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U.S. IMPERIALISM IS
OUR COMMON ENEMY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE STUDENT STRIKE

In order to understand the events of the student strikes of last spring in Rhode Island, it is necessary to recognize the progressive aspects and also the reactionary elements evidenced at that time.

Being more familiar with the character of the strike at Rhode Island College, the writers of this paper will deal most extensively with an analysis of that particular strike.

To the students, the deaths at Kent State and the United States invasion of Cambodia were concrete examples of the oppressive nature of the United States government. The spontaneous and strong nature of the students' reaction displayed the depth of dissatisfaction with this government.

On Tuesday, May 5, 1970, a memorial service was held for the murdered students of Kent State. Religious feelings quickly dissolved as the microphone was opened and political implications of the recent events were discussed.

At this time, a mass democratic process was being carried out. Within a short time, Pat Sloan proposed moving the meeting to the Student Union where he set himself up in the position of a bureaucrat by taking over the use of the microphone. He implied that this type of parliamentary procedure was necessary to get things done quickly. His actions revealed the tacit assumption that truly democratic means could not work — that is, nothing could be accomplished if all the people present directly addressed themselves to the issues. This was the first of many of Sloan's activities throughout the strike which revealed his function as a bureaucrat. Another slander of the democratic process appeared with the appointment of a strike committee. Sixteen people were nominated and then appointed rather than elected — again to save time. Bureaucracy and its perpetuators always work against true mass democracy.

Bureaucracy

The assumptions on which the formation of a bureaucracy takes place are invariably anti-people in nature. One of these assumptions is that people are irresolute and cannot act out of common bonds or common will. It is also assumed that people can never know enough about the situation that has already caused them to take strong and positive action — that they have to be taught by the bureaucrat. Criticism is tolerated, not listened to, by the bureaucrat on the assumption that leadership or authority is already extant — the bureaucrats themselves. Bureaucrats always define themselves as the enlightened few possessing a monopoly on knowledge. This position denies the validity of people's experience.

A prime example of the manner in which bureaucracy operates was the first meeting of students with the College Council on Tuesday, May 5. Students were called there not to take in but merely to witness the ratification of a resolution drafted in utter contempt for what had already been the strongly stated will of the majority which was to strike. The Council had an inordinate number of faculty and administrators while students were represented by only two "spokesmen". Sloan, as one of these "spokesmen", acted in a blatantly bureaucratic way. He knew the desire of the majority was to consolidate a strike and had posed as a leader of that strike. However, on stage he quickly and utterly ignored this decision in proposing a moratorium to make the strike "legal". At this point he exposed decisively his role as go-between. The other spokesman, Eli Perlman, who was obviously over-anxious to show his willingness to cater to the will of the administration, blundered to the consternation of all including administrators.

An important tool of bureaucracy is the use of parliamentary procedure. It is always the tool employed by the ruling class — in this case the College Council. Invariably, parliamentarianism is used oppressively by an elite minority obviously not desirous of or too fragile for mass democracy. An example of this is the fact that the microphone was open at the whim of the Council and a time limit was set on discussion. The obvious sell-out nature of bureaucracy soon became apparent to students. They saw that the bureaucratic "representation" of the will of students was a major departure from what was in fact the case; that there was mass support of a strike that originated with students and to be supported by students with or without the consent of administration or faculty..

It was significant that hundreds of dissatisfied people remained after the Council Meeting. Conscious of the function of bureaucracy these students immediately decided to meet openly in the Union and resolved to continue the strike independent of the bureaucrats, the administration, Sloan, and sympathizers. Large numbers of students rose and spoke out against the bureaucrats. The depth of student dissatisfaction with bureaucracy was revealed. The suppression of their honest feelings by bureaucratic meetings became evident.

Students began to carry out struggle over the three issues of the strike — United States out of South East Asia, condemnation of the Kent State deaths, free racial and political prisoners. Again bureaucracy appeared in the form of workshops. The way was paved for all types of "leaders", resulting in another inherently unequal relationship. Prototypical classrooms were set up replete with "expert" teachers, usually esteemed members of the college "community" (the community of bureaucrats). Bureaucracy relies on expertism to justify its existence.

