

REPORT ON THE SAN FRANCISCO STATE STRIKE by Diane F. 2/8/69

The strike is now entering its fourth month. Although at the beginning there were several factors working against the strike, at every point the strike was successfully able to escalate. During the first phase, the TWLF and Strike Committee went around to classrooms (some teams did more educating than others) and held mass rallies. By the end of the first week, an Ad Hoc faculty group of 70 joined us, and the school was officially closed down by President Smith. It has never been successfully reopened.

The next period was the period of the convocation. It was used by the TWLF to explain its position to 1000's of students and faculty, as well as to the community at large. The administration, on the other hand, was unable to use the convocation to advantage. Their main effect was to illustrate why the TWLF was on strike. At the end of this period, Smith was replaced by Hayakawa.

The third period represents the first part of Hayakawa's reign. It was characterized by mass rallies, occupation of the campus by at least 600 cops and the visible support from the Third World community. People like Dr. Carleton Goodlett came to the campus, spoke in support of the demands, and were arrested. On one day, for instance, 4 busloads came from the black community.

During these phases, the YSA worked actively in the Strike Committee, but had no particular formal leadership position. We did, however, establish our reputation as good activists. Relatively speaking, there was a minimum of open factionalism in the committee.

Over Christmas vacation, PL captured the Strike Committee by erecting a "steering" committee, and by attacking those with ideas different from theirs. We felt that it was essential to build up forces for the reopening of the campus, and through a conference called by the strike committee, worked to build a week of solidarity. We worked in conjunction with certain forces inside the Third World. However, when the 2 PL people inside TWLF exerted pressure, the formal aspect of our work had to be disbanded.

At the same time, PL openly attacked the YSA in a paper. This was an opportunity for both the independent SDS caucus and the YSA to point to the sectarianism of PL, and attempt to re-establish the principle of a united front. As a result, when elections were held for a 12 man coordinating committee, the YSA won 2 seats (and probably could have won another, if we'd nominated another), and was able to win a more representative committee: 4 independent SDSers, 2 "Program" kids, 3 PLers, and 1 Student-Worker Alliance fellow.

As AFT moved toward its strike, PL began to attack them as "liberals." Their Student-Worker caucus said things like "AFT people aren't really workers, etc." The AFT calls for the settlement of the 15 demands and a pre-condition for AFT settlement, rather than endorsing the 15 demands. In other words, they don't intend to negotiate for the TWLF. In essence there are 2 strikes, both against the same enemy. PL attacked the teachers as being opportunists, as if they ought to be out on strike for idealistic reasons.

PL played on students' most backward fear of teachers, and a motion in support of the teachers strike in so far as we are fighting against the same enemy has never been passed, though we introduced it on 2 different occasions. The only motion on AFT that has been passed is one urging that AFT defy its injunction (though it never stated we'd help them in any way). At first, there was friction because TWLF was suspicious of AFT - they hadn't been on strike from the beginning, and maybe AFT would "take over" or sell out the strike.

The YSA spoke for the AFT, trying to educate students about how to exert pressure on the AFT to be sure they don't sell out the strike. That battle has been pretty much relegated to history, as in practice we have worked together on the AFT picket line. When the cops were about to attack, as they have from time to time, BSU people would often give leadership to the line. As a matter of fact, the AFT people now have a lot more at stake in many ways, and many are rather militant. They have been arrested, served with injunctions, and have defied the injunction against their picketing.

The Teaching Assistants AFT formed, then went out on strike in support of the 15 demands. The clerical workers and library workers have since joined them in the union. They have worked closely with the TWLF and AFT. Thus they represent a new source of energy in the strike. We have 4 YSA or SWP people in that union.

AFT has sent organizers up and down the state, and has established good contacts on other campuses. Almost 30 professors at San Jose State, out on a sympathy strike, were fired. The president of the state college AFT's (himself one of the fired), called a one day strike. It was effective in some areas (such as Sacramento State), and less effective in others. The main reason for the weakness in some places was uncertainty about whether the teachers had really been fired. If teachers at S.F. State and/or San Jose State were fired, another strike action or series of actions might follow. The local AFT is also sympathetic. In fact, on one mobilization, more than 300 city school teachers showed up, much to the surprise of the AFT Executive Committee, who'd hoped for 100.

Meanwhile, a Legal Defense Committee has been set up, mainly through the initiative of TWLF. With the almost 500 arrests on Jan. 23, the committee has had the largest meetings recently. Also, these meetings are attended by both TWLF and white students. Two YSAers have been specifically assigned to work in this committee.

