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#6

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NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS ON LATIN AMERICA
P.O. Box 57, Cathedral Station
New York, New York 10025

May 31, 1972

Dear Friends,

NACLA often receives requests from people incarcerated in U.S. prisons requesting literature on U.S. imperialism and current struggles against it. Since prisoners are generally paid something like a dime an hour for their work, if they are given any work, we send all literature free to them. Letters we recently received from two of these prisoners are being reprinted. The letters show the great interest they have in matters such as Latin America, cultural imperialism both here and abroad, and socialism (see pages 14 and 18).

The series of five articles on the Ralston-Purina Company continues in this Packet with the second in the series, on Labor. The first article was on the myth of "good capitalism," and future articles will deal with international operations, connections with the government, and wealth and power. We'll try, at the end of the series, to make the revised complete set available to those who request it.

Nixon's escalation of the war against the Vietnamese people slightly disrupted our work this month, which accounts for three pages of shorts instead of the usual six. Also, we have departed from our usual practice of trying to cover only Latin America and the United States; we are running an article by a friend who participated in some of the anti-war actions in New York over the past month.

The following news services are used for the Packet:

Hsinhua, the Chinese News Agency
Inter Press Service, Argentina
Prensa Latina, Cuba

Thanks to all of those who have subscribed so far. If you haven't yet subscribed, or if this is the first Packet you have seen, please subscribe now!

Yours in Struggle,

NACLA

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PARTS OF A LETTER FROM A BRAZILIAN, ADAMARIS DE OLIVEIRA LUCENA,
TO SR. ALBERTO DOMINGO, OF THE MEXICAN MAGAZINE ¡SIEMPRE!

Dear Sir:

Last November 28th, the Brazilian government, a dictatorship since April of 1964, condemned three young revolutionaries to death: Ariston de Oliveira Lucena, Diogenes Sabrosa de Souza - both members of Vanguardia Popular Revolucionaria - and Gilberto Faria Lima. One of these young men is my son: Ariston. The other two are my comrades, as loved and respected by me as is my own son.

I was imprisoned in Brazil in 1970 after a shoot-out at my home between several of the dictator's police and my husband, who died heroically. My three youngest children were also imprisoned. They were kept in an orphanage and one of them, nine years old, was mentally and physically tortured by the tyranny's lackeys.

I am a humble woman, daughter of the people, daughter of exploitation and misery, the exploitation and misery in which the immense majority of my people live. I barely know how to write. I only know that my duty is to struggle against that which I feel is arbitrary, unjust and discriminatory in my country. I only know that I must fight against North American imperialism which keeps the Brazilian dictatorship going economically and ideologically. My revolutionary practice is a product of my hate.

My husband fought consciously against the dictatorship. As a worker he suffered exploitation in his own body. I am of peasant origin. I am from the North East, from that dry and arid land where 60% of the people are unemployed or subemployed. I saw my own son die of hunger when he was only a year and a half old, and I have seen hundreds of children die like that in my country. We are used to seeing death by starvation in our country. But, Mr. Domingo, we are not resigned to allowing this to continue. That is why we are fighting. That is why thousands of young people suffer torture today, the most barbarous tortures you can imagine.

That is why thousands and thousands of Brazil's best young people are ready to die in the effort to see our country freed from oppression, exploitation and imperialist intervention.

Ariston is an optimistic young man. He is 19 years old. He never knew the joys of adolescence because the revolution claimed all his efforts. I raised him with a great deal of difficulty, working as a maid, ironing and washing clothes all day long so he wouldn't meet his brother's fate. My husband earned a miserable salary. Ariston took up his father's gun, not out of vengeance but out of political conviction. While my son was working with Carlos Lamarca [a Brazilian guerrilla leader who was recently killed by the Brazilian Army] organizing a training camp from which to initiate armed struggle in the countryside, comrades of his - in a revolutionary commando which bore the name of my assassinated husband - kidnapped the Japanese consul so that through liberating him they could gain the release of my children, myself and other comrades, so we could come to Cuba.

We all left prison half dead. We were insulted, beaten and tortured. Now my son is condemned to death and I can neither shed tears which would shame him with my cowardice nor ask for clemency from the dictatorship. It would be like a betrayal of my son's courageous position. In any case I wouldn't ask for justice from those who neither know what it means nor practice it. All I can do, Mr. Domingo, is ACCUSE.

