

SDS NEW LEFT NOTES

Vol. 4, Number 11

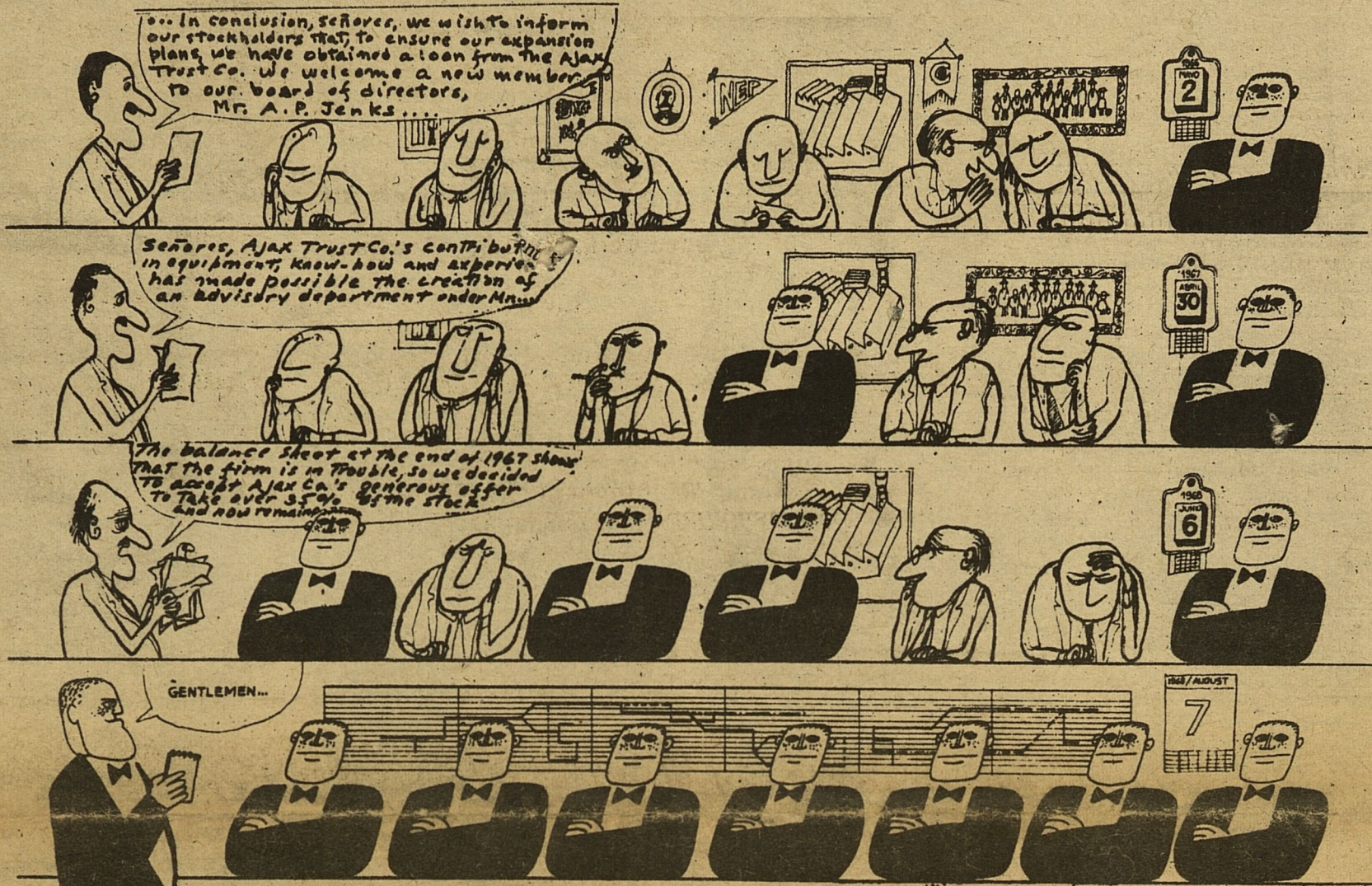
LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

March 13, 1969

Agitators

The Man let it be known through official "leaks" this week that indictments are about to be issued against several "professional agitators" who travel to campuses to incite rebellion. The Justice Department claims to have "substantial evidence" and dossiers against such people—who presumably will be prosecuted under the Stokely Carmichael interstate riot act. People are reminded not to do the Man's work by giving him any information at all.

from the magazine Primera Plana, of Argentine, lifted from Granma



The Berkeley strike is now in its seventh week. For an analysis of what's going on (and not going on), see Page 8.

Mexico

Mexico has a long history as a colony, first under the Spanish, then the French.

Today, American business dominates the country. Last fall, more than 50 persons were murdered when they demonstrated for reforms; the struggle continues. For a look at Mexico's history and present situation, see page 2.

Greece

Modern Greece exemplifies the development of U.S.

cold-war policy and its anti-communism. Litton Industries and the CIA helped make it that way. See story on page 2.

Middle East

Oil interests are strong

here, where Al-Fatah is leading the struggle for National Liberation. For the third in a series, see page 4.

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Mexican movement fights continued repression

by Bob Stewart
Chairman, Chicago
Revolutionary Contingent

To understand fully the events of last year in Mexico, as well as events in the future, it is essential to understand the history of Mexico. Unlike the history we're taught in the U.S., it is not an abstract string of events seemingly unrelated to present-day activity, but rather an accumulation of experiences that are manifested in Mexican political life in a very direct way. Present-day Mexicans can relate political questions to events that took place centuries ago, and so have a sense of continuity with history that makes political struggles seem the natural course of events rather than being unusual.

Imperialist Invasion

While Mexican history goes back over 2000 years, the period of conquest is regarded as the beginning of modern history. Mexicans regarded the conquest period around 1520, when the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan was destroyed by Cortez, not as the beginning of an era of enlightenment and civilization, but as the opening battle in the Mexican people's struggles against western imperialism. Cortez, far from being a hero, is regarded as a degenerate and a thief, while Cuauhtemoc and Quitlac, two Indian chiefs who fought Cortez, are looked on as the first in a long line of resistance heroes. Mexican schoolchildren are taught today how their ancestors fought to the last man against the rifles and cannons of the Spaniards.

While the Spaniards may have won the first round, the Mexicans still resisted. Uprisings by various Indian groups, slave rebellions, and resistance to land seizures and feudal dues went on for the next 300 years, the Spaniards living parasitically off the sweat of the Indians and contributing nothing to the development of the country.

Mexican Resistance

Finally, about 1810, a Catholic priest named Hidalgo (later excommunicated) started an uprising in the small town of Dolores, which, though defeated, sparked off a struggle that was finally able to throw out the Spanish. This struggle had a characteristic that is common to all progressive struggles in Mexico: it had a mass base of workers, peasants, slaves, artisans, and lower sections of the clergy. This was not just a struggle for a change in control; the struggle also contained class demands that reflected the interests of the most oppressed as well as of the leaders. In this case it was the abolition of slavery and feudal dues and protection for Indian lands.

This did not end the Mexican people's struggle for independence however; they remember well the American invasion of 1848, when the northern half of Mexico was stolen by American slave-owners interested in Texas and merchants interested in California gold. But even more important was the invasion of the French in the 1860's (with the backing of other European powers who wanted a foothold for a possible reconquest of South America) and the ensuing people's war against Maximilian. After the expulsion of the French (supposedly the finest army in Europe) by the Mexican workers and peasants, social reforms were instituted — including the establishment of civil

marriage, confiscation of church lands, and the beginnings of agrarian reform.

However, because of the degeneration of the Mexican government into a complete dictatorship of the moneyed classes under Porfirio Diaz and the growing influence of U.S. imperialism (oil, textiles, mining, railroads), another upheaval was in the making. And in 1910 the dam broke, led by Francisco (Pancho) Villa and Emiliano Zapata on the left (peasants) and Francisco Madero, Alvaro Obregon and Veustanzio Carranza on the right (bourgeoisie). Eight years of civil war took place, first against the Diaz regime, and then between the left and right forces as well as against U.S. invasions in 1914 and 1917. Though the forces of the left lost, they left a mark that still remains, giving the struggle an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-clerical character. Where the revolutionary armies had not instituted it themselves, the government began land reform. Where the foreign bosses had not already left, the government nationalized foreign enterprises. Today in Mexico all mining, petroleum, railroads, electricity, telephones and telegraphs, as well as sections of the chemicals and metals industries, are nationalized.

