the language of patriotism.

At the morning memorial service for Vietnam war dead, Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.) said of dissent:

"The war should not be supported nor critics silenced because the President now claims that Americans are supporting him, as President Nixon did on Thursday before the House of Representatives.

"The President of the United States has great power, but it is not given to him to decide who among the citizens of this country are Americans and who are acting as Americans and who are not."

At the massive rally later in the day, Sen. Charles Goodell (R-N.Y.) leveled a critical blast at the recent speeches of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, without mentioning Agnew by name.

"There are some leaders today," Goodell said "who, instead of lowering their

voices, are raising strident calls to the flag, to patriotism, against communism. They are even using the age-old device of imputing disloyalty to those in dissent.

"We say to them, 'You will not put us off with the divisive clamorous, pointless rhetoric of yesteryears. Throughout the history of man, the most vulnerable policies have been cloaked in such gaudy garments.'"

Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) sounded a similar note when he said at the afternoon rally:

"Let no American—no teacher, no student, no preacher, no politician, no journalist, no television commentator—be frightened out of his constitutional rights by those who preach repression and intimidation."

McGovern, who with Goodell had been reluctant at first to speak at yesterday's rally, said "we meet not in impudence or violence, but in humility and grace."

"We seek an America," McGovern said, "with the sense of proportion and priority that inaugurated our constitution . . . That document . . . should be our constant inspiration—freedom of religion, speech, press, the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Sen. McCarthy, in his speech, paid a tribute to all—American and Asian—who have died in the Vietnam war and then turned to a discussion of what has become the subject of the latest round of war debate.

"No one knows what the 'silent majority' in America thinks," McCarthy said.

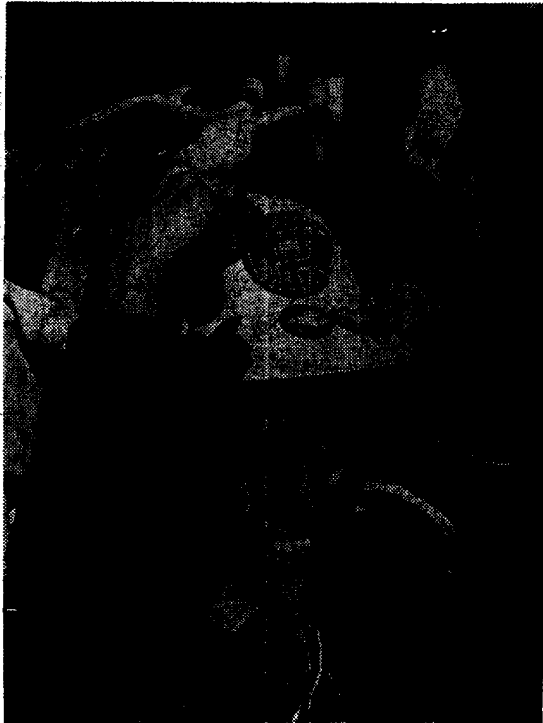
If there is such a silent majority, it is a challenge to American democracy. On an issue as grave as that of Vietnam, the majority should not be silent after four years of growing military involvement."

Recalling newspaper accounts of reactions to President Nixon's Nov. 3 headline Vietnam speech, McCarthy added, "52,000 Western Union telegrams and a telephone poll do not establish what the silent majority believes."

The theme of the rally as expressed by its organizers, the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, is an immediate cease-fire in Vietnam, to lead to a total military pull-

Goodell seemed to differ with that stance when he said: "We are told we advocate peace at any price. We do not advocate peace at any price; we are against face-saving at any price.

"We do advocate peace with pride and honor—the pride and honor that comes when a country has made a mistake, recognizes it and



Photos by Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

DOVE—with story—cap news L—x 22.4 mn-mn —
Doves are displayed by one of the demonstrators.

gets out of that mistake."

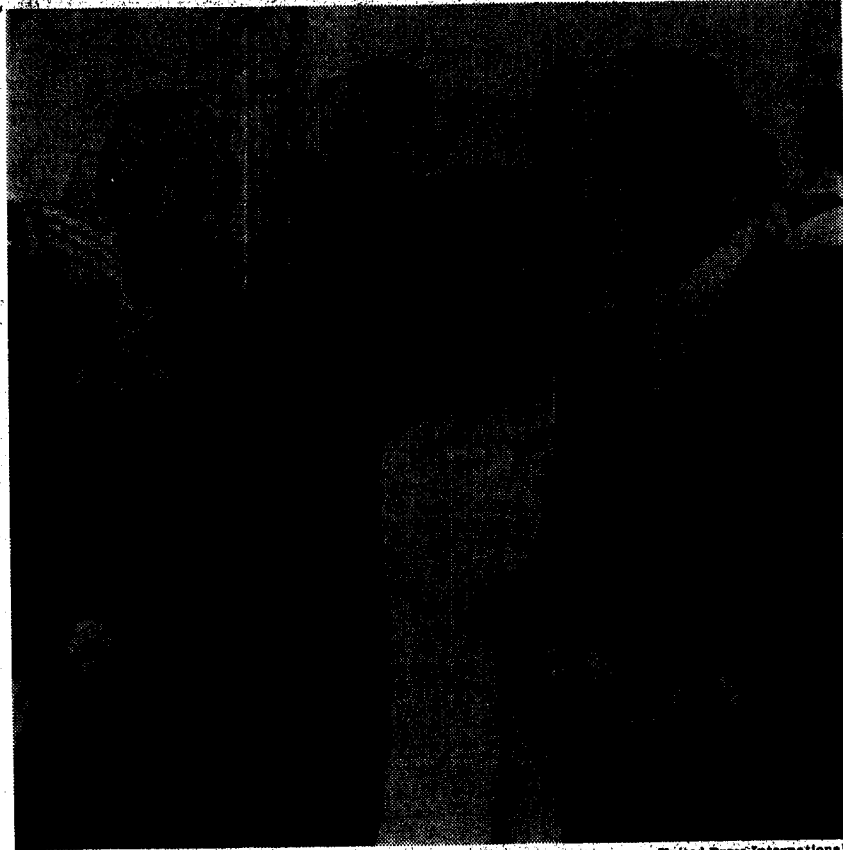
The committee issued its position paper—the equivalent of a call to action—on Friday and went considerably beyond what most of the elected officials were advocating yesterday.

Drafted by Sidney Lens, a member of the Mobilization executive committee, and a long-time labor organizer, the document contends "we march because we consider Vietnam not a mistake but an inherent part of American policy.

"We march because war and militarism have entrenched an economic and political leadership which is wedded to the status quo both at home and abroad and which defends global imperialism abroad and racism at home."

Dick Gregory, the black comedian, spoke on this when he told the rally, "This gathering says to tyrants all over the world that we are going to see there will be no war."

He said he was a convict, but not a criminal and added, "we await the day when the convict will be able to try the criminals."



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Sens. Goodell, left, and McGovern flank Coretta King marching along the Avenue.