I ACCUSE the fascist dictatorship in Brazil, not of wanting to assassinate my son but of keeping my country in a situation in which millions of children have no access to public health, to education, to food. I ACCUSE it of maintaining a situation of exploitation which daily kills dozens of small children with undernourishment. I ACCUSE it of torturing, imprisoning and killing hundreds of young people who daily sacrifice their youth for a life of struggle preparing the road which will lead to our people's liberation. I ACCUSE it of handing our natural resources over to imperialism, to foreign capital whose exaggerated intervention in my country has forced the denationalization of our economy, since the government gives foreign capitalists

such good terms. I ACCUSE it of maintaining a repressive army that consumes three times more of our national budget than does education. I ACCUSE the dictatorship of closing public schools under the pretext of lack of funds, while it finances private schools where the children of the ruling class are educated. Because education is classist in my country, the people receive an education which is deformed in the schools which are at the service of the ruling class and the foreign boss rather than the interests of the people. Mr. Domingo, we have a 60% illiteracy rate.

I ACCUSE the dictatorship of keeping hundreds of teachers and doctors in prison, while in the countryside and in the cities there aren't enough hospitals or classrooms. I ACCUSE it of maintaining the most ferocious kind of censorship through a total control of mass media; in that way it often misleads public opinion and, through the publication of false news items, tries to demoralize the revolutionaries. I ACCUSE it of keeping dozens of honest journalists in prison; many of these, far from being revolutionaries, have simply identified themselves with the people. I ACCUSE the Brazilian dictatorship of having removed even the most elemental individual rights, including the right of "habeas corpus," and of having restored the death penalty - not in order to apply it to the torturers, to those who steal the sweat of the people, but to young revolutionaries who oppose Medici's terrorist, fascist and sell-out regime.

Mr. Domingo, I, a woman of the people, wife, mother and comrade of Brazilian revolutionaries, ACCUSE my country's government of playing the role of imperialism's policeman in South America. I ACCUSE it, from my Latin American woman's heart, of having contributed morally and materially to the overthrow of the Bolivian nationalist government, in order to put a fascist dictatorship in its place. I ACCUSE it of mobilizing troops last November on the Uruguayan border in order to prevent the triumphs of progressive forces in the elections there. The North American imperialists know that their direct intervention in Latin America is now and will be in the future almost impossible. That is why they need a government of a large and potentially

rich country, that will do its dirty work, intervening in its place. That is why they keep making loans to Brazil. That is why a war industry is being developed. That is also why the "Trans-Amazon" highway is being built. It is not only an attempt to colonize the Amazon region and reduce the social pressure in the North East, but it is also an attempt at populating a huge strip of land which would unite Brazil with other countries in South America. All this is directed towards a logistic placement of Brazil's sub-imperialist aggressive army. The so-called "golden highway" will serve one main function: that of a military thoroughfare. It is also an economic project. Enormous mining resources will be exploited with North American capital. And so imperialism, through Brazil's frontier with almost all the other South American countries, will be magnificently linked with Peru. Brazil is a kind of strategic tentacle in the southern part of our continent.

Mr. Domingo, my son may be shot by the dictatorship. It has its own "legality" and acts in accordance with it. I don't accept this legality imposed by a minority on a majority. We revolutionaries who are ready to fight always run the risk of dying. We may die in the first battle. My husband was assassinated. My son was in the armed struggle when he fell prisoner. We are fighting a war to the death against the dictatorship, a war which has cost and will cost many lives. This is the price we revolutionaries must pay for a better life for future generations. Because in Brazil, as in almost all of Latin America, the present life is one of struggle. My younger children, as small as they are, are preparing for the struggle. I am ready to fight and I am outside Brazil only by circumstances. But we know that if the dictatorship assassinates, imprisons and shoots our comrades, it is in an effort to demoralize us, to try to close off our path, kill our optimism and our faith in the revolution.