Popular Struggles Continue

The Mexico of today, however, is a far cry from the revolutionary expectations of Mexicans in the 20's and 30's; and the "revolution" which Mexican politicians talk so much about has been abandoned in the face of U.S. economic influence. U.S. factories like General Motors, Ford, G.E., and Goodyear dot the landscape; Coca Cola signs cover storefronts, and Mexican agricultural productivity has been increased (a benefit of the revolution) — not to make Mexico self-sufficient in food, but to provide cheap tomatoes, oranges, lettuce, and cotton for the U.S. markets.

It should also be understood that popular struggles have not stopped. In 1958 there was nearly a general strike, and the Mexican peasants have put up a continual struggle for more land, modernized production, and higher prices. In the last four years there have been four major peasant struggles in different parts of the republic. This is the setting for the student uprising of last year.

In mid-July, 1968, a group of youths from Vocational School Number 5 had a fight in which the police intervened. A battle between cops and students started, and the Granaderos (riot police) were called in. They invaded the school and beat both students and teachers.

(In Mexico all schools of higher learning, including vocational schools, are supposedly autonomous.) In response to this incident the students at the Polytechnic Institute called a protest demonstration for the 26th of July to coincide with one called by the university in support of Cuba. Both demonstrations were attacked by the Granaderos. Two students were killed, 200 injured, and many were arrested.

Demands, August Action

The students responded by: 1) forming the National Strike Council, 2) going out on strike (200,000 students), 3) drawing up six demands calling for freedom for political prisoners, disbanding of the Granaderos, etc., 4) setting up political brigades to get their side of the story out to the people, and 5) intensifying the struggle in the streets.

During August there was at least one major demonstration a week, involving tens, then hundreds of thousands of participants. While the demonstrations built solidarity and spirit among the students and provoked bloody, but expensive, battles with the police (Mexican students burn buses as a means of hurting the government financially). Political brigades worked painting slogans on walls and distributing leaflets to workers. Students would jump on a bus (few Mexicans have cars) without paying, distribute leaflets, get off at the next stop, and get on another bus. In this manner the whole city was covered with leaflets in a short space of time with a minimum of contact with the cops. Also, street meetings were held in a sort of guerrilla-like fashion, since the cops would break up any meeting very quickly.

By the end of August, the struggle had begun to acquire the characteristics of a mass movement, and the largest demonstration in the history of Mexico was held. On August 27, 700,000 people gathered in the Zocalo (the main square) across from the National Palace in support of the student demands. This was the high point of the movement. By this time 500,000 students were out on strike throughout the country and Comites de Lucha (struggle committees) with a revolutionary perspective were being formed not only in schools but also in factories and workers' neighborhoods, and among peasants.

Naturally, the government wasn't happy. The Olympics were approaching fast and no amount of intimidation seemed to slow the movement down. Diaz Ordaz went on TV and radio pledging to defend the Mexican equivalent of "Law and Order," but to no avail.

Repression Hits Hard

On September 19, the government made its most serious act of repression; Mexican troops occupied the university, arrested everyone, including employees, and surrounded the Polytechnic Institute. This was a serious blow to the movement, as it meant the loss of more activists as well as the loss of a place of refuge and base of operations. Four days of street fighting between students and soldiers, with many workers and working-class youth helping the students, followed the occupation. Students used rifles and Molotov cocktails, and workers' wives helped by raining down on the cops various objects such as bottles, bricks, and tubs of hot water from apartment windows. Motorists would stop and allow students to siphon off gas. The self-igniting Molotov cocktail was born in the chemistry labs of the Polytechnic

Greece:

by Stephanie
Rugoff and Beth
Lyons, NYU SDS

April 21, 1969 marks the second anniversary of the Greek junta. The right-wing colonels seized control using NATO weapons and the NATO plan Prometheus and have maintained their power with the aid of US capital and weapons.

The fascist regime did not destroy democracy in Greece — because democracy has never existed. Since 1821, when the Greek people fought the Ottomans, they have been fighting oppressors. The period which leads into the current US involvement and the junta began in 1933 under the fascist Axis regime of Metaxas. During the German occupation of Greece in WW II, while the patriots of the resistance were fighting the invaders, the Metaxas regime and King George were still arresting progressives. The effectiveness of the resistance fighters is illustrated by a statement of the General Staff of the Germany Army that "in our estimation 94% of the Greek people are against us." The Greek resistance struggle played a decisive role in the successful invasion of Italy and stopped the flow of German men and materiel to the Middle East.

During the occupation, the two forces representing Greece were EAM, the National Liberation Front (EPON, the youth corps and ELAS, the military section) and the Allied-supported government-in-exile headed for a time by George Papandreu. Papandreu used ELAS to defeat the Germans. Meanwhile, with British help, he was planning to destroy it after the liberation.

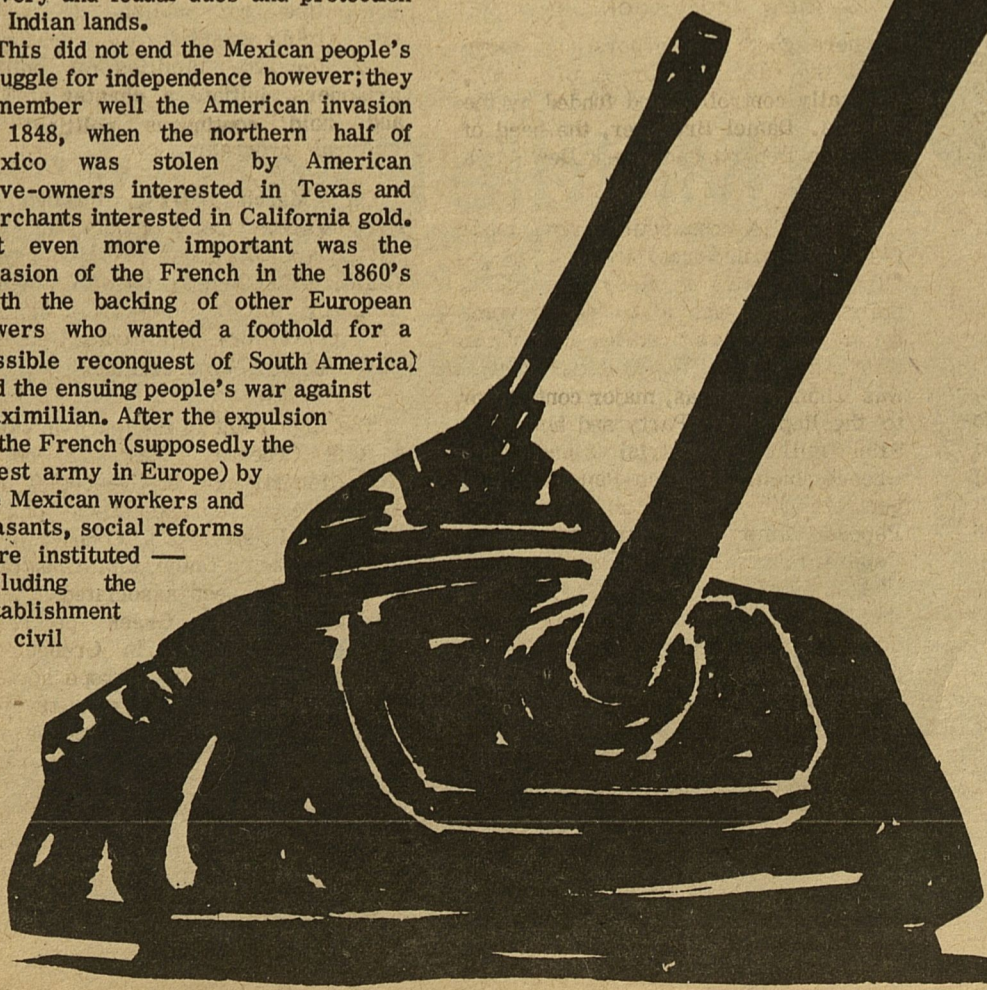
On Dec. 3, 1944, the Athens EAM called a demonstration in support of a larger voice for the Resistance in the new government. 500,000 men, women, and children poured into the streets. The demonstration began peacefully. The demonstrators were attacked from hidden positions by the police (some of whom had held the same positions under the Nazis). What had begun peacefully now turned into the massacre still known as Bloody Sunday. Hundreds were wounded or killed in the ambush.

The next day Papandreu had the gall to go on the radio and declare that his hands were clean of the responsibility. Further, he accused EAM of being responsible!

Battle of Athens

The Bloody Sunday massacre was the spark that set off a spontaneous uprising in Athens. George Papandreu resigned on Dec. 4. On that day, the Battle of Athens started. Tens of thousands of people were killed as the city was fought over block by block. The British poured in more and more of their troops, but Athenian civilians and local members of ELAS still fought back bitterly. The British were bombing indiscriminately all of Athens, and since the regular forces of ELAS could not bring any assistance to the city, the reserves in Athens had to make a tactical decision. In order to save Athens from complete demolition, they decided to withdraw, and on the night of Jan. 4-5 they slipped out of the city under cover of darkness.

