

Prospects

Organizations like the SDS in the United States, the 22 March Movement in France and the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund in Germany have received considerable notoriety as a consequence of their activities. For a good many students, that notoriety probably is directly translatable as effectiveness. For the short run, it would appear that they are the only vehicles open to the student radical and the less militant young person who is impelled for personal reasons to move from mere indignation to protest.

Many of today's students--far more than are directly involved in protest--share the activists' disillusionment with the political process. Because of the diverse and changing issues which fuel dissent, an end to the Vietnam conflict would not automatically signal the close of student protest. Other issues quickly would come to the fore.

The social and political malaise that underlies much of the present-day dissidence will not be speedily cured; there are, in fact, striking parallels between the situation today and the conditions of cynicism, despair, and disposition toward violence which existed after World War I and which later helped produce Fascism and National Socialism on the Continent. In Scandinavia, where the Vietnam issue has been central to dissent, an end to the conflict in Southeast Asia might well diminish the level of protest. Elsewhere in Europe, the prospects are less encouraging. In Italy, France, West Germany, Spain, and Portugal, the democratic base ranges from fragile to non-existent and could well be threatened should the dissidents provoke frightened governments into repressive measures of the kind that would broaden the nature of the dissent.

Several Latin American governments are observing closely the efforts of the Ongania regime in Argentina to depoliticize the universities and to end the abuses of fifty years. Meanwhile, an increasing number of them are disposed to quash student

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dissent with military force, as witness the case of Mexico. In Brazil, student agitation may well induce a reactionary military clique to pressure a reluctant but harried government into adopting far more harsh domestic policies. Meanwhile, local Communist parties have made inroads into student organizations, in some cases enhancing the chances of violence.

If an education is everywhere necessary for "success" by today's standards, it is doubly or triply so in Africa and other underdeveloped areas. For the educated African, then, political activity and government service become the most promising path to money, status, and power. The professions are limited, industry still is largely under European control and management, and military service holds little attraction. Until these conditions alter, student dissidence will be fed locally and will pose a threat to the stability of a number of governments.

It is debatable whether an end to the Vietnam conflict would defuse student dissent; some other pretext would serve equally as well. In the United States, where the question of university reform is real but not as pressing or as explosive as in Europe, peace in Vietnam probably would cause dissidence to subside--but not disappear. The chances are that some of those who lend support to SDS would lose interest and that SDS would turn with renewed vigor to the political problems of the slum dwellers. Given the discouraging record of past student forays into slum areas, it is moot whether any momentum could be sustained--especially if imaginative Federal, State and private redevelopment efforts were under way at the same time. Other radical groups would retain little more than nuisance value; most are too compromised by their association with Communist party organizations and too restricted by hidebound, unimaginative leadership to prove very effective once cut off from SDS or denied the Vietnam issue.

International Communism has not been able to employ its student/youth mechanisms to channel dissent in support of its objectives; nevertheless, Moscow benefits from whatever notoriety attaches to Free World institutions as a consequence of activism.

-38-

Sensitive
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The national Communist parties, particularly in Europe, have been unable to cope with the dissidents and view with alarm the possibility that their malleable youth organizations will be drawn toward the radicals.

A word of caution is indicated. Many sociologists and psychologists believe that industrial societies are disjunctive, that they tend to aggravate conflict between generations. If this is so, there is a likelihood that dissidence will worsen and that its base will broaden--unless the youthful energy which makes it so potent a force can be rechanneled to more constructive purposes.

-39-

Sensitive
No Foreign Dissem

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21

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ARGENTINA

Summary

Recent student disturbances--the first since the Onganía government came to power in 1966--point up the problems that Argentina is encountering from its sizable student population. They also reflect the similarity between student problems in Argentina and those in France, West Germany, and even the United States.

To meet its student challenge, the Onganía administration has emphasized conservatism and tradition. It has been quick to suppress antigovernment demonstrations and has shown little sympathy for student demands.

