

View from the Top

Thorstein Smith

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The Establishment press has been full of three things lately: encounter groups, pollution-ecology-environmental control (which has got to be the most cooptable issue since sideburns) and wasteful spending by the Defense Department.

Two interesting mainstream views on the latter were in *Look* (Aug. 25, the second of a series) and *Fortune* (Aug. 1st issue). *Fortune* lists the top 25 contractors, breaks down defense contracts by state and into dollars per head of the population per state (meaning: just how dependent a particular state is on the military), and shows how the 25 largest contractors account for nearly half the value of all contracts.

States most dependent on military contracts are California, Texas, Missouri, Indiana, Georgia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. Top states in 1968 were California (nearly \$6.5 billion) and Texas (over \$4 billion), with New York third in contracts (nearly \$3.5 billion). Top five contractors are General Dynamics (about \$2.25 billion in new contracts in 1968), Lockheed, G.E., United Aircraft, and McDonnell Douglas. 81.4% of the value of all federal contracts let in 1968 went to purchases by the Pentagon.

Not all the news from the Pentagon front is bad, fortunately. On the toy scene, anti-Vietnam feeling accounts for a steady shift away from Green Beret uniforms and M-16 plastic rifles. Domestic racism, however, continues: Lone Ranger six-shooters are holding steady.

Official statistics indicate there are now nearly 1.5 million men in the army, 750,000 in the Navy, 315,000 in the Marines, and nearly 900,000 in the Air Force. There are 429 major, and 2,972 smaller, U.S. bases overseas. To service these, there are 138 stockades and brigs, which house 15,000 prisoners, most of whom are convicted AWOLs.

The Central Committee for C.O.'s (Philadelphia) reports the Army received more C.O. applications in the first five months of 1969 than in all of 1968, and that CCCO's own counseling with men in the service has increased ten-fold in the last year.

The *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 17) reports the government as worried about the political potential of returning G.I.s: "Returning Negro servicemen could, in time, become a dangerous cadre of angered ghetto militants if the Government fails to meet their needs." Result: "Higher education may offer the most effective way to ease their readjustment to civilian life and help assure their economic success."

However, the current G.I. Bill pays a single vet only \$130 a month, which isn't enough to meet his tuition most places. One, two, many Columbias! Tip to Secretary Finch: substitute the word "university" for the word "ghetto" in the WSJ quote above.

Miscellaneous items

14,300 people died last year in industrial accidents, but companies underreport, so this isn't the full story. Says Ralph Nader (WSJ Aug. 5), "The industrial safety problem is far more serious than crime in the streets."

In a study of the California higher education system, class discrimination was again found confirmed. U. of C. students get an average subsidy of \$5000, but Cal State students only \$3000, and junior college students only \$1000.

"Yet students from \$25,000 income families are four times as likely to be eligible for the U. of C. as those from families making less than \$4000. "The end result," say W.L. Hansen and B.A. Weisbrod in their book *Benefits, Costs And Finance of Public Higher Education*, "is that California's three higher education systems...educate three different general classes of students and, in turn, provide three different levels of subsidies.

"The same is true for many other states...that have a multiple-tiered higher education system...in California, over 40% of families with college-age children receive no public subsidy at all, while a most fortunate ten per cent receive subsidies of over \$5,000."

A number of banks are now providing small (average \$13,000) loans which act as seed money to obtain federal loans, to black capitalists. Arcata Investment, in Menlo Park, California, is one example. In the Bay Area, some 30 businesses got help (at 8% interest) from Arcata, generating jobs for 160 people. Almost all these businesses are either service (e.g. parcel delivery) or franchises of outside white companies (e.g. auto parts). One exception is a printing company called Amistad Lithograph (after a slave ship seized in a rebellion off Africa).

The Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence (and its containment?) at Brandeis now lists "Field Research and Case Studies," "Theory," "Student Disorder," "Media," "Historical Perspectives," and "Police and Criminal Justice" categories in its occasional round-up of violence literature. Current round-up has 60 titles, but a very mixed bag of authors from the National Guard Association to the Pacifists.

The Center reports that sales of *Gun Digest* were up 25% last year, and that the Stanford Research Institute estimates there are 115 million privately owned guns in the U.S.—more than two for each male between 14 and 65.

"Weatherman" is probably responsible for at least six of these 115 million, since the Weather Bureau of SDS is now copying the Panther line of having every member armed. Good luck!



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