World reaction forced the British to negotiate. The agreement included a promise for a plebiscite for retention of the monarchy within a year. However, immediately after the "agreement," right terror groups called "X" organized and continued the persecution and execution of resistance fighters, while never having war trials for the collaborators. The people took up arms



Libertad a los Presos Políticos



Cárcel a los que reprimen al pueblo

Mexican student stickers: "Free the political prisoners. Jail those who repress the people."

Institute.

Nevertheless, the movement was beginning to feel the weight of repression, with leaders semi-underground, 50-60 deaths, hundreds of wounded, thousands in jail and no real organized movement of support from the workers or peasants that could divert some of the repression.

Importance of Olympics

On top of that the Mexican government was getting more frantic as the Olympics got closer. It should be understood why the Olympics were so important to the government, really to the entire Mexican ruling class. Mexico is very dependent on two things: foreign investments and tourism. Foreign investments provide access to sums of capital that cannot be raised by the Mexican bourgeoisie themselves. Foreign investments make Mexican agriculture more productive as well as providing Mexico with a great number of relatively cheap finished goods. This leaves Mexican capital free for more profitable ventures like construction and real estate. It also provides jobs for the growing Mexican working class. Tourism is Mexico's second largest industry next to oil. Tourists come, of course, from the U.S., but also from France, West Germany, and other European countries. This not only gives the Mexican ruling class a feeling that it is a part of "western

civilization" and provides it with international business contacts, but, most important, provides it with millions of U.S. dollars to help offset its otherwise terrible balance of trade. For that reason, the ruling class wants to present a picture of affluence (i.e. financial success), and, most important of all, stability! The Olympics were seen as a way of doing this. The only problem was that everyone in Mexico understood this tactic and resented the money that was being used to lay out the welcome mat for foreigners while domestic needs went unmet.

The National Strike Committee called a rally in the Plaza of Three Cultures for Oct. 2 to keep things going. The Plaza, near downtown Mexico City, lies in a workers' high-rise housing complex and next to a vocational school. The day of the rally, troops surrounded the 10,000 people gathered there, and according to the strike committee, plainclothes agents of the army or police, firing from one of the buildings onto the troops on the other side of the plaza, set off an hour-long massacre in which troops fired point blank into the crowd with machine-guns, from helicopters and at buildings from tanks. Unfortunately for the soldiers (Mexico has a professional army of the type Nixon wants here, not conscripts) many students at the school and in the buildings had arms and many soldiers were killed, and their commander was wounded. The fighting continued all night and spread through the city, though on a small scale.

Serious Setback

The movement had suffered a serious setback. Almost 200 people were killed and many hundreds of others wounded or arrested. This was the worst act of repression since the time of Porfirio Diaz and sent the movement into a state of shock. All of the strike leaders were underground and many students stayed hidden or away from the movement headquarters at the Polytechnic Institute. Shortly after, the Olympics started and schools were closed for vacations. By the middle of November the National



profitable land for imperialism

again—the Civil War had begun.

It ended with the British imperialists leaving and the US imperialists moving in. In the same year that the CP was outlawed, 1947, US economic aid to Greece began under the Marshall Plan. 40% of the Marshall Plan money was used for military purposes. Although the Marshall Plan was formally terminated in 1962 when assistance reached \$3.5 billion, US aid to Greece has continued. In fact, the US has given Greece more money relative to its population than it has provided for any other country with the exception of Vietnam. Now, the Greek Army is planning to send troops to Vietnam.

Greece Profitable Ground

The US is interested in Greece for numerous reasons. Greece exemplifies the development of American cold-war policy and its anti-communism. Greece, as a NATO base, is strategically important to the US because of its proximity to the Soviet Union and the Middle East. NATO is operating its most important European missile base on the island of Crete and the US 6th Fleet uses Greek ports for supply bases and harbors. The rightist Greek army has proven itself as the only European army to successfully fight a full-scale war against the communists (Coulambis, Greek Political Reaction to American and NATO Influences, 1966).

Economically, Greece is profitable ground for American business. According to a special advertising supplement in the "New York Times" (March 3, 1968), "Greece... Ideal Country for Investors," sponsored by the Greek government and US and Greek business interests, the Greek government guarantees complete protection for foreign capital investors, enjoyment of tax exemptions and assurances against the expropriation of property. An additional factor conveniently omitted from this

advertisement is that all trade unions in Greece have been banned.

Until the end of last year, one of the companies involved was the infamous conglomerate Litton Industries (see "Ramparts") whose chairman, Tex Thornton, is a good friend of LBJ's. Litton was paid for its expenses plus 11% by the junta. In addition, Litton received a fee of about 2¢ for every dollar of private money invested in Greece. Aside from applying "systems analysis" to the job of staking out investment projects in Greece's historic Western Peloponnesus region and on the island of Crete, Litton tried to recruit the foreign capital needed to operate the projects. The aim was to pump \$240 million into the target areas within the next 3 1/2 years.

Student Situation

Aristotle Onassis has now taken over the function of attracting private capital to Greece. Olympic Airways, owned and operated by Onassis, has recently been running an ad in American newspapers. The main copy reads, "Eleven Ways to Stop Student Unrest." The method suggested is to send students to visit 11 places in Greece. It is ironic that they omitted the islands of Yiannos and Leros where thousands of political prisoners are held and tortured, including some who have been there

since the Civil War (late 1940's). Some of the ways the junta stops its own student unrest is to torture and imprison leftist students.

Other ways the junta stops student unrest are to limit the student enrollment to certain specified groups. A loyalty statement is required—even those who sign are rejected if the junta deems them politically unfit. Eliminated from the student population are children of known or suspected leftist parents.

Agnew and Greek CIA

Where goeth the corporations, there goeth the CIA. The Greek CIA, KYP, is totally controlled and funded by the US CIA. Daniel Brewster, the head of the State Department Greek Desk, is a CIA agent.

These CIA connections are made visible here in Vice President Agnew. "The millionaire mystery man behind Spiro Agnew" who also "swung votes for Richard Nixon" at the Republican Convention (Daily News, Aug. 9, 1968) was Thomas Pappas, major contributor to the Republican Party and head of a \$190 million industrial complex in Greece including Esso-Pappas, which controls 97% of the oil in Greece. Pappas' family in Boston controls the Pappas Foundation of Greece and the USA, a right-wing CIA conduit. One of the directors of Esso-Pappas, who ran the Greek Ministry of Public Order, resigned his post to devote full time to helping the Army men prepare the coup. Pappas has been a friend of Nixon's since at least 1952 and was Pres. Johnson's special envoy to the funeral of King Paul of Greece.

For over a year, some members of NYU SDS have been working with Demokratia, a radical anti-junta organization. Demokratia's primary aim has been to inform Americans about the current political developments in Greece and relate their implications

to international affairs. The Vietnamese struggle against imperialism goes beyond the confines of Southeast Asia. Greece today has all the trappings of Vietnam ten years ago. Although the struggle of the Greek people will be long and laborious, we must respond to their justified demands for their freedom as well as to prevent the far-reaching consequences if they are defeated once more.

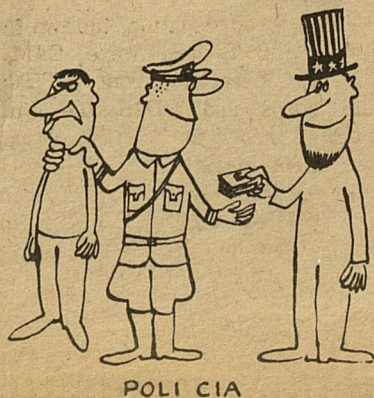
Demokratia has been the only committee to publish a monthly newsletter, establish a Greek relief fund for the families of political prisoners, initiate a chapter at NYU, and hold continuous political and cultural programs.

On March 20-25, through the co-operation and support of NYU All-Square Congress, NYU Lawyers' Guild, NYU Demokratia, NY Regional SDS, and the Anti-Fascist Committee of York University, Toronto, a teach-in on Greece will be presented.

The high point of the teach-in will be a talk (Tuesday, Mar. 25) on the liberation struggle in Greece, by Tony Ambatielos, representative of the Patriotic Front and a Founder of the Greek Seamen's Union. Mr. Ambatielos, who has long been associated with the struggle of the Greek people to establish democracy in Greece, has recently been touring Europe speaking to labor organizations, etc., trying to create ties and means of cooperation for the current struggle in Greece.