I don't speak as an intellectual. I say what I learned in the process of the struggle, in the practice itself, as a revolutionary, as an exploited person who knows that the path of revolution is the only one we have in order to rise out of our misery and our underdevelopment. My revolutionary position is built on a long class struggle

in which my class has always been beneath the boot of the ruling class bourgeoisie. But in this moment of confrontation - when Brazilian fascism assumes an attitude in line with its ideology not only internally but when it throws out its tentacles in the service of imperialism against our Latin American brothers and sisters - I want to alert world revolutionaries and especially those in Latin America. I want to tell them that the Brazilian struggle will be a long one, because we aren't only fighting for our people's freedom in Brazil, but for other people's right to independence. I want to alert them about this gendarme role that the Brazilian dictatorship has taken on.

I don't want solidarity for me or for my son facing the death penalty. I ask solidarity for our cause, for our revolution. I ask journalists, progressive intellectuals, revolutionary priests, students, workers and peasants that they denounce - by all means open to them - the role of imperialism's spearhead being played today by Brazil. I ask the oppressed Brazilian mothers that they be alert, that they support their sons and daughters by entering the ranks of revolution. I ask my people, and the peoples of Latin America, that they be alert and united against the Brazilian dictatorship and against imperialism.

Our struggle has just begun; many of our comrades, many of our sons and daughters, will fall assassinated or in combat. A lot of good young blood will be spilled for our independence, but this long uncompromising struggle will lead us to our emancipation, the people taking power.

A Brazilian mother greets you and appreciates the publication of this letter, a Brazilian mother who is just one of millions who have suffered misery, exploitation and the death of her children, but who is not about to ask clemency for her son. A Brazilian mother who will continue the struggle to VICTORY.

Adamaris de Oliveira Lucena

EVEN BENEATH THIS BITTERNESS

At the bottom of the night
the footsteps descend and retreat.

Shadows surround them
streets, drunks, buildings.
Someone running away from himself.
A broken bottle, bleeding.
A widowed paper sailing around a corner.
A freethinker pissing on the grass,
where tomorrow the well-dressed children
will play beside the dew.

Far away something screams, dark metal, genital.
Asphalt and blind stones, sleeping air,
darkness, cold, police, cold, more police.
Streets, whores, drunks, buildings.
Police again, soldiers, again police.
The statistics say: for every 80,000 officers of the law
there is one doctor in Guatemala.

Then understand the misery of my country,
and my pain, and everyone's pain.
If when I say: bread! they say
Shut up!
And when I say: liberty! they say
Die!

But I don't shut up and I don't die.
I live
and fight, maddening
those who rule my country.

For if I live
I fight,
And if I fight
I contribute to the dawn.
And so victory is born
Even in the bitterest hours.

- Otto Rene Castillo
Guatemala

FACULTY AND STUDENTS ESCALATE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE WAR

In response to President Nixon's mid-April escalation of the air war in Indo-China, a group of faculty and students from the New York area gathered to discuss what they should do. Most were veterans of the anti-war effort and many had known each other from previous marches, teach-ins, and actions. The group reached general agreement that the time for legal campus-oriented protest had passed and that the moment had come for stronger measures. Calling themselves the New York Regional Anti-War Faculty and Students (RAFS), they initiated a series of actions with a non-violent sit-in at Columbia University's Pupin Hall, which houses the Physics Department.

Along with members of SESPA (Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action), they demanded that the five members of the Physics Department associated with the Jason Project of the Institute for Defense Analysis either quit the project or renounce their Columbia affiliation. Jason is an association of physicists from a number of leading universities who do voluntary research for the Defense Department. Jason members have been responsible for a number of the instruments of death used in Indo-China, such as anti-personnel mines and bombs designed to maim and not kill. Jason has produced fleshettes, small objects which penetrate the human body when exploded from bombs. More recently, plastic fleshettes have been used since they are impossible to detect by x-ray and therefore a direct probe is necessary. Jason has also developed the electronic battlefield, which is a computerized method of bombing any warm body (soldier, civilian, animal) by remote control from a central computer now located in Thailand but soon to be moved to Washington.

As members of the university community, the group thought that it had to demonstrate against those who undertake war research and pressure both them and the university to sever all links between the war machine and academia.

The action was also designed to support Columbia students striking against the war and the demands of community groups. During the sit-in up to sixty persons rep-

representing more than twenty colleges and universities occupied the building.

The sit-in lasted five days, after which time the group decided to leave voluntarily since they had found documents which clearly showed the historical links between the Columbia Physics Department and the Department of Defense. Two SESPA members and one of the RAFS group remained until arrested as a symbolic act.

