

SFSC FALL '68?
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SFS: ANOTHER BERKELEY OR ANOTHER COLUMBIA

As the Mickey Mouse Right of California presses its "Crusade" by attacking the presence of Eldridge Cleaver and George Murray on college campuses, the student Left has responded essentially in two issues.

First, they have raised the question of academic freedom. The Governor is trampling on one of our "sacred civil liberties" and he musn't do that, they say. An alliance of Liberal students and Faculty attempt to make this the issue around which any struggle takes place.

The other response "raises" the level of struggle to the slogan of "racism" which resounds within the ivory towers. The Governor can't stand to have Black People "tell it like it is", so we will use this opportunity to really publicize and educate just "how it is", they say.

But the Governor is a lot smarter than he might look! It was more than a week after the struggle began at Berkeley that Eldridge Cleaver explained the real issue to a teach in crowd of over 500 students. He said that there were two things that he and George Murray have in common: 1- They're each teaching on college campuses; and 2- They're each members of the Black Panther Party. He went on to say that they were not being attacked because they are both black. He pointed to a black Sociology teacher and asked why he, also, was not being attacked.

The conclusion that Cleaver drew was that the Governor was scared to death, not of black teachers, but of people with real political power in the community climbing over the ivory tower and linking up with the student movement.

This was the essence of the Columbia Strike. The reason the sit in was not smashed in its early stages was the threat of a tremendous community response. Columbia students had done their homework before the strike - they had been propogandising about issues of relevance to students and the broader community. When the strike occured, a sit in was sparked in a tenement. Leafleting was done at NYC high schools, and marches were organized from various parts of the community up to Columbia.

All one has to do to make this point clearer is to mention France. When students took over University buildings, the first thing they did was to spread the strike to other sectors of the community.

Finally, SFS students will hopefully take notice of the highly volatile nature of Bay Area high schools right now. This is probably the most obvious area to which any student strike must spread, and the effect of uniting the two movements would be beneficial to the consciousness of both.

Before any student movement can think in terms of making a POLITICAL EVENT out of what would otherwise be a student protest, they must have an analysis of the nature of this historical period. In the 1950's an "academic freedom" fight might have been all that was possible. The question is, Is there anything different about the present period which would allow for a student struggle to spread into a significant political event?

Historical Period

America today is characterized by decay. As slum housing gets older, rents go up. As transit systems become outmoded, fares and congestion in-

crease. Even the air and water are rotten with pollution and getting worse.

Governments half heartedly attempt to provide the necessary "services" the whole disgusting mess engenders by TAXING wage earners, and by HOCKING our cities to major financial institutions. Thus the Nation's cities are now \$30 Billion in debt to the biggest banks.

Footing the bill for this mess is the wage earner. Sales taxes, payroll taxes, transportation taxes (gasoline), transit fares, commuter taxes, etc. are all levies which fall most heavily on working people - and are all increasing at an alarming rate.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics offers some of the objective results of this process. Real wages of non-supervisory personnel have declined nationally for the past two years - the first time this has happened since the "post war boom." A not unexpected result of this is the tremendous increase in strikes across the Nation. More man hours were lost to unauthorized (wildcat) strikes last year than in any year since 1948.

And inflation eats up what attempted gains taxes miss! In the month of January alone weekly pay of factory workers dropped nearly \$2.00 (all Street Journal, Feb. 27). The race to keep pace with this attack on wages is reflected in the fact that 20% of the full time non-farm workers now put in 49 hours a week or more, while 40% of these 9.4 million workers work more than 60 hours a week (US Bureau Of Labor Statistics, Liesure and the Long Work Week).

Another process of this period is the inability of capitalists (as a whole) to invest productively, even in the face of decay. The percentage of the US Labor Force employed in production (mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, public utilities) has declined from 53% in 1945 to 41% in 1967 (US Statistical Abstract, 1967). Simultaneously, the credit industry (mortgages, bonds, speculation, etc.) has soared.

In the face of this crisis the typical attitude of wage earners is "Screw anyone else, I want a bigger piece of the pie!" Transit workers want (and have a right to) a wage increase, even if it will be paid for by other wage earners by a fare increase. Welfare recipients want a better program, even if it will be paid for by increased taxes on wage earners. Everyone pushing for a reform realizes that he is competing for the same shrinking piece of the same shrinking pie.

The job of the Left in this situation is to unite wage earners around programs that would take surplus (profit) that is now being wasted (the credit industry, defense, etc.) and invest it productively. In the face of the decay of America, we must demand hundreds of thousands of productive jobs, building housing, transit systems, etc. all to be financed by surplus that is now being wasted.

SFS

Students at SFS must begin to arm themselves with such analysis so they will be able to bring something to the rest of the community as they attempt to spread a strike. We must not go to high schools and simply encourage any notion. The high schools are already in motion! We must be able to explain why a demand for productive jobs is in the interests of all wage earners in this period. We must develop programs around which the wage earners of the Bay Area can unite.

BAY AREA LABOR COMMITTEE

The Labor Committee is a new organization which developed several months ago out of the confluence of the Columbia strike and a Tenant Union struggle. There is also an active Philadelphia Labor Com. and people are now building Labor Committees in 4 other cities. For further info. or lit.: Bay Area LC, Tom and Arlene Karp, 260 Bay St., SF, 94133, 986-1020