For further information, contact NYU SDS, 10 W. 4th Street, NYC, 212-598-3956 or Demokratia, 346 W 20th St, NYC, 212-929-2390.

Our struggle against imperialism must not be parochial. In whatever way possible, the struggle of various peoples for self-determination must be supported.



POLI CIA

History of Middle East liberation struggle

by Susan Eanet

This is the third part in a series on the Middle East liberation struggle. Part 1 discussed Middle East history, Part 2, Arab women.)

There are major splits in the Arab world over the Palestinian and other national struggles. For example, the commando activities are outlawed in Saudi Arabia, which is also trying to crush the struggle of the people of South Yemen (Aden). The rulers of those countries whose economies are most closely aligned with American interests are opposed to the development of anti-imperialist struggle. But the inspiration provided by the Al-Fatah and the Front of South Yemen are too great to be crushed.

Holy War Reactionary

In any national liberation struggle the elements of the history and culture of the struggling people plays a prominent role in unifying and mobilizing the masses. In no case has this been more strong a factor than in the Arab struggles, in which the traditional Muslim concept of the "jihad" or Holy War has been fully utilized to unite the people. This is the non-progressive aspect of the Palestinian liberation struggle, it is the factor that tends to lend credibility to the harangues of the Arab bourgeoisie, to Nasser, to Saud, who use it to keep the people from their own throats by trying to relegate the Palestinian struggle to the level of a religious war. They fail to encourage the Jewish workers in Palestine to unite with the Arab people against international imperialism, and they thereby limit the level of the struggle and its potential for success. In this context of a religious war, is it possible that a socialist consciousness can emerge and that the Arab people can win, both against the Zionists and against the reactionary Arab rulers?

There are other important contradictions. For instance, although Cairo supports the Al-Fatah, Nasser jails Egyptian communists. The Al-Fatah was forced to remain secret for the first ten years of its existence to avoid being crushed by Arab leaders. King Hussein of Jordan appeared on "Meet the Press" last year and hinted that the Arab governments would be willing to recognize Israel "provided a

satisfactory settlement of the crisis is guaranteed." The reason for his trip here was to purchase F-104 bombers from the U.S. Imperialism continues to profit from both sides of this war.

One of the main actions of the six-day war of June 1967 is described below in the excerpted article from Tricontinental magazine. What happened during that war is similar to the strategy followed by the U.S. in Vietnam: bomb the cities into the ground, level the villages. In Vietnam the U.S. uses the excuse that the village has been harboring Viet Cong; but the Israelis need only the existence of Arab villages to justify their destruction and the accompanying annihilation of children and peasants. Aside from the 240,000 new Palestinian refugees who were forced to flee from the western bank of the Jordan in the June War, about 200 to 300 new refugees a day continue to enter Jordan even now. They live out in the non-arable rocky or desert lands, with barely any shelter, food or clothing.

Support Al-Fatah

OSPAAL (the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) released a position on the Middle East in July 1967 in which it stated that "Old alliances that are not really based on the interests of the Arab peoples have been exposed....It is not possible, under the cloak of so-called brotherhood, to unite progressive and revolutionary governments with corrupt, feudal monarchies, completely sold out to imperialist policy."

One year later in July 1968 OSPAAL made an international call for material support for Al-Fatah, as the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle in the Middle East. In the opinion of the OSPAAL secretariat, Al-Fatah recognizes the necessity to wage internal struggle in the Arab countries as well as against Zionism, to combat the doctrine of religious war and replace it with hard political education, and has a strong sense of international responsibility. In the year since the June War, OSPAAL arrived at this conclusion and called on the revolutionaries in the world to support Al-Fatah.

The following article appeared in the Tricontinental, the theoretical organ of the secretariat of OSPAAL, in the November-December, 1968 issue. It

gives the political perspective of the leadership and the youth corps of the Al-Fatah, the vanguard of the struggle of Palestine.

Our contact with Al-Fatah had begun two days earlier, in an Arab city. There we met the first representatives of the Palestinian people. The underground networks of Al-Fatah have achieved the creation of an organization capable of throwing back the enemy's attempt at penetration. Everything is organized and dispersed. In one house we were provided with some of the things necessary for the trip to the commando bases. In another we received clothing, while further on, now in mountains bare of vegetation, we once again made contact with the clandestine networks that—although far from the scene that has nothing to do with the normalcy of this city—act with the same vigilance and care that characterizes the entire military apparatus.

We arrived at a tent after making contact with the first fighters of the Front, wearing the camouflage uniform that identifies the commandos and armed with automatic rifles. We were received by the guards of the camp. Inside the tent were an old wooden table and some rough chairs; under a small gas lamp, a relatively young man wearing the olive-green uniform that also symbolizes the liberation struggle of other peoples: Abou Amar, one of the small group that began to organize Al-Fatah 14 years ago in Gaza and is today one of the few leaders who is known to the public.

We offered him our impressions and told him of our desire to get to know the truth of the "Palestine problem"; we spoke to him of the lies with which the corrupt press of the capitalist world tries to give the world a false picture of the objectives pursued by the Palestinian people. Abou Amar commented:

Not Waging Racial War

"It is true that imperialism has tried to confuse world public opinion; it has even found spokesmen who try to present the struggle as one of Israel, a small people of two million Jews, threatened with extermination by a hundred million Arabs. We have not taken up arms to force two million Jews into the sea or to wage a religious or racial war. The Jews lived alongside the Arabs, including the Palestinians, for many years, and we have never proposed to expel the Jews from Palestine. We are carrying the war forward to expel from our country a military occupation force set up by international imperialism and led by the US Government, British imperialism and international Zionism — which served as the instrument for carrying out imperialist policy in the creation of Israel.

We are showing that, in reality, the struggle is being waged between an imperialist army of occupation (which has the full support of the most powerful capitalist governments) and a handful of Palestinian patriots who, with their commando actions, keep that army checkmated. Our struggle is for Palestine, for the Arab people, for the world. We are a national liberation movement which is struggling, just like the fighters of Vietnam, Bolivia, or any other people of the world. The enemy has a concentration of 25,000 soldiers along 110 kilometers of the border that it has forced upon us and, in addition, uses the most advanced techniques: electronic circuits that detect the presence of any person crossing its positions, soldiers lying in ambush with rifles equipped with infrared sights and reflectors, mined fields, and other modern techniques. However, all these resources cannot contain the daily actions of the commandos. The enemy has claimed that it has 1600 prisoners. We can say that there have been some 150 Al-Fatah men who have been arrested or wounded in combat in the occupied zones; at least half of the rest are completely innocent.

We have lost many men in this war, but, in the type of action that we must carry out, we cannot hope to avoid considerable loss of life. It is necessary to die many times to obtain freedom."

We got ready to take leave of Abou Amar. We were to make a short tour of some zones where the commandos' secret bases are located and then rest for what remained of the night.

Before we left, Abou Amar broke off a discussion to tell us:

"We have many problems. Our movement is maintained fundamentally thanks to the voluntary contributions of the Palestinian people: that is the basic source of our finances, and we are glad this is the case. We maintain absolute independence; we do not belong to any political party, nor do we depend on any government. But every day we must turn down dozens of young Palestinians who want to join the commandos: each new fighter represents uniforms, weapons, shoes, food—in a word, there are many problems to solve. In addition, each new member is analyzed in depth. The enemy tries to penetrate our organization. We must be very careful about this, and the day we discover someone sent by the enemy he will be punished in the only way possible for those who betray a people's struggle."

Medical Volunteers

In the early hours of the morning we conversed with the director of the recently built hospital where we were to spend the rest of the night. He explained:

"We completed this hospital just three weeks ago for giving basic care to the combatants. In the actions which because of their nature can cause us many casualties, a doctor accompanies the fighters to the point nearest the action. In any case, there is always a doctor near the scene of the fighting to give first aid to the wounded and later move them to the hospital. Now there are just a few doctors, but in the next few weeks doctors will come from Algeria, Syria, and other Arab countries to work as volunteers with us."

The director of the hospital is a young man; expressive; with an affable personality, broad knowledge, and an interest in international affairs. Along with Abou Amar, he is one of those who founded Al Fatah 14 years ago. We asked him about the development of the struggle and its difficulties, and he told us:

"Our movement must face many difficulties. It differs greatly from the national liberation movements of Latin America in some aspects, and from all the other national liberation movements in others. For example, we cannot count on the support of workers, peasants, or any group of people whatsoever in Israel; they have all declared themselves to be our enemies, although our struggle is against imperialism and for the liberation of our country. Another aspect is the terrain. As there are no mountains or wooded plains, we must carry out commando actions in zones completely lacking in vegetation; this is why we have not been able to make



Al-Fatah-trained Arab girl practices with her gun.