During the occupation, group cohesion and solidarity remained remarkably high, forging personal links as a basis for future action. Afterwards, the group continued to meet and maintained its decentralized leadership with everyone taking turns as volunteer chairperson or serving on special tactical committees with responsibility for logistics and planning. They also established a common bail fund to be used for any member when arrested and agreed that the RAFS should act as a group whenever possible.

In the meantime, the group struck at Honeywell Corporation, one of the many corporate giants which produce weapons of death, including guava bombs (which explode into many fragments that pierce the flesh and shred the human body). At this demonstration, group members joined other anti-war protesters to block the main door of the Honeywell building in downtown Manhattan, thereby forcing the company to close its central computer on the first floor. The sit-in lasted all day despite the fact that the police arrested twenty-eight demonstrators.

The group then decided to take their protest to the UN, and seventeen members chained themselves to the railing of the Security Council. Panicked tour guides hustled their tourists out of the chamber and security guards came running in large numbers. The demonstrators demanded to see the President of the Security Council (who at that time was U.S. Ambassador George Bush), and further demanded that he call an immediate meeting of the Council to discuss the censure of the U.S. government as a war criminal and as a flagrant violator of international law for its mining and bombing of Vietnam. The higher-ups refused to meet, but the group did talk to a deputy who presented the group's demands to the UN's Secretary General. After five hours of talking with guards, officials, and those members of the press who managed to get

through the official blockade set up by the U.N., the RAFS demonstrators left with a heavy escort of security guards after their chains had been cut.

After the U.N., the group attacked another instrument of the ruling class: the Fort Dix-McGuire Air Force Base in nearby New Jersey. On May 4th, small groups leafletted against the war and called for GIs to join the rally planned for Armed Forces Day on May 20th. GI organizers that same day invaded the mess halls at dinnertime and passed out leaflets to over 2,500 men stationed on the base. The participants were soon detained on orders of freaked-out brass who could not believe that seventy-five civilians had actually carried on an anti-war action on "their" base. Those detained were photographed by agents and "expelled" from the installation. However, the rank and file response to the action proved most rewarding. GIs enthusiastically took the leaflets, responded with peace signs, returned clenched-fist salutes, and generally showed their sympathy and willingness to participate in stopping the war machine. The RAFS group later joined the actual demonstration on May 20th at Dix and McGuire, where about four hundred persons gathered to hear speeches by anti-war GIs and organizers from the American Servicemen's Union. In preparation for this peaceful march and rally, base authorities threw up sandbags at entrances and barbed wire around houses on the base. They thus showed their fear that the demonstration might be joined by those from within, reflecting the Pentagon's cancellation of Armed Forces Day across the country because of the protests that had been scheduled.

After its support action at Fort Dix, the RAFS group left for Washington to participate in the demonstrations there. It has also scheduled a political marathon on Memorial Day, when the group will hold an all-day meeting to discuss its past and future actions and dynamics.

By its acts the group hopes to make clear the links between the universities, the corporations, the military establishment, Washington, and international organizations, all of which share responsibility for the crimes against humanity being perpe-

trated by the U.S. government in Indochina and around the world.

The Regional Anti-War Faculty and Student Group hopes to carry anti-war protest to new levels, and will show that faculty and students will escalate in direct relation to the government's imperialist politics in Indochina and throughout the world.

HIP CULTURE AND THE THIRD WORLD

Dear Everyone,

We arrived here on Wednesday and everything is fine. Will write about Cuba later but wanted to write now about Mexico City while it is still fresh in my mind.

Mexico City seems almost as large as New York, which was quite surprising to me, I guess because after living in New York City all my life, anything comparable is a surprise. The poverty was not as pervasive as I expected, although, of course, for the people affected it is very bad. Those who are the poorest, that is, begging or selling chiclets, etc., in the streets, are the Indian mothers and little children. The children begin this work when they are about three. Children are not children in our sense very long, unless they are of the middle or upper classes - they are infants and then they are the equivalent of ten-year-olds. Of babies, there are many - more than I have ever seen before. Almost every other woman has a baby or is pregnant.