Background

As in most of Latin America, the university system in Argentina in the nineteenth century was modeled after the Spanish. Students were required to memorize large amounts of unrelated material in rote style. The curriculum was concentrated on classical themes, such as Greek philosophy, ancient literature, medicine, and law; sciences and the humanities were not included. Also adopted from the Spanish was the "faculty system." Students entered a faculty which was self-contained. All courses were held there, whether or not related to their field of specialty. Thus a student in the Faculty of Medicine had all his history, language, and other non-medical courses within that faculty.

Not only the Spanish influenced the Argentine university system in the nineteenth century. The Positivist philosophy through its emphasis on the development of scholars and experts who would manage the affairs of the nation, established university graduates as an elite group. In addition, the immigrant wave from Europe which markedly altered the ethnic make-up of Argentina introduced a more enlightened university background from non-Spanish Europe, and some modern ideas began to penetrate the Argentine system. The role of the Roman Catholic

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No Foreign Dissem

Church in Argentine education was, in the meantime, declining, and by the early 20th century political reforms had ended the Church's sway.

It was not until 1918, after a student campaign against the university system at the city of Cordoba, that a reform program was achieved. Under "the Cordoba reform," students were given a voice in university administration, including the right to vote on course content, professors, and rectors for their schools. Tuition was eliminated, and drastic revisions were made in entrance requirements. The reform was basically a middle-class phenomenon. The universities--previously citadels for the sons of the upper-land-owning classes--were now opened to the middle classes. The working classes, however, were still largely excluded by tuition and fees. With the opening of the universities to the middle classes and the inclusion of students in university government came the involvement of students in national politics--a role they have been reluctant to relinquish.

Peron, when he assumed power in 1945, took control of the universities at all levels. He opened them to the lower classes by eliminating tuition fees, he ended the use of part-time teachers, and he established a "Workers University." Although political activities were banned by Peron, student organizations became even more politically oriented and shifted leftward in their ideology.

The fall of Peron signaled a return to the system that had prevailed under the Radicals. Student political groups ran the gamut from Communist to Far Right, but the most important were the Reformists, who had originally sparked the Cordoba reform, and the Humanists, who were oriented toward Catholicism. Although student political groups were independent of national party affiliations, the Reformists were later dominated by the Communists and the Humanists leaned toward Argentina's poorly organized Christian Democrats.

Dr. Arturo Illia was made president of Argentina in 1963 at the insistence of General Ongania, commander in chief of the Argentine Army. By 1965, the military were beginning to lose patience with the

Argentina - 2
No Foreign Dissem
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No Foreign Dissem

kindly old doctor from Cordoba--and so were Argentina's activist university students. Demands for improvements in the universities, including increased budgets, were mixed with student complaints about many of Illia's policies. In 1966, the leftist-oriented and Communist-run Argentine University Federation, to which most important student groups belonged, mounted increasingly violent demonstrations. These disorders were one of the factors which led to the 1966 coup and Ongania's assumptions of the presidency.

The Ongania government took over the national universities in September 1966. It claimed that its aim was to end student involvement in politics and to improve the educational system, but the exercise of undue force against students at the University of Buenos Aires drew world-wide condemnation. When the government demanded that university rectors take an oath of loyalty, many resigned; teachers at all levels, some fearing repressive measures, followed suit. New university regulations in 1967 placed the universities under the control of the Secretariat for Education of the Minister of the Interior. University administration was now to be handled by faculty and the Secretariat. Students could have no vote in the governing council, though they were permitted one elected representative, and all students were required to pass at least one course a year to maintain university status.

Universities Today

Argentina probably now has the best system of higher education in Latin America. Between 35 and 40 percent of Latin America's university students and several thousand students from outside the hemisphere are enrolled in Argentine schools. Enrollment in the nine national universities and 13 private institutions totals more than 250,000. State-owned university education is tuition-free, although private schools are permitted to charge tuition.