Imperialist Israeli troopers look for AL-Fa

e: Part 3

better use of the revolutionary experiences of other peoples. We must create our own methods, our own tactics, constantly."

While we rode in the commandos' jeep, we mentally reviewed our impressions and the ideas formulated on the bases of operations: the fighters, their families, their human problems in general, the difficulties and prospects of their struggle, and their need of support for the revolutionaries of the world. On stopping, we were taken out of our meditations by the hospitable and fraternal embrace of the commander in chief of this zone of operations of the commandos, at one of whose bases we had just arrived.

The major is a young man. His life as a revolutionary began many years ago. Twice imprisoned in an Arab country which opposed the struggle of the Palestinian people, he was a member of the military and after the June War joined the commandos. Today he is chief of a zone of operations.

We left with him, and after a few hours, arrived at the hamlet of Kerameh, opposite the Jordan River and Valley, on the "border" of the zone occupied by Israel; we walked along the main street; Kerameh was deserted, its entire population having been forced to leave a few months before. On the main street not a house was standing; everything had been destroyed. Desolation and death were reflected everywhere.

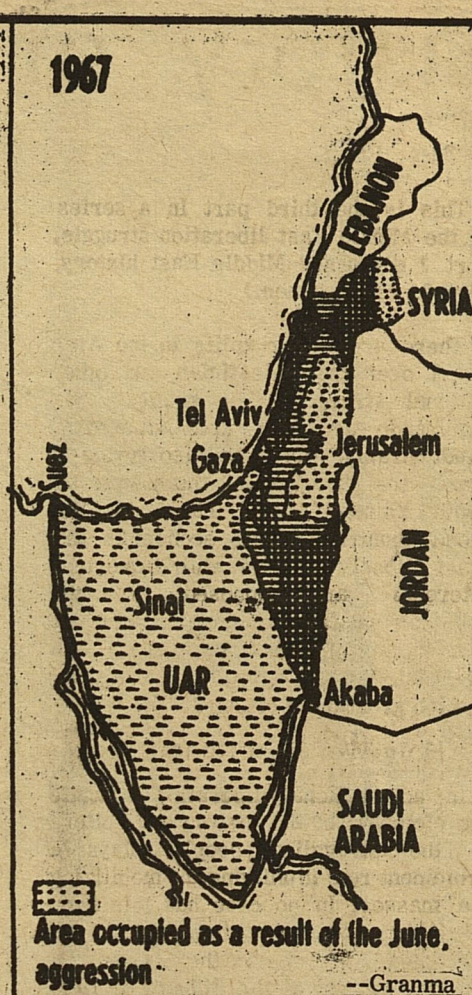
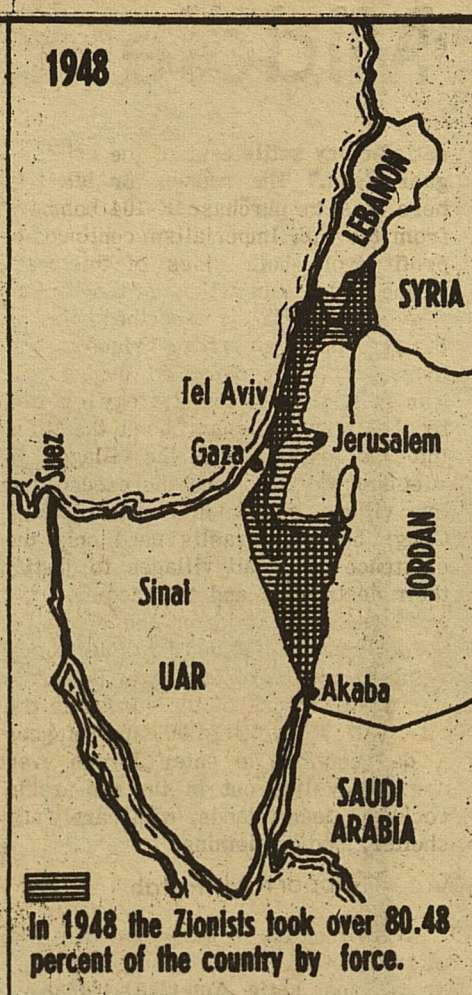
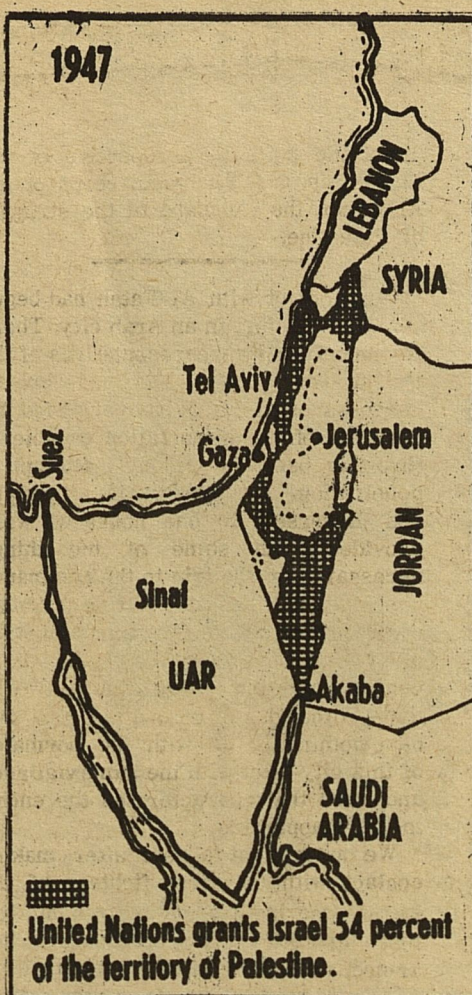
The Major narrated what took place in Kerameh last March 21:

"We knew several days before that the Israelis were going to attack us. They are never able to carry out an action against us without our finding out about it in advance and preparing for it. Thus, before the attack, we had taken up key positions to throw back the new Zionist aggression. This hamlet is part of Jordanian territory, but we decided to defend it, and we brought the commandos from their bases of operations and concentrated a force of about 100 men here. All those who came did so as volunteers. We were not able to concentrate more men for fear of weakening our positions in the occupied territory.

Kerameh Action

At five in the morning, Israeli tanks and jeeps preceded the advance of the infantry against the Damiya and Allenby Bridges in an operation against Kerameh, while on the bank of the Jordan, outside the territory occupied in June, the Israeli paratroops came down and advanced towards the small hamlet. To the east, in the mountains, another group of paratroops was dropped to complete the encirclement. Our commandos had occupied positions in the inner streets of Kerameh and to the east and west of the village, foreseeing the enemy encirclement.

"From the first moment, the Israeli troops suffered the consequences of their tactical failure, and the paratroop brigade that was dropped in the foothills of the mountains to the east of Kerameh was completely wiped out by the



commandos. The tanks had taken up positions just before the entrance to the village, and from there they began to fire indiscriminately against the flimsy houses, most of them made of baked clay, occupied by the Jordanian population of Kerameh. The tanks did not at any time leave the main street: they were afraid of the commandos, who, hidden in the side streets, rained steady bazooka fire at them. From all over, our fighters used their automatic rifles against the Zionist infantry. In the face of this situation, a brigade of amphibious tanks crossed the river between the Allenby and Damiya Bridges, while a brigade of light tanks crossed the latter in order to reinforce the aggressor troops. It was then that the artillery of the Jordanian Army, made up of a large portion of Palestinians, began to support our action, thus defending their country's soil, which was once again being invaded. The amphibious and light tanks were forced to retreat, and many of them were destroyed before they were able to cross the river again and enter occupied territory.

"After more than 12 hours of fighting the Israelis withdrew; a truce was declared so they could remove their dead and wounded. Fifteen tanks had been totally destroyed, and more than 75 Zionist troops were killed. Twenty-five Al Assifa fighters died in this action, and three were captured by the enemy. What you see here today is the result of that aggression.

"We consider the Kerameh action to be one of prime importance, but our tactics do not include this type of operations against the enemy.

Al-Fatah Tactics

"We will continue to launch swift surprise attacks. Before the enemy can recover from one attack, we will begin another: he will never know when or where we will strike next. We will continue this war of attrition, and our attacks on enemy positions will be greater and more frequent as our territory expands."

