

Documents from France

September, 1968

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Paris, May 4, 1968.

[Leaflet by students of the March 22 Movement explains why students fought the police]

Fights in the Latin Quarter.

Press + university + cops + owners = repression.

Why are the students “enraged”?

The papers write about “madmen,” about “golden” youth who want to get rid of their idleness by throwing themselves into violence and vandalism.

What’s the purpose of those articles?

Only one: to cut the students off from the workers, to caricature their struggle, to isolate in order to muzzle them better.

Three thousand students fought the police for five hours last Friday—is this the “handful of trouble-makers” referred to by the Minister of Education, Peyrefitte?

NO.

We’re fighting because we refuse to become:

- professors at the service of a system of selection which keeps out working class students,

- sociologists who manufacture slogans for the government’s electoral campaigns,

- psychologists charged with making “teams” of workers “operational” in terms of “the best interests of the owners,”

- scientists whose research work will be used exclusively in the interest of the profit economy.

We refuse this future as “watchdogs.”

We refuse the courses which teach us to become that.

We refuse the tests and the titles which compensate those who have accepted to enter into the system.

We refuse to be recruited by these “mafias.”

We refuse to improve the bourgeois university.

We want to transform it radically so that it will educate intellectuals who will fight alongside the workers, and not against them.

We want the interests of the working class defended inside the university. Those who want to separate us from the workers go against the interests of the working class and of those who want to fight with the workers.

Wherever you are, wherever we are, let us all mobilize against bourgeois repression.

– March 22 Mouvement

Paris, May 14, 1968.

[Leaflet by the Workers-Students Action Committees of the Censier Annex of the University of Paris. It was distributed to the workers of a chemical plant in Paris]

Workers:

After a week of continued struggle, the students of Paris have taken possession of the Sorbonne—and we've decided to become the Masters.

Until now, a bourgeois education was imposed on us, and we weren't able to challenge its content. This education prepared us to be future managers and the instruments of your exploitation.

Until now we had to solve our problems by traditional methods like petitions, elections of better leaders, and partial demonstrations. The inefficacy of these methods was proved to us by the experience of the past few days; only mass action led by the rank and file was able to make the established powers back down.

We haven't simply demanded more space, more credits, more professors. We asked ourselves: Why the space? Why the credits? Why the professors? We challenged the very purpose of education.

There are profound similarities between your problems and ours.

Who decides the speed of the assembly line? Who decides the uses of the production? Everywhere it's the same rule: we are told to execute the orders of the hierarchy.

We want to be informed of your struggle. Your struggle is ours.

– Workers-Students Action Committees

Paris, May 20, 1968.

[Leaflet by the Workers-Students Action Committee Citroen (The "Citroen Committee") of Censier. It was distributed to workers from Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia and North Africa who are employed at the Citroen automobile plants in and around Paris.]

Hundreds of thousands of foreign workers are imported like any other commodity useful to the capitalists, and the government even organizes clandestine immigration from Portugal, thus showing itself as a slave driver.

These workers are ferociously exploited by the capitalists. They live in terrible conditions in the slums which surround Paris. Since they are underqualified, they are underpaid. Since they only speak their own language, they remain isolated from the rest of the working population and are not understood. Thus isolated, they accept the most inhuman work in the worst workshops.

ALL THIS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO CHOICE:

They left their countries because they were starving, because their countries are also under the yoke of capital. Victims in their own countries, they are victims here too.

All that has to end.

Because they are not ENEMIES OF THE FRENCH PROLETARIAT: ON THE CONTRARY, THEY ARE THE SUREST ALLIES. If they are not moving yet, it is because they are aware of the precariousness of their situation. Since they have no rights, the smallest act can lead to their expulsion, which means a return to hunger (and jail).

Through their labor, the foreign workers participate in the creation of the wealth of French society. They must have the same rights as all others.

Thus it is up to revolutionary workers and students to see to it that foreign workers ENJOY THE TOTALITY OF THEIR POLITICAL AND UNION RIGHTS.

This is the concrete beginning of internationalism.

The foreign workers, who make up an integral part of the working class in France, together with their French comrades, will massively join the radical struggle to destroy capitalism and to create a CLASSLESS SOCIETY such as has NEVER been seen.

– Workers-Students Action Committee–Citroen

Paris, May 24, 1968.

[Leaflet by the March 22 Movement, distributed to students and workers at a large demonstration.]

Against the Gases:

1. Preventive measures:

– in the absence of a gas mask:

– Underwater glasses or hermetic motorcycle or ski glasses. Hold half a lemon in mouth (for breathing). Linen around nose and mouth.

– Do not remain in a gas trap. Put water on the linen around the mouth, open the mouth to water. (Do not put water over the eyes or on the body because this may release poisonous elements.)

– Do not breathe the gas of the offensive grenades (they're the ones that make a lot of noise when they explode).

– On the skin: a layer of dye or greasy cream.

– For the eyes: Hydro-cortisone eye-wash.

2. If someone is hit:

Doctors are not all familiar with the necessary measures:

a) 1. Lead the patient to a warm and well ventilated room; he should not exert himself.

2. Move him as little as possible.

3. Drops of sulfuric ether in his nose.

4. Bleeding: 500 mg. of blood, minimum.

b) Give the patient oxygen and let him rest.

c) Do not let him eat or drink for four hours after the exposure.

Serious cases risk dry pulmonary lesions (bronchitis, red spittle), or in the case of saturation, death from pulmonary lesions.

Chlorine grenades (in transparent, plastic cylinders) attack external and internal mucous membranes.

Do not wear nylon (which burns) or paper padding.

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