In 1966, Argentina's primary school system had 3,118,000 enrolled students--about 90-percent of the school-age population--and its secondary schools 755,000. Well over 90 percent of primary school

Argentina - 3

No Foreign Dissem

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No Foreign Dissem

teachers have teaching degrees, and the ratio of teachers to students is the lowest in Latin America. About 3.8 percent of the national budget each year goes to education--close to the 4 percent figure recommended by UNESCO.

There is another side of the Argentine educational picture, however. Only 50 percent of primary school students complete the total program. About 43 percent of those who enter secondary school go on to graduate, and only 25 percent of students who enter the universities eventually receive degrees.

The system also wastes resources because of its distorted pattern of degree specialization. About 25 percent of the university students study medicine. (Argentina has more doctors per 10,000 population than the United States.). Another 20 percent study law. Despite the fact that Argentina has serious shortages in the natural and social sciences and in many technical fields, few students enter these disciplines.

Argentina's school system, like most in the world, suffers also from regional imbalance. Schools are concentrated in the major cities; the rural areas are largely neglected. The universities--both public and private--are scattered through downtown buildings of major cities. Students find private accommodations, at home or in rented rooms, and social facilities are for the most part nonexistent.

Private universities, which are relatively new in Argentina, must meet stringent academic and financial standards and submit to government supervision. All but three of the 13 schools are affiliated with the Catholic Church. Only about 15,000 students--six percent of the total university enrollment, attend private institutions.

When students attempted to hold demonstrations to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Cordoba reform in 1968, the Ongania regime proved that it was determined to bring order to the national universities. Police, both within the schools and on the streets, dealt quickly with the demonstrators.

Argentina - 4

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No available figures indicate the total number of professors in Argentine universities. It is known, however, that about 11,000 teachers at various levels were employed at the University of Buenos Aires prior to the 1966 take-over and that the staffs of other national universities are smaller. The limited number of full-time professors is the most striking feature of the universities. At the School of Economics at the University of Buenos Aires, for example, there are only 12 full-time professors for 15,000 students. Most classes, especially at Buenos Aires, are held in the evenings to allow both students and teachers to hold other jobs. Professors devote little time to research or writing, and many textbooks are collections of earlier printed works, rehashed and padded.

Many professors are politically to the left, ranging from mild Socialists to Maoist Communists. Although several former deans of the University of Buenos Aires have held far-leftist views, none are thought to have been Party members. The faculties of Philosophy and Letters of the same university have been strongly Communist, but their following has been limited. In 1965, however, they did prevent Presidential Assistant Walt Rostow from speaking at the Faculty of Economics.

The Communist activist professors were cautioned by the Communist Party not to resign after the 1966 take-over. Many who did leave their posts no doubt feared reprisals, either for their political views or for their Jewish origin. This year, however, most faculties are operating normally, with shortages mainly in the natural sciences, psychology and sociology.

The University Students

The large majority of students in Argentina's universities come from the middle and upper classes, with a small minority from the lower working classes. For the most part, they live in the same large cities where the universities are situated. In racial and ethnic background, they match the national profile--a mixture of Spanish and Italian, with other European strains and a few mestizo (mixed Indian

Argentina - 5

No Foreign Dissem

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No Foreign Dissem

and white). Unlike other Latin countries, the upper classes in Argentina are not exclusively of Spanish derivation. They also have Italian, German, and British heritages. Argentines tend to be highly discriminatory, however, especially toward dark-skinned people of any race. Although some conservatives still hold anti-Semitic beliefs, Jews have not been excluded from the universities. The upper classes who resent the middle classes, distrust the lower class, which make up a large part of the activist or radical university student groups.

Students from the upper classes can afford to attend schools in the US or Europe, and many do. They are, therefore, not as involved with university activities in Argentina as are other groups. Middle-class students attend the universities to cement or expand their standing in society. Most recognize that they must attend graduate schools abroad for a complete professional education. Lower-class students go to the universities to escape the ranks of the working class; many of them become the politically oriented activists and professional students.