Expertism

The expert line is always introduced and supported by the bureaucrats. The expert uses his self-defined position to substantiate all sorts of ill-defined and indefensible interpretations of problems that could not stand on their own objectifiable merit. Free exchange of ideas is once again discouraged on the grounds that the expert will answer all questions as long as order is preserved. After a very short time it becomes apparent that the expert will not be able to fulfill the audacious role he has assumed. The fact is that no one had the monopoly on answers to questions concerning the issues of the strike. The only satisfactory way of dealing with it would be unencumbered mass democracy. On many occasions the bankruptcy of the experts would manifest itself and questions would be turned back or "thrown out" to the audience but argumentation around these questions went on with the sufferance and under the control of the expert. All sorts of appeals to "order" would be made when the situation got out of hand — in other words, when analyses were put forward that did not correspond to those of the moderator.

An archtypical example of the poverty of expertism was the collective walkout staged by the formidable triumvirate of Doctors Anghinetti, Lewalski, and Profughi. The subject that they were to address themselves to was United States imperialism in South East Asia. Anghinetti proposed to deliver his anecdotal impressions concerning the situation. When asked to provide a serious analysis born of some kind of study, he stormed out of the room. Profughi talked about his radical credentials but under questioning suddenly remembered an urgent appointment in Cranston and also departed. Finally, Lewalski was asked for some kind of historical analysis of the situation. Claiming insufficient time for preparation and displaying annoyance at honest questioning, he also stepped down from the stage leaving students incredulous at this spectacle. Lewalski, who had hundreds of years of Anglo-American Colonialism to draw upon for analysis and years of teach-ins to come up with an indictment of United States imperialism, suddenly found himself muddled. Seemingly paradoxical, this position can be explained in terms of his stake in the whole scheme of things, as head of the History Department at Rhode Island College, an institution that works hand-in-glove with United States imperialism on the cultural level.

Mass Democracy

Within a matter of days, all of the anti-people theories used by the bureaucrats to justify their existence were smashed. Relying on their own experiences, students quickly saw that basic or mass democracy provided the only correct framework around which to conduct struggle. With mass democracy people have equal access to and control of ideas. Regulation of people's right to speak and criticize come from people themselves and not from any paternalistic leadership. Since all change comes about as a result of struggle, to say that struggle should be limited in any way by the imposition of the will of an elite and self-appointed few is to promote bureaucracy which in turn promotes fascism. The magnitude of the differences of opinion on various facets of the strike came fully to light with the mass democratic process. People were daring to struggle and were willing to be criticized. Of course ideological education, which was a matter of primary importance during the strike, moved forward at a tremendous pace. Differences were not cemented over.

door-to-door to confront on his own, round the antagonistically "half-fascist" suburban worker, to explain in the most pretentious language possible that the troops have to be returned home from Indochina. Leaders of racism and repression were scorned from canvassing methods for fear of offending or confusing the supposedly racist and repressed everyman, person. Besides, he or she could never fathom, as the Brown University member could, that racism and repression were ideally bad things. Banking on the trumped up complexity of the whole picture, the Brown bourgeois intellectual elite scorned and spat upon the working man with anti-people propoganda.

"Free university" enterprises, sprang up from an idealist base. At Brown, the major purpose of the "free" university was to set forth idealized models as to what the existing university (the existing university with its connections in India, Africa and the Middle East) should be transformed into. Free university line is the transformation from "closed" university to "free" being carried out peacefully, intelligently, and with liberal academic tolerance on the parts of both trustee, banker and idealist student.

Strike idealism never stood alone. It was substantiated and propagated by the bureaucratic structure created at the strike's beginning, which derived in the expert handling of the power clique, by means of the obscurantist weapon of parliamentarianism. At the first formal strike meeting occurring on May 5 the provisional strike chairmanship fell from the sky to the feet of Michelle Russell, who quickly and expertly applied parliamentary procedure to her own group's interests, allowing to speak those she and only she chose. This tendency persisted into the strike. Parliamentarianism remained the chief weapon of the steering committee that eventually took control of strike matters from the condescending hands of Mrs. Russell. (It's interesting enough to note that one of the voices more often and more loudly heard from the steering committee ranks was that of NUC Jack Russell, husband to the mystically appointed provisional chairman.

