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CAMPUSES QUIET ON WAR PROTEST

Little Enthusiasm Is Shown
for Capital Demonstration
Set for the Weekend

By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

Enthusiasm on college campuses for the antiwar demonstration in Washington this weekend has been generally running low.

A check of some two score colleges around the nation suggests that while student opposition to the war and the Nixon Administration is as monolithic as it ever was, the visceral enthusiasm for collective protest, so apparent last spring, has largely abated.

On many campuses there is a sense of retrenchment, a rejection of old tactics, and a searching for new modes of dissent.

"The problem," says Jerry Gordon, an organizer for the demonstration, "is that students feel totally alienated from the Administration, that it has never listened and that it will not listen now."

Many students interviewed in the last two weeks agreed with Mr. Gordon's rationale for the new mood, but others attributed it to more cynical motives. Some talked of the "success" of Vietnamization in reducing the draft calls, and of the draft lottery, which they said had depersonalized the anger at the war. Still others talked of just being tired and of their distrust of the forced communion of protest marches.

Most Convince Students

Mr. Gordon said that the task before the protest organizers "is to convince students that meaningful protest has been effective and can be effective and that Congress, if not the President, can be swayed."

To date, Mr. Gordon, a coordinator for the rally's sponsoring amalgam—The National Peace Action Coalition—cannot determine how that message is being received.

"We know without any question that there will be many more older people—trade unionists and women's clubs members in Washington this weekend," he said. "But we are not able to speak with the same certainty of students. Campus sentiment toward protest is amorphous and ill-defined."

That lack of definition was reflected in the spate of reports from colleges and universities. But certain generalizations were also evident.

For example there seemed to be more organizing activity in such places as Wayne State University in Detroit and Jersey City State College, which were only brushed by the fervor that followed last spring's Cambodian incursion and the killings at Kent State University in Ohio and Jackson State College in Mississippi.

Some Sharp Contrasts

Conversely at those schools where protest raged, there is now a singular dearth of speeches, rallies, petitions and calls to action.

At Princeton, the first school to shut down last spring to permit students to work in political organizing, there is now very little organized antiwar activity.

An attempt to mobilize opinion against the Reserve Officer Training Corps or on-campus Government research has drawn no support. Michael Sheldon, a senior who played a militant position in last year's protests, is openly despairing. He explained:

"People who have talked radical are getting conservative; many people who have been banging their heads against the Pentagon wall for years, and they're realizing that their heads are cracking instead of the wall."

At Harvard last Thursday, Prof. George Wald, the Nobel Laureate, stood on the steps of Memorial Church to address a noon rally in support of this weekend's march. By 10 minutes after 12, only three listeners had appeared. The rally was called off, and Dr. Wald went to lunch.

At the University of Buffalo, which last year was thrown into turmoil by both campus and national issues, there has been absolutely no talk of the April 24th demonstration.

Different Target for Some

There are a handful of more or less anonymous radicals, living in working class areas, who do talk of the May 1st Washington rally, being organized by the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice.

The May 1st demonstration is expected to embody what is left of the counter-culture thrust that provided much of last year's style on campuses. Persons like Rennie, C. Davis and John Froines, both defendants in the Chicago conspiracy trials, have been touring colleges promoting this event.

At Oberlin in Ohio, some 150 students gave Mr. Froines a cold reception. At Buffalo, Mr. Davis drew perhaps 500 of the school's 23,000 students. Last year, Jerry Rubin, the yippie leader, speaking at Buffalo, had an audience of 6,000.

At Stanford University in California, Adam Levin, president of the students, thinks the apparent calm on the campuses is "a false veneer covering student feeling about Vietnam that ranges from rage to alienation."

The inactivity, he says, stems from a realization that "ac-

tivities against the students' own universities did no good," and that now there may come a "redirection of student energies on a national scale."

Still, no one at Stanford has been able to discern any wide scale desire to participate in a rally in San Francisco that will coincide with the Washington demonstration.

At the University of Illinois, as of last week only 39 students had signed up for a chartered bus to the Washington rally.

At Columbia University here, the office that had arranged previous transportation is not handling it this year because, said one of the counselors, "of the confusion and indifference." At City College, no one is even organizing this travel.

But Wayne State has already

sold out 50 buses for the round-trip from Detroit, and Jersey City State has taken 11 buses, more than Yale and Columbia combined.

Of the few students found who said they would be going, many reflected the view of Carol Oboler, a 21-year-old senior at Oberlin, who said:

"I'm not sure what it will accomplish, and basically I'm pessimistic. But I've been going on these marches since I've been 14, and I have a sense of duty about it."

As for the organizers of the demonstration, they hope that regardless of the student turnout, the rally will provide a focal point that would serve as a stimulus to responsible protest. They hope this feeling will build toward a nationwide student strike on May 5.