Class differences are made extremely obvious by people's clothing - while in the U.S. that type of differentiation is more regional. By their appearance, you can immediately tell upper, middle and lower class people, and in addition, the various segments of these classes. The things the poorer people must do to earn money, like fire eating on a street corner, kept making me think of Fellini's "La Strada." Distinctions between generations are also revealed by clothing. The rural Indian women migrating to the city and working as servants in middle- and upper-class homes, still maintain some Indian styles. But the longer they stay, the more urban and Western their appearance; the second generation sons and daughters lose much of their heritage.

But compared to New York, Mexico City (or at least the richer parts of it that we saw) is quite clean. Like most Americans we failed to see the bad slums which exist in other areas of the city. There is an enormous number of cars - as many as in New York, it seemed - which cause a good deal of air pollution. The people's

faces still do not have the tension and the coldness of those in the U.S. The deadly routine and tortuous pressure of urban America still have not penetrated Mexico. That is a relief and it is not as frightening as looking at people at home can sometimes be.

We rode a lot on the subway, which is very beautiful - only one year old, clean and bright. The station design, posters and photographs are quite pleasing, except for the poster which says, "Yes, You Are Important," which, of course, "you" (the common Mexican) are not. Everybody seems extremely proud of the subways, keeps them clean, and you don't get the kind of hiding-yourself feeling you get in New York.

We went to the market one day. The fruits and vegetables are the most beautiful I have ever seen - except that the polluted water system makes them unhealthy to eat. Most Mexicans have some form of gastroenteritis all their shortened lives. However, fruits and vegetables for export to the U.S. are grown under conditions which are much stricter than for internally-consumed produce.

Overwhelming was the almost total elimination of Mexican music and folk art. Maybe once or twice we heard Mexican music; the rest of the time it was the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, etc. It is absolutely amazing to see the Mexican people from the countryside not only standing in the modern subway waiting for the train, but also listening to the Stones. In a main park on Sunday afternoon people sat facing a bandstand, listening to rock tapes played on loudspeakers. (The words are even left untranslated, in English.) It was humiliating walking through the crowds and seeming to be the American bearer of this culture. Most women wear rebozos and ponchos (but the ponchos are mostly of orlon). In the market, they sell some Mexican artwork, like embroidered belts, beads, etc. However, only Americans are seen wearing these things, not the Mexicans.

American and European hip culture is a reaction to the deadliness of capitalist consumer culture. In our society, those who are hip, freaks, whatever, dress with the bright simple clothing of the less culturally destroyed and less destructive people and try to regain some of their peace of mind. The music tries to lose some of

its rigidity and go back to more looseness and feeling, all the time drawing from other Third World cultures and peoples who have not been part of the sophisticating process of the development of advanced capitalism.

However, at the same time, whole export industries are growing up in these countries, like Mexico and India, just to serve the needs of hip young Americans. Once these goods can be exported at a high price, or relatively high for those countries, they become too high-priced for the people who live there and originally made them as a self-expression. Ironically, just like every other American commodity, the distillation of hip U.S. culture becomes an important export to those countries - it becomes a status symbol. An attempt is made to get the young and most educated people in these countries to think "hipness" is something to aspire to - it is an attempt by the imperialists to integrate them not only in economic ways, but culturally as well. And the culture which was originally taken from the exploited peoples returns in a totally alien form with no relationship whatsoever to their lives. But it becomes the symbol of modernity.

Although those of us in the U.S. who try to live this new way think we are getting away from the whole imperialist capitalist life style, we are to the Third World the very America from which we are trying to escape. For the culture we are defining as ours is being exported to keep other people subservient. As long as the potential leaders of these countries, like Mexico, center their activities around North American hip culture and not the needs of the people, national liberation is much more difficult to achieve. The solution is not giving up what has been developed of our culture, or, shall we say, our eclectic culture. We should, however, be more aware of how it is being used against Third World peoples. It means that we have to be more on our guard to see how we are being used by the imperialist U.S. government and corporations. What is hip in our death-oriented capitalist society can be oppressive and negative for those in the underdeveloped world.

Love, Stephanie

LETTER FROM A PRISONER (1)

Dear Sir,

My name is _____ and I am currently doing an indefinite sentence at _____.

I am a Puerto Rican that was raised in the South Bronx, a ghetto of New York City. Like many of my unfortunate brothers and sisters, I left school and went into a life of crime at an early age. I came from a poor proud family that had an idealistic idea of the so-called American Dream. But me, I guess I was confronted with the objective truth and either couldn't understand it, or it was too great to bear and so, I tried to escape it.