Within the committee, the YSA put forth a position paper. PL has put forth its mechanic conception of political trials: mass trial. The attitude of the committee is one which wants to avoid victimization and impractical suggestions. TWLF put forth several recommendations - all indicating that they had met and rejected mass trial. However, at the last defense meeting PL used their 2 TWLFers to get up and speak out against TWLF recommendations. This obviously made the other TWLFers mad.

However, there is confusion about whether the committee should ask for support of the defendants on the basis of the 15 demands, or on the right to strike. This is complicated by the fact that the strike is continuing, and amnesty is one of the 15 demands.

One prominent TWLFeR asked to be put in charge of the committee as a TWLF assignment. He has tried to set up committees which function, and has deliberately avoided bringing PLers into the staff. PL doesn't seem to see what can be done through the committee, so they haven't been around much.

We have been gratefully accepted into leadership positions in the Legal Defense Committee, and we have tried to explain our concept of a united front defense. But TWLF people don't see the need to ever come to a vote. They believe it would divide the committee, rather than seeing that a vote helps to settle the question. For this reason, PL has been continuing their discussion of mass trials. Meanwhile, a couple of people have already been tried. One was given 30 days, another ended in a hung jury. One person was given 30 days on a probation violation (stemming from the sit-ins last May) and more are due for a probation hearing this week.

In the Strike Committee, the pamphlet writing committee is trying to get out a revised edition of the pamphlet. The work is only slightly less sectarian than the first edition, long winded, and absolutely unreadable. Hopefully, the pamphlet writing committee in the Legal Defense, which incorporates Todd Gitlin and Alex Forman, will be able to work.

The latest development is the Community Conference to Support the S.F. State Strike, which is supporting both teacher and student strikes. Over 150 organizations have affiliated, including the parent groups which have sprung up in support of the strike. The subcommittee that has really developed is its labor subcommittee. The group, practically totally staffed by SWPers initially, held a conference in which 6 trade unionists and 3-4 community leaders spoke with the TWLF. Almost 1000 people attended, and contributed almost \$300 for legal defense work. The meeting was not as well publicized as it could have been, so it was a real success despite its limitations.

Out of that meeting, came the press conference which the Community Conference called this week, at which time the oil workers president announced a "mutual aid" pact with AFT and TWLF. This was a result of SWP trade unionists' intervention with Jake Jacobs, a president of one of the oil workers' local, as well as a result of a mobilization of students last Monday morning at the oil workers picket lines. Berkeley students brought over the bulk of the 350-500 students. There will be another mobilization this Monday.

In addition, Mission High School students have presented 17 demands to the administration. Mission is mostly black and chicano. There will probably be some expression of solidarity with them this week. Also, orientation for the next semester, as well as registration, begins at State this week. Plans are to register, mostly in AFT teachers class-

rooms. There may be some "creative disorder" tactics during registration -- such as a number of students signing up for a "fink" teacher's classes, then all dropping out of the class, taking books out of the library (the library is hardly able to function under such conditions.)

All those who have been arrested have received notices from Hayakawa that disciplinary action will be taken against us. A total of nine YSAers has been arrested, seven of them on the day that over 400 were arrested.

Just before the end of school, attendance was between 15 and 20%. Students still think we can win, so there is no reason to believe that the strike will not continue. Although there is pressure for the teachers to go back, our estimation is that they will stay out as well. They know they have no choice.

As we begin the second semester, the strike force is stronger. The position of the YSA is also stronger. Our major orientation is on the strike -- both on and off campus YSAers are involved in building the strike. We have recruited four students in the midst of the strike. We have sold our Militants and Young Socialists and over 200 of the red Che button on the lines. People are aware of the YSA as a political force on the campus. Further, although PL still has a lot of power and influence, students and faculty and Third World students speak openly of PL's sectarianism. They dislike the doctrinaire attitudes of PL. That is one reason why frequent strike meetings are small.

The strike has been physically wearing on everyone. We have attempted a division of labor within the fraction, but we too are tired. Fortunately we will have a new addition to the fraction, Don C. from Arizona.

Our main problem throughout the strike has been that we have been unable to tap the sources of outside support that could have been tapped if we'd been leading the strike. TWLF, for instance, is afraid to set a focus date.

The AFT is well organized, and seems prepared for a long strike. They had an ad in the paper the other day, appealing for \$250,000 for operating expenses, strike benefits to teachers, and \$80,000 for other striking employees. The AFT Teaching Assistants local has an office in the same flat where the Community Conference is.

PL has been pushing its latest magazine, devoted to the black struggle. Articles in The Militant, consequently, have been timely.