

Since the formation of the United States Festival Committee in October, a number of questions of a general nature have been raised regarding the political makeup of the Youth Festival's participants, the attitudes of other youth groups vis-a-vis the Festival, the relationship of these groups to the United States Festival Committee, and the relationship of the present Committee to past committees. More specifically, many people have asked about the political nature of the upcoming Helsinki Festival and the attitude of the Finnish government and Finnish youth groups toward the Festival, the position of the United States National Student Association, and the structure of the USFC. This paper will attempt to answer these questions. However, one precautionary note should be made at the outset: the materials available in the United States about the Festival and the participating groups is extremely limited, both in number and in the spectrum of sources. This paper is based on information gathered from the United States National Student Association's working papers for its 1961 National Congress, the August-September 1961 issue of WFDY (World Federation of Democratic Youth) News, assorted articles from Time and Newsweek magazines and the few pieces thus far put out by the U.S.F.C., including its Constitution and Prospectus.

1. THE UNITED STATES FESTIVAL COMMITTEE AND ITS STRUCTURE: The USFC had its founding conference on the campus of the University of Chicago on October 14-15, 1961. Attending the conference were students and young people from all parts of the United States who came on the invitation of ten initiators, including the student body presidents of the University of Chicago and Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, the former College Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, the Vice-President of the U. of Chicago student body, a National Councilman of the Student Peace Union, the former Editor of the CCONY newspaper, etc.

The conference adopted a constitution setting up the United States Festival Committee, the purposes of which shall be administrative: "to publicize and encourage participation in the VIIIth World Festival of Youth and Students, to be held in Helsinki, during the summer of 1962; to organize a 'delegation' to the Festival." That is to say, nobody can take a political stand on behalf of the American participation and everybody who goes and participates does so as an individual. In other words, the American group at the Festival is not a delegation as such, but rather is a group of individuals participating. The Constitution also states that "the Committee shall welcome participation of all young Americans at the Festival in Helsinki, regardless of race, religion, sex, or political affiliation" (emphasis added).

Finally, the founding conference elected an administrative board (consisting of a Chairman-Executive Secretary, an Assistant Executive Secretary, a Program Coordinator, a Public Relations Director, and a Financial Director) to carry out the day-to-day activities of the USFC. Elected to the Administrative Board, in order, were Michael Myerson, Bert Weinstein, Alix Dobkin, Barbara Rabinowitz, and Norman Berkowitz. It was also decided that there would be a three-man Executive Board, with representatives elected at regional conferences on the West Coast, the East Coast, and the Midwest. The Executive Board would serve as policy makers both here and in Helsinki. The elected representatives are Mike Tigar of the University of California, Berkeley (West Coast); Norman Berkowitz, formerly of Hunter College, New York (East Coast); and Dick Prosten, of Roosevelt University in Chicago (Midwest). We also have a National Advisory Board with whom we consult for recommendations and suggestions.

The members of the NAB are:

1. Peter Brownstone, Graduate student, Member of Student-Faculty Court, University of Chicago.
2. Kenneth Cloke, NSA Delegate, Rep.-at-Large to Executive Comm. at Berkeley Campus of Univ. of California.
3. Ronald Dorfman, Chairman of Midwest Student Civil Liberties Coordinating Committee.
4. Leonard Friedman, Student Body President of U. of Chicago.
5. Joe Johnson, Founder, former President of NAACP at Hunter Coll.
6. David Levey, Student Body Vice-President of Univ. of Chicago.
7. Arthur MacEwen, Chairman University of Chicago Students for Civil Liberties.
8. Jim McDonald, Entertainer.
9. Jeff Mackler, Community Councilman at Antioch College; National Councilman of Student Peace Union.
10. Jeffrey Segal, Student Body President, Roosevelt University in Chicago, NSA Delegate, Chairman Student Activities Board.
11. Bruce Solomon, Former Editor-in-Chief 'Campus', and Student Government at CCNY.
12. Alan Steinberg, former member of Executive Committee of Student Government at CCNY.
13. Mitch Vogel, NSA Delegate, Chairman of Students for Democratic Rights, member of Executive Committee of Student Government.

Our finances come from an administrative fee as part of the participants' fee, and from individual donations which we welcome and can use.

2. THE USFC AND ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS: The present United States Festival Committee has no relationship to any past U.S. or American Festival Committee. We officially began on October 15, 1961, and will officially end on November 1, 1962.