We left Kerameh, and, after a long journey, arrived at the Major's commando base. Kerameh is a living demonstration of the type of warfare being waged by the people of Palestine, of the reality of the so-called Middle East crisis. It shows who is directly suffering from the consequences of this crisis; it gives the lie to the United Nations cease-fire "agreement." Palestinian combatants. The former inhabitants of Kerameh, seemed to be excluded from the terms of this "agreement"—at least, this is the way the Israelis saw it. Here it was plain to see that the war is being waged by a handful of courageous, poorly armed Palestinians, struggling not only for their country but also—and at the cost of their lives—for the land and liberty of their Jordanian brothers.

"Al Assifa is organizing militias of workers, peasants, professionals, and a large majority of young students, who are trained on their days off from work or study.

Commando Training

"These men use their free time to join us and receive commando training; they learn how to engage in sabotage and harass the enemy in the cities and towns of occupied territory. As we see it, we must organize and develop resistance, the struggle against the occupiers, against imperialism, whose principal leader is the United States of America. The most important thing for us is to go back to Palestine, to obtain our freedom, to return their land and their homes to all our people. In order to be a member of Al-Fatah, the important thing is not that one is a member of the left, center, or any other faction. What we demand is that the people who want to fight at our side understand the role of imperialism, understand that imperialism tries to condemn us to live isolated in the world as refugees and considers us subhuman beings, objects dispersed throughout the world. Our principal watchword is to struggle for the liberation of Palestine, but we are also part of the national liberation struggle of the entire world, and we fight together with Vietnam, Cuba, and China to win our freedom. This is why we study not only the struggle in Palestine, but also the revolutionary experiences in other parts of the world."

Youth are Fighters

The doubts that we had expressed to Abou Amar days before were being dissipated. We were getting a comprehensive picture of the situation convulsing this part of the world.

The camp is located in a small, semiforested zone surrounded by a complex mountainous system which contrasts sharply with the verdure surrounding the -small tents. We found out that 80% of the men in this camp are no more than 18 years old. Our host from the Political Section spoke to us about the problems of the struggle, about how long it will take, and, hence, about the pressing need for Palestinian youth to assume responsibility for the future.

The head of the camp told us: "Here we teach the Palestinians not only to fight the enemy with weapons, but also to appreciate the objective of our struggle. We have to train ourselves in commando techniques, ranging from hand-to-hand combat to the handling of all the types of arms our organization has. The first phase of training here in this camp is very short: the commando receives basic training to familiarize himself with the war. The second phase is combat itself, as the

best training is actual combat against the enemy. All our instructors are Palestinians, and all, before coming here to instruct the new recruits, have had combat experience. We believe that you cannot teach anyone how to act in combat if you haven't experienced it yourself. The youngsters you see in civilian clothes—you asked what they were doing in the camp—are candidates for our next commando training course. They come here on their days off as a way of persuading us to let them begin training earlier. They spend all their free time with us. We can't admit and train all those who claim their right to fight for the liberation of our country; we try to make them understand that they have to wait but that they will be admitted soon."

(Note: In the New York Times, on March 6, 1969, the latest Israeli strategy for continued occupation of the seized lands is reported. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, reports the Times, calls for a string of Israeli settlements in the Judean hills, on the occupied west bank of the Jordan. He also says that Egyptian and Jordanian law should be replaced by Israeli law, and that the occupied areas should be "integrated economically with Israel". It is perfectly clear from this speech by Dayan that the Zionist expansionists have no intention of returning by negotiation the lands seized in the June War, and that they have narrowed the range of alternative settlements to military means.)



هذا طريقي في الكفاح
فيا نجي اتمم كفاي

Al-Fatah poster says, "This is the way to liberation of my homeland. And so, my brothers, I'll fight on."



h commandos.



Education in North Vietnam

by David Tobis
Liberation News Service

(This is an interview with Ta Quang Buu, North Vietnamese Minister of Education and professor of mathematics. He was chief of the Vietnamese delegation to the 1954 Geneva Conference, and speaks fluent English. David Tobis visited North Vietnam in March, 1968.)

Q. What is the role of the Party in education?

A. For someone from the United States it is very difficult for you to understand the role of the Party and how it insures democracy. You imagine the Party as someone with a big strong hand. But the Party is a leader whose principal task is to regulate and to educate the relation between man and man in the society and in the college.

We call the relations between man and man class relations. Once class relations are solved, the other relations are very easily solved. I don't imagine democracy without the resolution of class relations.

Q. Is Mao read extensively North Vietnam?

A. We respect the experience of our neighbors. But for us it is only an experience. Our line is the line of our Party. The lines of all other parties are great experiences but we do not have to put them into practice. Otherwise we would have too many heads.

Q. How is Marxism taught?

A. Marxism-Leninism is our philosophy. It is a compulsory subject matter for any school, any discipline, in the social or natural sciences, because we think it is the basis.

The main thing is to teach Marxism-Leninism in a systematic way without being scholastic and dogmatic. ... We must make our students proud of the lines of the Party without being chauvinists.

Student Role

Q. What role do students play in the management of the colleges?

A. The students are the true masters of their colleges. They have the right to tell a teacher that his teaching is not very clear. That he has repeated what I have heard the other day from another teacher. That his teaching does not seem to be fundamental, modernized, and very useful to the Vietnamese. An example of what we understand as Vietnamese teaching: for many years we taught in our medical colleges the physiological constants that were relevant for European bodytypes; so now we have to develop our scientific research to make our teaching Vietnamese.

Democracy in the management of our colleges has played a very great role in the raising of the standards in the colleges. It is not so much in the participation of the students in changing the curriculum. Here the teacher is responsible, but he has to consult his students. The principal role played by the student is how to teach, and how to teach to sons of workers and peasants

who are not born amidst libraries and who do not have parents who are professors and teachers. 96.8 per cent of our students are from worker and peasant origins. We educate our students in the spirit that they are peasants and workers in colleges. Our motto now is that a Vietnamese soldier is a peasant in a uniform. Our army has class character.

Q. How do you integrate theory and practice in the university?

A. What we call practice, we do not mean technological practice, because there I think the Americans do better than we do because of your economic development. What we mean by practice is revolutionary practice, the fighting spirit of laboring people, how they solve the problems of production on military questions. Schools and colleges are isolated from that kind of practice. We have more heroes in the army than in our schools and colleges. When a freshman enters college morally he is better than when he goes out. Even now. But when he goes from college he is much better in technology and science. We can tell our government that he is an engineer. But it is difficult to say that he is a better man than when he went in.

Q. Marx said that in a capitalist society family relations are a form of class relations. Do you have this problem in North Vietnam? Is there a generation gap?

A: The parents in our country are still somewhat backward, but there is no practical gap. They still want their sons and daughters to be a doctor, a professor, to be someone in the scale of society. In that sense they are somewhat backward in their relations to their children. But the gap is not very great because of democracy.

I have four sons and two daughters. The four sons want to be tankists in the army, not mathematicians. They dislike mathematics because in their eyes their father goes to the office at six o'clock in the afternoon and does nothing in between.

Mexico

(continued from Page 3)

Strike Committee had dissolved itself and most schools voted to discontinue the strike.

After Christmas vacation, the movement began to recover. One-day strikes took place in different schools, and around the end of January a one-day strike took place at the University, all protesting the continuing repression. A national Comite de Lucha was formed to replace the Strike Council, and political brigades began to work again with leaflets as well as with the paint brush.

It is mainly because the movement did not have a revolutionary perspective that it was defeated by the government. The movement seemed to be operating on the basis that the government really could free all political prisoners, disband the Granaderos, and fire the police chief of Mexico City, as if it had any means other than repression for stopping up the volcano of discontent. It is not just a question of the use of legal forms of struggle, which still do have some validity, but of out-and-out reformist strategy, though with very radical tactics.

Many activists in the movement seem to understand this and are talking of organizing Comites de Lucha in factories, villages, and workers' neighborhoods as well as uniting with such committees where they already exist. Whether the movement develops these forms and along with them a revolutionary perspective in practice as well as in words remains to be seen, but while these struggles go on in the city, in the countryside the guerrillas wait.

Today in Guerrero a liberated zone has been established and an armed group of about 300 men moves quite freely on two fronts over a very large area. There is a great deal of support among the peasants and the government has had to send in 10,000 troops to try and isolate the guerrillas. The guerrillas operate primarily as armed education brigades, taking towns to talk to the inhabitants about the movement and its necessity. They have executed a number of mayors who were tried by the villagers and found to be guilty of serious crimes like assassinations, etc. They have had a number of engagements with the army and have captured many arms and even shot down a U.S. helicopter. But basically their group is interested in base building and socialist education, waiting to open up new fronts.

