

Bits of the World in Briefs

Fifth Estate Collective

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CHINA

The Chinese people have a new hero, according to the *Peking Peoples Daily*. He is Teng Hsiang-erh, a Shantung province coal miner who is being hailed as a model worker. To earn the distinction, Teng did the following: refused to take time off for his honeymoon, never took a vacation in 28 years, worked on his days off, and stayed at work rather than care for his terminally-ill mother. However the acclaim is not unanimous. According to Japanese reporters in Peking, many of Teng's fellow coal miners think he's a fruitcake. (IWW)

USSR

While on the subject of work, the IWW reports that the Soviet Union has recently started locking up workers in mental institutions when they complain about low wages, health and safety hazards and factory speed-ups. The Soviet government usually saves its mental institutions for dissident intellectuals (who must be mad to question the "workers state") and has usually employed the much cheaper method of shooting dissatisfied workers. It still goes to show that the crazier the authorities think you to be, the healthier you really are. (IWW)

WEST GERMANY

The Vietnam Veterans Against the War were right when, in 1972, they told the Senate that the U.S. government would never again have a ground army that they could depend on. At that time, lower ranking GIs in Vietnam were mutinying against orders to fight and the fraggings of officers were not rare occurrences.

Now, in West Germany, discontent within American NATO forces seems to be growing as lower ranking U.S. soldiers and their civilian friends and families, stationed in West Germany as part of America's hand-picked contribution to NATO (the government's most reliable troops), are trying to stop the deployment of the Neutron bomb in Europe.

The soldiers are passing around petitions stating that, "A weapon that kills people while saving property may be good for the property owners, but not for those who have only our lives to lose." The intention is to get enough signatures of "soldiers and civilian personnel" to put pressure on military higher-ups to stop the spread of the bomb, even in spite of daily threats and harassment from officers and senior sergeants in the chain of command.

During a recent interview with the GI organization Fight Back (in West Germany), a member of GIs Against the Neutron Bomb stated that 75 to 80 per cent of the U.S. troops stationed with NATO are against the Neutron bomb and NATO forces as a whole. When asked if the U.S./NATO forces would be effective if sent under combat conditions into Italy or the Middle East, the GI responded "Hell no! (laughter) I'd be gone, I wouldn't be there to

see it. A lot of people wouldn't go. Shit, I wouldn't go with any unit. Those fools tell me to shoot somebody I never saw before in my life." (LNS)

SPAIN

A fancy Barcelona night club, La Scala, was destroyed on January 15 and four workers killed in a fire supposedly caused by Molotov cocktails. Police immediately blamed the action on the anarcho-syndicalist CNT and two anarchist commando groups, the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (FAI) and the Juventudes Libertarias (JL), although the newly founded Iberian News Service (INS) reports that 80% of the workers at the night club were CNT members.

Because of the growing power and size of socialist organizations and the jack-rabbit growth of the CNT over a period of eight months, INS reports that Spanish, Italian and Argentine fascist groups, such as the Warriors of Christ the King and Fuerza Nueva (Ordine Nuovo in Italy), have suddenly become more active in attempts to discredit leftists, and the night club incident may be just another of their efforts to do so.

The far right in Spain has until recently remained in the background since last June's elections and although they are small in number, they enjoy the comfort of having the police turn a blind eye to their actions (the same police that were Franco's shock troops). INS reports that in their attempts to discredit the left, right wing groups hope to force a military takeover (their favorite slogan is "The Army To Power"), but observers agree that there is no immediate threat of a military coup. The Army's first loyalties are to King Carlos, who is supported by socialist and communist parties.

Even though it seems quite certain that the FAI and JV had nothing to do with the destroying of the night club, the CNT made clear that they had no connection with the two groups (except historically), but called for the immediate release of the 14 JV members who were indiscriminately arrested for the incident. (INS)



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