Our relationship to the International Preparatory Commission (see below) which administers the Festival is a simple one: they have recognized our Committee as the rightful administrator of the American participation. That is to say, Americans who wish to participate in the Festival must apply and pay their fees to the United States Festival Committee, Inc. Our Executive Board is to be in Helsinki one month before the Festival to work out arrangements for room, board, inter-delegation meetings, passes to events, etc. with the I.P.C.

The relationship of the USFC to local committees is also very simple. To the best of our knowledge, there are presently about a dozen festival committees on college campuses in the U.S., and about eight or ten local committees in American cities. Each of these committees is autonomous. We only supply them with information and applications. The committees themselves run whatever activities they may wish to. However, one of the jobs of the USFC regional representatives is to stimulate local committees to form; and of course all applications to participate in the Festival itself are processed by the USFC office in New York.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE FESTIVAL: The official title of the ten-day event is "World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace and Friendship". In order to achieve this goal of "peace and friendship" the Festival has three media: cultural exchange, political exchange, and personal exchange. On the cultural level, each participating country is expected to present some kind of show of its national culture. Besides the big stage shows (which include world famous ballets, choruses, combos, opera troupes), there are inter-

delegation cultural exchanges with dances, art exhibits, athletic competitions, meetings of hobby enthusiasts, comparative workshops in various vocations and occupations, and the like. Similarly, on the political level (which, incidentally is increasingly becoming deemphasized as compared with ~~the~~ cultural), exchanges take the form of seminars on specific problems, larger gatherings on general questions, inter-delegation meetings in which, for example, the American participants may invite the Cuban, French, and Indian delegations to meet in an exchange of ideas. Finally, there is the personal exchange. For those who do not care to attend some or many of the organized events, they may instead choose to sit and talk the day away with newfound friends and acquaintances or have beer klatches as their schedules allow. In an attempt to approach the stated goal of "peace and friendship", then, the Festival brings together for ten days, thousands of young people from Eastern bloc countries, NATO countries, China, and the non-aligned nations in an arena of cultural and political exchange--and it is the one event which does so.

4. THE POSITION OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT AND STUDENT GROUPS TOWARD THE FESTIVAL: In October, 1960, the IPC met in Stockholm to decide on a site for the VIIIth World Festival. Four suggestions were made: Rome, Havana, Helsinki, and Colombo (Ceylon). The Italian delegate withdrew Rome from consideration and the Cuban delegate withdrew Havana. A decision was then made to inquire as to the Finnish Government's willingness to hold the Festival in Helsinki. An IPC delegation approached the Prime Minister of Finland for permission to use Helsinki. In his published reply, he gave his o.k. to the Festival and stated that it was government policy not to interfere in international events of non-governmental sources.

However, the SYL (National Union of Students of Finland) which is the Finnish equivalent of our National Students Association has taken a position of active opposition to the Festival for two reasons. First, in the plans to hold the Festival in Helsinki, the SYL was not consulted by the IPC which it (SYL) took to be, at the very least, bad protocol. This is essentially the position of a majority of the members of the Council of Finnish Youth Organizations, as well. Secondly, the decision not to participate in Festival preparations is simply following a tradition of "refraining from participation in events which are partisan, of a predominantly political nature, or controversial." (NSA working papers). Of these three categories, there has been much debate as to whether the Festival is partisan or predominantly political; however, this debate in itself makes the festival "controversial". In any case, the IPC has decided to keep Helsinki as the Festival site, and the 14,000-20,000 originally estimated to attend are still expected.

5. THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION TOWARD THE HELSINKI FESTIVAL: The USNSA, on the basis of reports of eye-witnesses at previous festivals and as a matter of sympathy with the Finnish SYL, has declined an invitation of the International Preparatory Commission to participate in the planning of the Festival. In the opinion of NSA, the IPC does not operate on "a representative, open, or free basis". However, the NSA does recognize that the Festival is a reality and that numbers of young Americans will participate and states that "these young people, not representing the United States, and not claiming to, should not be subjected to suspicion or reprisals because of their attendance." (from the resolution on the Festival presented at the NSA Congress in 1961). The United States Festival Committee of course does not claim to represent the United States. We are a group of individuals who desire the stated aim of peaceful coexistence and see the Festival as an important event (of which there is no equal in terms of size, scope, events, and representation) and a means to achieve that goal. Once again, we invite the participation of any individual, regardless of political belief and welcome NSA officials or friends to attend.

As far as we know at this time, the USNSA takes no stance toward our Committee.