So this confusion led me into the life of crime and drugs. Since my incarceration, I have been giving these matters thought. I am presently trying to seek knowledge that might be of some help into having a better understanding of myself. I notice that I know so little of my culture and the political and economic reasons for these misfortunes. Over here they have a library but because of circumstances - little material on subjects like political science and culture, and the size of the population that uses the library - it is almost totally impossible to obtain material on these subjects. I am quite interested in reading material on: Latin American culture; political science; African culture; psychology; economics and philosophy. Some of my brother inmates have informed me that you try and help prisoners that are unable to obtain literature - because of lack of funds - by sending them free literature. I would highly appreciate any of those materials I have mentioned or any material you feel might be of some help for me. I would like to take the opportunity now to thank you for anything you might be able to do for me and also for everything you have done in helping other brothers and sisters in the same predicament I am in. Many thanks, and so until I hear from you,

Very Sincerely Yours,

* * * S H O R T S * * *

TUPAMAROS AND URUGUAYAN PEOPLE CONTINUE TO FIGHT

(NACLA)---Hardly a day has gone by in recent months without actions by Uruguayans against their right-wing military government. Strikes and shootouts swept the capital city of Montevideo in early April, as the government declared a "state of internal war" in order to cloak in legality its suppression of the aspirations of the Uruguayan people. In spite of this, Uruguayans have continued their struggle for a decent life. The Tupamaro guerrillas, who ended their moratorium on armed actions - in effect during the elections - have again taken up the gun, but this time in the countryside. During the last two weeks in April there were frequent clashes with the Army only 120 miles from the capital. That rural area is now under siege, occupied by over 400 troops who are trying in vain to destroy the popular Movement for National Liberation (MLN - Tupamaros).

In addition, Uruguayan workers held a 24-hour general strike on April 18th to protest political and economic repression. Then on April 25th a nationwide strike was held, the seventh strike in less than two months in a country of three million people. And on the day before the last strike, the Tupamaros kidnapped the President of the Chamber of Deputies (similar to our Congress) so that he could witness their questioning of a police photographer held in one of the guerrillas' "people's jails!". The cop testified to his membership in a police-run vigilante group which kills "suspected subversives." Although authorities deny police participation in the vigilante group, the kidnapped President of the Chamber of Deputies, H. Gutierrez Ruiz, said that he spoke to the "prisoner" and thought he was telling the truth. Gutierrez Ruiz was released by the Tupamaros the day after he was kidnapped, the day of the general strike.

The United States is giving substantial aid and training to the Uruguayan police and army; in fact, last year the Tupamaros assassinated the man whom the U.S. sent down to supervise the whole operation, Dan Mitrione. In spite of his work, and in spite of

the U.S. aid and the repressive operations of the Uruguayan government, the Uruguayan people have continued to struggle towards a better life and a new society.

* * *

ECUADORIAN STUDENTS PROTEST U.S. EXPLOITATION

(NACLA)---The first Ecuadorian National Conference of University Students of Economics was held late in April of this year, passing a resolution demanding the confiscation of all the installations of a joint British-U.S. petroleum corporation called Anglo-Ecuadorian Oilfields. The expropriation would be in compensation for the more than 800,000 sucres (\$1 million) which the company owes to Ecuador because of its "tax evasion and illegal profits." In addition, the student conference also called for the changing of present government contracts with foreign firms for the petroleum resources of Ecuador, charging that the contracts are "detrimental to the state sovereignty and national economy." These contracts are assuming great importance since it is considered likely in many circles that Ecuador will become the biggest oil-producing country in Latin America before long. And it is the U.S.-owned Texas Co. which is exploiting many of the oil resources.

At the same time as the conference was being held, workers at the U.S.-owned Houston Company began a strike in the capital city of Quito against their low pay and calling for better living conditions. In another city, workers, supported by some students and teachers, demonstrated for the nationalization of their natural resources, especially oil and forests, which had been seized by U.S. corporations. Their demands are being moderately supported by the military government which recently took power in Ecuador, reflecting growing nationalist trends in Latin America.

* * *

STRUGGLES IN BRIEF

(NACLA)---(Editor's Note: Most of the countries in Latin America are controlled by U.S. imperialism. And although in certain cases many of these governments challenge the United States over the most blatant forms of exploitation, they are still capitalist nations. And where there is exploitation there is struggle. Information on some of these struggles follows.)