Although bourgeois bureaucracy appears highly pervasive in its effect on groups of people this does not mean that it is overpowering. By rigorous mass democratic struggle and guided by Mao-Tsetung thought, idealism and bureaucracy are exposed for what they are and for whose interests they are employed. Mass democracy did not fail during the Brown strike. It was not openly applied to public analysis of the events. This error can be made once and those rising progressive forces can benefit from it. But a similar error will not be made a second time. Brown University communist, anti-imperialist and progressive people must join together to wage unceasing combat and ideological warfare in the classroom and out to expose the bourgeois bureaucratic idealist line. Brown's elite and sophisticated classroom standard of detached expert transcendence will be easily smashed. The development of fascism will be checked.

A STUDY OF THE STRIKE AT U.R.I.

The U.R.I. "strike" was the scene of much confusion last year, primarily due to the absence of a political party organized under a comprehensive anti-imperialist slogan.

From the outset, a self-appointed strike committee set themselves up as the representative organ of the broad masses of students; of course, they were not. Opinion varied widely concerning methods of dealing with the issues of the attack of the Cambodian people and the murders at Kent State, while the "strike" concept itself was the target of a sharp challenge. Supposedly very liberal, and mindful of diverse opinions, the strike committee, in fact, orchestrated a rubberstamp bureaucracy that served to infuriate, confuse, and mislead people throughout the duration of its existence.

Weak. People were motivated to act by the highly emotional issues of Jackson State, Kent State and the attack against the Cambodian people. The decision to walk out of the classroom originated, to a great extent, as a result of this. Only towards the end of the strike was there a comprehensive political analysis of these phenomena put forward as an alternative. The unity of these superficially disjointed problems lies in the fact that they are part and parcel of United States imperialism that economically exploits and manipulates colonized peoples throughout the world and oppresses us economically, politically, and culturally at home. Education at Rhode Island College is geared to propel us into social roles which perpetuate this imperialist system. The "culture" that we are exposed to serves to mystify and obscure rather than to explain the role of our unrepresentative government throughout the world.

Months later, United States imperialism still exists although it is being defeated by peoples' wars throughout the world, most ostensibly in India, Palestine, and all of South-East Asia. We, the students of America, must also be prepared to wage a protracted fight. The primary role of a progressive student in America today is an ideological one. The struggle against anti-people ideas must go on in the classroom. It is the purpose of Rhode Island Student Movement to carry on this struggle resolutely.

Revolution is the main trend in the world today!

Support the anti-imperialist struggles of people throughout the world!

Dare to struggle-dare to win!

THE STRIKE AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

That idealist world outlook and bureaucratic structure go hand-in-hand, working together to obscure real problems and to create passivity, was proven during the course of the Brown University segment of the widespread student strike of May 1970. Brown's specific policy and tactics can be easily analysed and readily understood in view of the general scheme of petty bourgeois protest.

From the strike's outset, general idealist world view publicly bloomed. Immediate and honest outrage at the deaths of four white student protesters touched off the call to strike. However, bourgeois interests in the form of university officials, chosen-few house radicals, and bourgeois press snapped up this honest outrage, smearing it in sentimentalism in which the "innocence" of the dead students was emphasized. One heard only statements dealing with the lack of radical reputation on the parts of the murdered, dealing with their being merely "Concerned" with the expansion of an imperialist war, dealing with their intent to hurt no one...All this weeping and sentiment when rigorous analysis of the real issue, the real cause of the deaths, fascist repression, was not only left undone but was in fact craftily skirted through appeals to emotional idealism. No public denunciation of imperialism, no calls to oppose imperialist wars with peoples' wars of liberation. The blatantly fascist nature of the killings became immediately obscured. The official and primary problem of the strike, as dictated from strike top level command, was to formulate a statement expressing the Brown "communities" sentimental horror at the most unfortunate deaths in Ohio, while going into Providence teaching the lesser people the Liberal Word.

A hard working bourgeois liberal clique called for the strike and remained in its forefront constantly. No actions were taken without this clique's consent, no policy stated without this clique's official censorship. Those individuals comprising this ruling group had strong affiliation with every reactionary or revisionist organization on campus: New University Conference, Student Mobilization, Young Socialist Alliance, Progressive Labor, radical anarchist sensationalist contingents as well as no-stand-in-particular academic liberals. The line issuing from Brown's "mass" meetings to strike central to absurd guerrilla street follies to "information" committees was a single standard though multi-voiced offend-no-one policy. How often was it heard that the strike was a "united front strike"? What united front? A united front of every non-revolutionary group in existence; with each group putting forth their individual bid for notoriety.

ifested itself visibly on a number of occasions. The mass meetings in Edwards Hall provide concrete examples. The bureaucrats presented motions that they themselves had drafted and would ask the "audience" for a "yea" or "nay" vote concerning them. This is the most brazen form of anti-people slander. Where did the encouragement of mass democracy figure here? Nowhere. The democratic rights of people are trampled over when these proto-fascist "meetings are instituted by elitist strike committees. Those who were most affected by the edicts handed down from the meetings were the students, the same people who were allowed the least degree of creativity in their formulation.