Where is Mexico going? Revolution without a doubt, but when depends on the seriousness of the city movement and its ability to link up with and aid the struggle in the countryside. Movement people have not lost their revolutionary optimism in the face of repression, but rather it has increased. As one activist put it, "the problem of the students and the people has not stopped, because the racist government of Diaz Ordaz has not solved the problems of our people. The only response he has given has been insults, lies, deaths, thousands of injuries, and political prisoners. The struggle has not been stopped. We have not been halted; we shall win."

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L.A. schools blow out

(Special from Los Angeles to NLN)

Demanding an end to police occupation of the schools, more than 20 Los Angeles schools (including junior high schools, high schools, and junior colleges) "blew out" last week after police and students fought at Carver Junior High.

The blow-out grew out of a week-old strike at all-black South West Junior College in the south side ghetto. The newly-built ghetto school, hurriedly built after threatened actions by the black community, obviously couldn't meet that community's needs for quality education. The Black Students' Union (BSU) at South West called a strike March 7, demanding, among other things, a black studies program and an end to the school's racist practices.

Forty-one of the 64 teachers formed a racist caucus and refused to teach as long as they were "intimidated" by the black students at the school. The remaining teachers organized a radical caucus and offered to teach "liberation classes" called by the students.

A member of South West BSU, James Jones, went to all-black Carver Junior High to speak at a Carver BSU meeting there, intending to rally support for the strike. The principal at Carver called police in to throw out Jones. He was arrested and charged with "disrupting a school."

Arrests, Beatings

Following his arrest, Carver students sat in at the principal's office, protesting the arrest and demanding that Jones be released. Police were called in once again, arresting ten students, ranging in age from 12 to 14 years old. Many Carver students were clubbed and beaten. Two girls were hospitalized, one with a busted kidney, the other a broken leg.

The following Sunday, a community meeting was called in South Central Los Angeles. More than a thousand people attended and voted to call a strike of all city schools attended by black students.

At Los Angeles City College, the strike committee — composed of delegates from BSU, SDS and UMAS, the United Mexican-American Students — called a support strike and set up barricades around the entrances to the school. Cadres of striking students went into classrooms rallying support for the strike. Demands were raised, including full acceptance of BSA's 8-point program on the campus, kicking all pigs off campus, an end to police science department and free access to the campus by members of the community without fear of police harassment or arrest.

The student government at LACC, composed almost entirely of members of BSU, UMAS and SDS, turned over \$92,000 in student body funds to the bail fund for the striking students.

In a state of panic, President Gooder offered concessions to the strike committee. He offered to issue a public statement in sympathy with the Carver Junior High students and promised to "humanitarianize" the police science

department, the long range target of the LACC student movement.

In response to Gooder's offer the strike committee issued the following statement:

"In order to show good faith so that negotiations of campus and social issues might begin, we demand the following:

"1) All barricades remain intact by the order of the president.

"2) The college president and other administrators must join in the peoples' cause and stand with the people on the barricades.

"3) The above stand as preconditions to negotiate existing demands.

"We find these terms necessary because of a long history of dishonesty on the part of the administration."

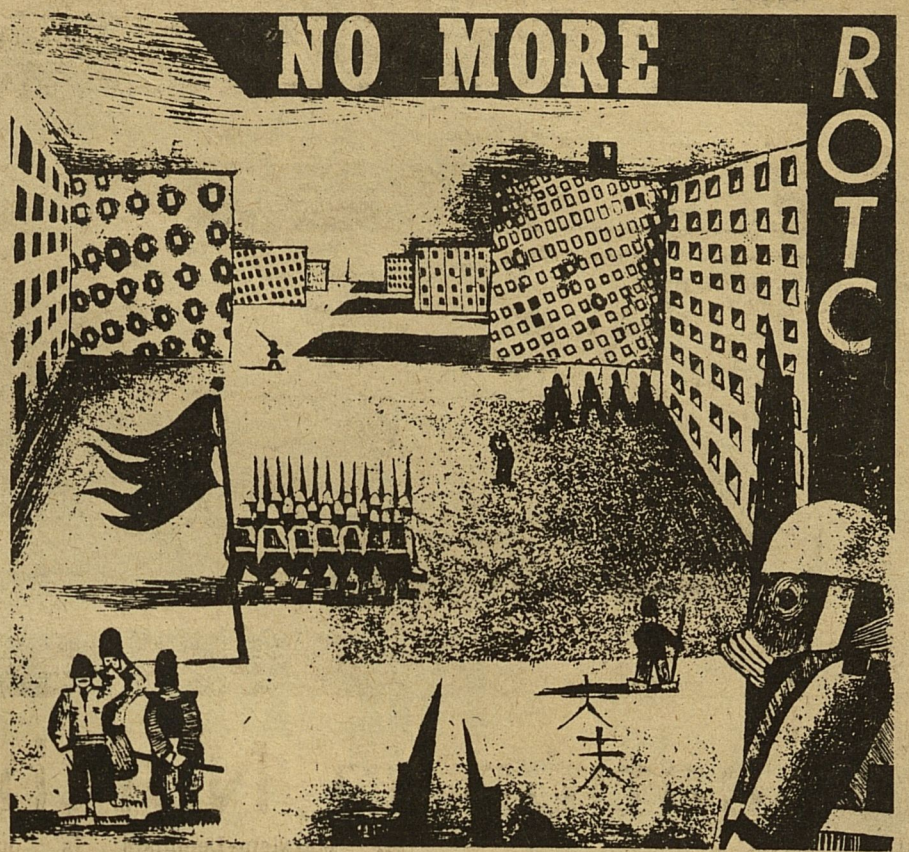
Strike Growing

The Black Students' Alliance (BSA) — an alliance of all the city's BSU's — issued a statement which calls for the spreading of the strike throughout the city and to the white schools. Liberation schools were set up in the black community, run by striking students.

Demonstrations are already taking place at many white high schools, called by SDS. At East Los Angeles College, hundreds of students marched from a support rally to the political science building chanting "On strike, shut it down!" It was alleged that thousands of dollars damage was done to the building.

The black community in Pacoima had a meeting and issued a statement of support for the striking students. They raised eight demands including one that called for a new junior college to be built in the Pacoima ghetto instead of the proposed site, Northridge, an all-white community. Other demands dealt with community control of the schools and quality of education. The community high school, San Fernando High, also called a strike.

After one week of building, the strike gives every indication that it will grow throughout the city, hopefully with the support of white students.



by Roger Lippman

SEATTLE: Over 2000 University of Washington students demonstrated Mar. 6 against ROTC, and more than 8000 students on this 30,000 student campus looked on. Meanwhile, a rally called by the student government for the purpose of holding "rational dialogue" on the limits of dissent (i.e., to compete with the demonstration) drew about a thousand students.

The demonstration was called by SDS as part of its anti-militarization, anti-imperialism program. SDS has demanded:

No more ROTC

No more military or corporate recruiters

No more war research

No more classes which are apologies for imperialism.

SDS made it clear that the issue has nothing to do with the "limits of dissent" (as the administration, the student government, and the campus newspaper tried to pose the question), nor does it have anything to do with purifying the university. The real issue is that the university is an integral part of the apparatus of imperialism, and particularly that ROTC is important to the military and therefore must be stopped.

The demonstrators marched through classroom buildings chanting "Join us" and "Smash ROTC". They marched around two ROTC buildings and through a third. There was no confrontation with authorities, but an SDS speaker at the rally at the end of the march said, "The black people have a saying, 'As a house goes up, a house must come down.' This house went up on violence. We'll be back next quarter to shut this place down."

— noted briefly —

Three days after local I-561 of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers announced the launching of an international boycott against Standard Oil of California to compel Standard to bargain in good faith with the union that will settle the strike at Standard's refinery in Richmond.

However, the union is still on strike against the Chevron Chemical plant in Richmond, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Standard Oil of California, and the international boycott against Standard products, exempting products produced under fair conditions, will continue until this strike is settled too.

The strike at the Chevron Chemical plant, which is continuing, involves a more substantial issue, the continued existence of a union shop at the plant. The company has made this a negotiating point and wants the union to surrender the union shop clause.

G. T. (Jake) Jacobs, secretary and treasurer of local I-561, called the settlement at the refinery a victory for the union.

"Considering what we were up against, we did pretty well. We got double the original offer of the company and we forced the company to rescind the firings of the workers fired for strike activities and to agree to take no further reprisals," said Jacobs, "and anytime you can do that with Standard it's a victory."

"We wouldn't have been able to make these gains if it weren't for the help we received from outside, such as the Third World and other students and the longshoremen," he said.