ARGENTINA: More than 200,000 schoolteachers went on a 24-hour strike May 4th demanding a pay raise and better working conditions.

COLOMBIA: Students of Valle University in Cali went on strike for an indefinite period during the last week in April in protest against "cultural penetration by U.S. imperialism." The students have been struggling for over a year against U.S. involvement in their University affairs.

VENEZUELA: Strikes and demonstrations by students and teachers were held in ten cities during the last week in April, pushing the government to end its restrictions on the democratic rights of teachers and its suppression of the student movement.

CUBA: Two mass rallies to protest the U.S. escalation of the war against Vietnam have been held in the capital of Havana. Workers and students held placards with slogans such as "Yankees get out of Indochina" and "Vietnam will win." And on May Day, Fidel gave a long speech to a huge crowd in the "Plaza de la Revolucion." Among those in attendance were 130 U.S. members of the fifth VENCEREMOS BRIGADE which just returned from six weeks of construction work in Cuba.

* * *

LETTER FROM A PRISONER (2)

Comrade,

I wish to thank you for the Latin America & Empire Report which I received yesterday. I was more than a little surprised that they allowed me to receive it, since there is complete domination here to suppress any literature which doesn't conform to their ideas.

I would like to say that the articles "Haitian Dictator Gets U.S. Arms" and "Statement of Peruvian Miners" were outstanding. There was nothing wrong with the other articles; I like nothing better than those articles which expose the C.I.A. and these money-hungry companies in this country for what they really are.

As for what I would like to study: Anything that shows the tactics that the U.S. imperialists use to kill, rob and cheat by proxy or in person our Latin American brothers and sisters. I realize that they are doing this all over the world today.

The reason I picked Latin America over Europe or Southeast Asia is because I think that the decent people in this country realize the wrong that our government has done and is still doing over there. But Latin America, hardly anyone realizes the injustice that is being committed there - if not on just as big then a larger scale, and it is time that everyone was awakened to the fact.

I wish to thank you again. I forgot - I am greatly interested in Socialism.

Yours in the Struggle,

RALSTON PURINA: LABOR PRACTICES
PART II

Ralston Purina has tried to appear as a benevolent, humanitarian corporation which works to promote harmony among its consumers, workers and stockholders. The management of the company has tried to create the belief that the interests of the workers and the interests of the company are the same. But the company's needs are to control larger markets, to produce at lower costs and to provide larger returns for its stockholders. To provide greater wealth to the stockholders means that less is available to meet the needs of the workers. Ralston Purina has handled the conflicting interests of the stockholders and workers in a variety of ways. But in each case, the interests of the stockholders has been the company's primary concern.

Take the case of one worker in the American Federation of Grain Millers, Local 303 at the Bloomington, Illinois plant. At that Chow plant (animal feeds) Ralston Purina had an incentive program which allowed workers to receive additional income for producing faster. This particular worker, having worked for the company for nearly eleven years, on October 27, 1961 found that the foreman had not given him credit for certain incentive items on his work report of the previous day. Having been hassled before by this foreman, the worker wrote across the face of the work report, "Go to hell you damn liar," with an arrow to the foreman's initials. The company fired him that day.

The grain miller, feeling he was illegally denied his job, went to an arbitrator appointed by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to settle such disputes. The NLRB consists of five men appointed by the President of the United States. The arbitrator decided that it was too harsh to fire the worker. In the same breath this "impartial" arbitrator said, "It is the damage to managerial authority that makes insubordination so serious...Repetition of an offense of this kind would be far more serious and might well be grounds for discharge. To emphasize the seriousness of this act a long period of layoff without pay is justified." The man was laid off and lost seven months of pay.

This worker was fired two months after the Grain Millers union was recognized as

the bargaining agent for the 82 workers in his plant. It seems unlikely that this worker would have been fired had the company not been trying to assert its power in the face of a new union.

Intimidation is only one of several tactics used by Ralston Purina to fight workers and unions. Misrepresentation is another. In 1964, workers tried to organize a local of the United Auto Workers at the Richmond Indiana, Ralston Purina Chow plant. To establish a union, over half of the eligible workers in a plant must vote in favor of the union in an election supervised the NLRB.