The need for ideological struggle became more apparent as the strike wore on, however, this was discouraged by the "leadership" in favor of all kinds of pernicious activities. Thousands of letters were sent off to senators and congressmen; this after the huge impotent moratorium marches of the previous fall. Many students were cajoled into running off campus to canvass neighborhoods, and to apologize for the strike. Workshops were set up to train new experts for future "teach-ins". What in fact happened was that vague talk of unity was applauded while anarchy prevailed.

At this point it should be made quite clear that the strike at U.R.I. was by no means a total failure. The confusion that existed last spring has demonstrated clearly to students the need for conscious political organization. This is already being carried out at schools throughout the state, U.R.I. included, under the anti-imperialist banner of the Rhode Island Student Movement. The major drawback of our strike, absence of a political party has already been remedied. It is now up to all students to seize the initiative in order to further the task of organizing to change the world.

ALL REACTIONARY THINGS ARE THE SAME; IF YOU DON'T
HIT THEM, THEY WON'T FALL!

IT IS RIGHT TO REBEL AGAINST REACTIONARIES!

TWO WORLD OUTLOOKS: MATERIALISM VERSUS IDEALISM

To a large extent, ideological struggle in the classroom is based in an effort to deal with problems in which students have a common stake. These common problems lay their basis in a frustration that many students feel as a result of having come to the perception that the scope and intent of the classroom studies in which we are participants are ill-defined and in many ways inadequate. As well as being students, we are more importantly members of the American society; consequently, it is of the utmost importance that our studies not be carried out in a vacuum. We assert that there is, indeed, a real world in which there are real inequities, and in order for us to be conscious participants in changing it, we must be equipped with the necessary tools. It follows then, that if students are consistently presented with subject matter that serves no constructive purpose in helping them come to terms with the identifiable reality of which they are a part, the "equipment" of their intellect will be, in fact, useless.

We are students of materialistic thought because we have given up the idealist notion that the "outer world" is merely an external manifestation of an "inner" mind-oriented world. We assert that there is only one world, and that it is universally composed of matter in motion, accord to matter the primary position in our analysis of phenomena; hence, the nomenclature "materialist". Idealism, or mind-oriented interpretation, is relegated to a secondary position. Anyone who has performed valid scientific experimentation is fully aware of the fact that no amount of mental subjectivity will in any way serve to alter the empirical fact that a theory is either proven to be objectively correct in the real world, or fails due to the fact that the analysis upon which it was predicated had no material basis. We believe that the scientific objectivity that we all subscribe to in the laboratory, should be employed in the study of all disciplines, and most importantly, in societal studies.

CALL TO FORM MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT PROPOGANDA TEAMS

The experience of the revolutionary students put in systematic form can be summed up so the struggle against rising fascism can be intensified and raised to a higher level. This can be done by following the lead of the communist and anti-fascist forces among the working class and national minorities and by disseminating revolutionary ideology based on Mao-Tsetung thought and fighting for the right to organize politically and to rebel against reactionaries. The revolutionary students are laying the basis for armed struggle, therefore, the American Student Movement calls on all progressive students to Begin the War of Annihilation on the Cultural Front:
To stand up in broad daylight and denounce fascist culture, films, art, music, etc.,

Denounce bourgeois academic authorities,

Do widespread propoganda for Mao-Tsetung thought,

Develop mass democratic, anti-imperialistic, anti-fascist struggles under the slogans - no investigation!, No right to speak!, No sophistry!, No rhetoric!

Actively combat Trotskyism, revisionism, or any form of opportunism,

Hold meetings to sum up experience in the course of actual struggle and develop guidelines to move forward.

DEATH TO FASCISM!

DOWN WITH ALL FORMS OF OPPORTUNISM!

LONG LIVE INVINCIBLE MARXISM LENINISM MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT!