Eighty percent of university students avoid demonstrations. They do not want to jeopardize their standing at the university or their future entry into Argentine society. Moreover, student protest or "rebellion" in Argentina is usually directed more toward revision of the existing system than to its complete overthrow. A number of student organizations, however, provide centers for student opinions and actions; many of them are leftist.

The Argentine University Federation, until the Onganía regime the principal student confederation, now operates with much reduced membership. Orthodox Communist youth, Communist dissidents, and other left-wing groups are all still involved in the organization, but the government keeps a close eye on their activities, and the organization has been able to do little within the country. The Humanists, like the FUA, oppose the Onganía reform, although they are apparently more circumspect about the prospects of a confrontation with the government. As an organized force, they now

Argentina - 6

No Foreign Dissem

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No Foreign Dissem

appear to be semimoribund. The Integralists are a pro-Catholic and somewhat leftist group, limited largely to the University at Cordoba. Although they were a major force in the 1966 riots against the Ongania take-over, they did not participate in the 1968 demonstrations, citing as a reason the Communist domination of the FUA. The Communist Youth Federation and the relatively new Communist Youth National Committee for Revolutionary Recovery vie for the membership of Communist youth.

Despite the diversity of orientation among the student groups, some common attitudes seem to prevail. Generally, organized students--Communist and non-Communist alike--oppose the restrictions imposed by the Ongania reform. They want the tripartite system of administration returned so that they can have a voice in the running of the schools. They oppose the rule requiring a student to pass one course per year and any requirements for payment of tuition or penalties.

The students mourn the loss of student politics--formerly their major diversion. They oppose the Ongania government because it is a dictatorship, and they disagree with its rightist policies, both foreign and domestic. Since many activist students come from lower-class origins, it is understandable that they favor Peronism and more benefits for labor. Although the activists bitterly opposed Illia when he was president, they now support the ousted Radicals as one means of opposing the present administration.

There is no evidence of serious contacts with activists in other countries, such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit in France or Mark Rudd in the US, although the FUA, through contacts in Communist front groups, probably is in indirect touch with student leaders in other countries.

Students and Organized Labor

Not since the Peron era has there been so much dialogue between student leaders and labor. Recent splits in the 2.5 million-man General Confederation of Labor have led to the formation of the so-called

Argentina - 7

No Foreign Dissem

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No Foreign Dissem

"rebel" CGT. Avowedly more leftist than the mainstream and more of an orthodox Peronist stripe than the main group, it actively opposes the government and has, therefore, attracted support from the FUA.

The fragile alliance between the "rebel" CGT and the FUA has offered little threat to the government. Nevertheless, an alliance between the majority of students and a strengthened "rebel" CGT could create a major problem for the government.

The non-student who is the same age as his university counterpart probably resents the privileges the university student has while in school and his opportunities after graduation. This resentment probably is tempered somewhat by the sentiments of the 75 percent of university students who fail to graduate.

Prospects

In some respects, Argentina's university students are today faced with a situation similar to that existing in 1918 before the university reform. They are virtually excluded from any control over the administration of the universities, and requirements of academic performance mean that the schools are no longer open to all. It seems likely, therefore, that the pressures that motivated the students in 1918 will do so again.

There are, however, significant differences. The Ongania government is quick to suppress antigovernment demonstrations and has not the sympathy for the students demands, which the Radicals had in 1918. Moreover, the failure of student participation to improve university administration or the educational system was demonstrated over a period of many years and student involvement in generally unstable politics after the reform was not generally well received.

The outlook for the universities is probably one of order but little progress in the next decade. There are few funds to direct toward university improvement in the present austerity campaign, which may last at least two to three more years. And there is less sympathy for innovation or change among Argentina's traditionalist leaders. Innovations either good or bad, can come only with a progressive government in Argentina. The prospects for this are not bright.