6. THE COMPOSITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY COMMISSION AND THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FESTIVAL: The IPC is the organizing body and administrator of the World Festival. Groups with representatives on the Permanent Commission of the IPC are: Australia - Eureka Youth League; Bulgaria - Dimitrovia Communist Youth Union; Brazil - National Union of Students; China - All China Youth Federation; Colombia - Juventudes Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal; Finland - Festivaali-Festival en 1962, the Democratic Youth Union of Finland, the Federation of Hide and Leather Workers, plus observers of the Academic Rural Youth and SYL; France - Communist Youth Movement, National Union of Students of France (observer); Great Britain - British Youth Festival Committee; Ghana - Ghana Young Pioneers; Guinea - African Democratic Youth Assembly (JRDA); India - All India Youth Federation of Democratic Youth; Italy - Italian Union for Popular Sports, Socialist Youth Movement; Japan - Japan Festival Committee; Morocco - Moroccan working Youth; Poland - Committee for Cooperation of Polish Organizations; Senegal - Democratic Youth Assembly of Senegal; M.J.U.P.S.; Sweden - Demokratisk Ungdom; U.S.S.R. - Committee of Youth Organizations of the U.S.S.R.; Coordination Committee for International Work Camps attached to UNESCO; World Federation of Democratic Youth; International Union of Students.

Festival attendance is expected to come to about 17,000 young people from over 100 countries, with any number of interests, politics, cultural backgrounds, talents, hopes and desires.

7. THE HISTORY OF THE FESTIVALS AND HOW THEY HAVE BEEN RUN: The upcoming Festival is the eighth to be held. Previous Festivals have been held in Prague (1947), Budapest (1949), Berlin (1951), Bucharest (1953), Warsaw (1955), Moscow (1957), and Vienna (1959).

A number of criticisms have been made regarding the way that the Festival has been conducted in the past and the way the United States participation has been run in particular. These criticisms say that some Americans have given a false impression of life in the United States, that the officers of the past Festival Committees have made political statements in the name of the participants who in actuality they did not represent, and that there has not been the fullest and freest opportunity to express oneself at the Festival. Let us repeat two points made earlier; every American participant at the Festival represents only himself unless an organization designates him as its representative; nobody can take a political stand on behalf of the American participation. One other earlier point should be kept in mind; the present United States Festival Committee is autonomous and has no relation to previous committees.

The United States Festival Committee intends to use all its influence to guarantee the fullest discussion possible and to permit the freest expression of point of view. However, we view the "exchange of ideas" in much the same way as put forth by Alexander Meiklejohn. That is to say, while all points of view enrich discussion, they must be relevant to the subject at hand. It is decidedly not relevant nor appropriate to raise questions of nationalization of industry, armed aggression, or capital punishment, for example, at a meeting of theatre techniques. Furthermore, the conduct of an orderly meeting, while curtailing the freedom to speak does not curtail the freedom of speech. It is with this attitude that we hope the Festival will be conducted. Finally, it is not only inappropriate but most rude to disrupt a meeting by shouting out of hand and we shall attempt to prevent any and all such disruptive actions.

The United States Festival Committee also intends to allow for the free flow of literature within the American participation. Of course, the printed material shall be considered in the same category as pins, souvenirs, etc. That is, it can be exchanged between individuals both of whom agree to the exchange. We cannot, for example, guarantee that a statement supporting U.S. action in Cuba will not

provoke Cubans with whom an American can talk to refuse to accept the material, and to do so in no uncertain terms.

In short, the USFC intends to assert its influence to guarantee both the freedom of speech and the freedom to listen or not listen, as one chooses. Lastly, there is the question of freedom of the Press. The USFC is quite willing to allow the press into those events over which it presides and directs. This includes the American exhibits and cultural presentations, administrative meetings, and inter-delegation meetings provided the other contingents agree. However in those discussions and seminars on deeply controversial subjects, the IPC may find it necessary to disallow press coverage in order to assure the frankest discussion on these issues. It should be understood, for example, that those young people attending the Festival from Spain or Algeria may face extremely repressive measures upon returning home. It is therefore also necessary to protect their security and welfare.

Also, there are numbers of events to which the public is invited and of course the press will no doubt be admitted.

In summary, we hope this paper has served its purpose; that is, to answer the questions raised about the World Festival and about our Committee. Once again, we consider the Festival to be an outstanding event in the efforts to obtain a permanent peaceful co-existence. We know of no other event which brings so many different young people together in a cultural exchange of this size, and representation, and we shall strive to conduct ourselves in the best traditions of democracy. We invite you to join us. Applications should be addressed to:

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