In the company's attempt to convince the workers not to join the union, it issued certain letters and charts to the employees about how great their wages were compared to workers in other companies. According to the regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, these letters and charts "misrepresented" the true wage scale paid by other companies. In a tie vote, the union lost the representation election. The workers who favored the union complained to the NLRB. The Board ruled that even though Ralston Purina did "misrepresent" the facts to convince workers not to join the union, it did not influence the outcome of the election. Not until three years later was a union-- the International Association of Machinists and not the United Auto Workers-- finally recognized at the Richmond plant. The victory of the IAM was much more to Ralston's liking since the UAW is one of the strongest unions in Indiana.

The company has also used the tactic of blacklisting when necessary as in the following case which reached the media a few years ago. Ralston Purina produces a variety of poultry products (under the Honeysuckle and Checkerboard Farms labels) by supplying small farmers with baby chicks. The farmers then raise the chicks under a contract with the company. Ralston buys the grown chickens back from the poultry growers at a fixed price, and then packs and markets the poultry products. Because Ralston is a major producer of broiler chickens in the Arkansas, Missouri and Alabama area, it determines the price paid to the small farmers for raising the chickens.

In 1962 several poultry growers in Arkansas felt that Ralston and two other firms

(Tyson's Foods Inc. and Arkansas Valley Industries Inc.) were paying poultry growers too little for their work. They tried to organize an association to further the mutual interests of broiler growers. Ralston, together with Tyson's and Arkansas Valley Industries Inc., used their power to see that the broiler growers who tried to organize would never again receive contracts to raise poultry from any of the major buyers. The Packers and Stockyards Administration, part of the Department of Agriculture, in 1965 found that these three companies had illegally "combined and arranged" to blacklist the Arkansas broiler farmers. But in 1969 the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis found that the Packers and Stockyards Administration had no jurisdiction in this case and that even though Ralston Purina and the other two firms had engaged in illegal practices, and even though several small farmers lost their life savings, the charges were dropped.

Ralston Purina employs 29,000 men and women in the United States. Aware of the potential power of 29,000 organized, united workers, the company has promoted a policy whereby only 7,800 of these workers are covered by collective bargaining contracts. These workers are represented by fifteen different unions, which makes it difficult to coordinate labor demands or have unified labor actions. In Ralston's animal feeds division, the company has 68 separate plants but unions exist in only 24 of the plants. Of the 24 union locals, there are nine different unions representing the employees. These unions are the American Federation of Grain Millers; Teamsters; Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; Amalgamated Meat Cutters; International Chemical Workers Union; Brewery Workers; Laborers International Union; United Steelworkers; International Longshoreman's Association; International Association of Machinists, and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

What has been the effect of Ralston Purina's labor policies? Very few statistics are published on the wages paid by any one company or the working conditions in any one plant. A report however, was published several years ago by the Federal Trade

Commission which presents information on the wages paid and profits earned for the cereal industry, one of Ralston Purina's key divisions. The following chart is compiled from that study.

Labor Productivity and Average Wages Paid
to Production Workers in the Cereal Industry

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Value added per worker per hour	\$6.65	\$19.35	3 times
Average pay per worker per hour	\$1.30	\$ 3.15	2.5 times

Source: Grocery Manufacturing, Study #6, National Commission on Food Marketing, June 1966, pps. 112,209.

In the process of manufacturing cereal each worker does some labor to transform raw materials into a finished product and thereby increases the value of the product. Each production worker in the cereal industry in 1947, on the average added \$6.65 of value every hour to the final product. In that year the average cereal worker was paid \$1.30 an hour for his work. In 1963 however, the average worker increased the value of the cereal products by \$19.35 in one hour but was paid \$3.15 for this labor. As can be seen from the chart, though workers produced three times the value in one hour in 1963 as in 1947, they only received two and a half times the pay. If the figures are adjusted for inflation between 1947 and 1963, productivity per worker increased 70.3% while real wages increased only 33.4%.

Each year in the cereal industry therefore, workers receive a smaller part of the wealth they create. Traditional economists argue that inflation is caused by workers receiving higher salaries which forces the owners of companies to raise their prices to maintain profits. It is true that from year to year workers get higher salaries. But the yearly increase in salary is much less than the yearly increase in wealth they