Two weeks of controversy over Cornell University's role in supporting the racist South African regime came to a head on Monday, March 10, as about 300 students, led by SDS and the

Afro-American Society, blocked Chase Manhattan recruiters. They forced their way between two lines of campus cops and broke into rooms in the School of Business and Public Administration—where the recruiters were—forcing them to leave.

Ten days ago, at a stormy meeting during a three-day symposium on South Africa, Cornell President Perkins (on Chase Manhattan's Board of Directors) was unable to justify large Cornell holdings in member banks of the famous "South Africa consortium." He maintained that investments are made solely to "maximize return"; he left the hall when a black student held him by the collar and interrupted his speech. Since then it has been revealed that the stocks were actually sold, for "financial reasons," months ago.

Cornell SDS has called this a partial victory, and has called for the University to put its funds in productive areas, including support for the South African revolutionaries, low-income housing in Ithaca, and black studies programs.

Standard Oil of California came to San Jose State to recruit some of those "slightly corrupt" chemists and accountants and salesmen it needs. Instead, on Thursday, Feb. 27, Cal-Standard's five-man recruiting team faced 100 angry students—who smashed windows, kicked in doors, pelted campus police with mud, and kept all interviewees away for several hours.

The SDS/Student Strike Committee action was in support of the striking oil workers in Richmond—one of whom was killed by a scab truck.

The Cal-Standard recruiting brochure is titled "Jobs Should Be Exciting," but the recruiters seemed to feel that theirs was getting a bit out of hand. They canceled their Friday appointments and fled the campus.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

—The burning questions before the movement—

Black Nationalism:
Is it progressive?

Students and workers:
How to link up?

Revolutionary youth:
What program?

Revolutionary organization:
What kind?

The Militant, a socialist weekly, is currently featuring a series of discussion articles on the political issues now being debated in SDS and other sections of the movement. A number of these articles present a critique of the recently adopted SDS National Council resolutions on black nationalism and the building of a revolutionary youth movement. Some of the articles are devoted to an analysis of the viewpoint of the Progressive Labor Party.

For a Marxist assessment of the issues in debate, subscribe to The Militant for three months for \$1. Indicate if you want the previous 6 issues with articles on the SDS National Council decisions.

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--photo by Jean Ralsler/SF Express-Times



by David Wolfinson
Leon Marzittier
Berkeley Campus SDS

THE BERKELEY STRIKE

The strike at Berkeley is now in its seventh week. Throughout, the strategy has vacillated from a level of militancy unprecedented in the student movement to outright pacifism of the worst kind. Thursday, Feb. 20, marked the high point of the struggle. Thousands of students were fighting back in a war-like scene against tear-gas, MACE, pepper-gas and hundreds of vicious pigs. The next day, Friday, saw this mass struggle stopped cold by a failure to recognize the necessity of at least maintaining, or at best intensifying, the level of struggle. The word was "cool it," because "we have to show that the TWLF is still in control of the strike," or Reagan will use the National Guard and/or replace "liberal" chancellor Heyns with "conservative" Curtis LeMay. That day, 5,000 people attended a "peaceful" rally, and became thoroughly demoralized. As the "cool it" tactics persisted the following weeks, the size and the militancy of the picket lines diminished considerably, and the only confrontation with the police was a defeat for the students. During these weeks, the strike has been going downhill, and it is no accident: the reasons become clear if we examine the political history of the strike.

Political Scene

The leading political group in this struggle is the TWLF (Third World Liberation Front). This is the central body for Third World peoples. White strikers are working on the strike primarily through the Strike Support Committee (SSC), and through their individual organizations such as SDS, PL, ISC (Independent Socialist Club), YSA (Young Socialist Alliance), RSU (Radical Student Union, a splinter group from SDS), plus various liberal groups which wavered (the school newspaper, leaders of the experimental courses, the student government). The TWLF was formed at the inception of the strike as a consolidation of the black, Chicano, and Asian political groups.

The principal demand of the strike was the demand for an autonomous Third World college; other demands include admissions and hiring policies of the University and amnesty. These demands represent the response of the Third World people to the special oppression they face in the community and at the University. It was the

responsibility of the TWLF and primarily of the SSC to bring white students to the understanding that fighting against the special oppression of Third World peoples through support for their special demands is in the interest of all people!

Efforts of the SSC were principally concentrated on getting as many bodies on the lines as possible, regardless of whether they understood the TWLF demands or not. The method used was the traditional Berkeley technique: watering down of the politics to popular liberal issues such as free speech, academic freedom, or student power (or a combination of these); the pigs would then attack us on campus, the ensuing confrontation would polarize the students and the strike would be won. This "strategy," apart from the final conclusion, worked for a few days. There is a great deal of anti-pig feeling on the Berkeley campus and just the continual visible presence of 50 armed representatives of Ronald Reagan, plus the feelings of general oppression, incensed enough students to pitch an armed battle against them.

Anti-racism vs. Student Power

The main political line that TWLF leaders propagated was the self-determination of Third World peoples and the fight against racism. Through leaflets, fact-filled pamphlets, performances of the Radical Arts troupe, and classroom education, we attempted to explain to the students how fighting for the special demands of the Third World was in their interests. We tried to show the need for unity of Third World and white students (as well as workers) and we explained how this unity could only be gained by white students joining in the fight against the racism of the ruling class.

However, the efforts of the SSC (and of most of the other individual organizations working in it: ISC, YSA, RSU) did not have this orientation. Rather, members of the SSC were constantly making statements about racism being an abstract and unappealing issue. But for Third World people, and for the majority of white students, such as those who become teachers, racism is real and it is very important.

These self-styled radicals chose to interpret the self-determination aspect

of the TWLF demands purely as a student power issue. They said that once the Third World students had "control" of their own college it wouldn't be long before we, as white students, could "justly" demand control of our education.

The student-power myth has been exposed for a long time in SDS, both at the national level and here in Berkeley. We have come to understand the naivete and arrogance of the concept of an autonomous university serving the interests of its students. In fact, the university is part of society, and it has to serve either the capitalist class or the people. If students take over control of the university and try to use it against the ruling class ("critical university," "liberation school," etc.), the men in power will not hesitate to smash them. Sophisticated advocates of student power say: "we know that it's the wrong fight, but we wage it precisely to show that the system cannot grant the demand." But this attitude shows a real contempt for the student body ("they can't understand what we understand, so we will have to teach them the hard way"), and it breeds defeatism: if we know we can't win, why fight?

The consequence of this is that the vast majority of the students were not willing to risk felony charges, expulsion, or flunking out. The only reason for the occasional sharp struggle of masses of white students is their general oppression, and their hatred for the pigs. Lacking the political perspective of the fight against racism, most students dropped out of the struggle.

TWLF Leadership

However, to place the entire blame on the SSC and totally absolve the TWLF would be incorrect (as well as paternalistic). The TWLF, PRIMARILY AS A RESULT OF THE RACISM OF WHITE STUDENTS, also took an opportunist line. They felt, and no one demonstrated the contrary to them, that racist white students would not be willing to join the fight against racism. Third World people have been screwed and sold out by white people from the beginning of slavery in this country through the Civil Rights movement.

Third World people have had very few experiences where white people have shown that they would join the fight against racism. Because of this, the TWLF felt that it could not win students to its fight. So they too said that they were fighting for student power and that white students should join the strike on any grounds that could possibly mobilize them. The TWLF essentially took a nationalist position (i.e., that white and black students each had to fight for their own thing—Third World and white student power).

Also, the TWLF was responsible for the continual cooling of the militancy of the strikers. The Third World leadership never had the strategy of closing down the university. Instead, they saw the strike as a pressure tactic—putting the heat on and off the administration to see if they could negotiate a good deal. However, the administration needs more than a little convincing; they will only grant the demands when they have to choose between a university with a Third World college or no university at all.

Developing Unity

Moreover, this strategic mistake also cannot be looked at in isolation from the racism of white students. If 5,000 white students had defeated their own racism enough to fully support the demands of the TWLF, the Third World leadership might well have seen a more effective way of winning than dealing with the administration. And if the Third World leadership had persisted in their liberal pressure politics and there had been 5,000 white students ready to shut down the University, there would be no guarantee that the Third World rank-and-file would have settled for applying a little pressure here and there. By now, UC would be closed down.

It is easy to overemphasize the negative aspects of this struggle. The strike (which is still in progress) has been the longest and most intense struggle in the history of the movement at Berkeley. And whether or not the demands are finally won, two major advances have been achieved. First, the strike united all the Third World groups at Cal for the first time. Secondly, and most important, due to the strike there has been growing confidence of the white students in Third World students, and vice versa. This developing unity can only strengthen the movement in future struggles at Berkeley.

--photo by Pat Quinlan/Fifth Estate

