

So the race is on, with Asian communists trying to make major breakthroughs in technology or war in time to thwart the immense appeal of Western aid to poorer or underdeveloped Asian nations.

And who is winning? There have been several test cases in the past year. Though the results are not necessarily permanent, they have generally spelled a series of major disasters for the Chinese.

• In Moslem Indonesia, the sixth largest country in the world, the army engineered an anti-Chinese coup with strong support from powerful student groups throughout the country. American advisors here believe it wouldn't have happened but for the U.S. presence in Vietnam; they are probably right. General Suharto now apparently has hopeful feelers out for renewed American aid.

• In August North Korea carefully dissociated herself from the Peking line, and began making overtures in Moscow's direction. One reason, no doubt, was the continued presence of the Eighth U.S. Army south of the 38th parallel.

• Meanwhile, South Korea and Taiwan are being billed as major American aid success stories. From what I saw this summer in both countries, the stories are plausible enough.

• Unconfirmed reports say General Ne Win in a recent White House visit asked President Johnson for American aid to counter Chinese-supported guerillas in the northern forests of Burma. To Burma watchers, the xenophobic socialist general's American tour was surprise enough. U.S. aid would indicate a significant shift in Burma's foreign policy, which until now has been very deferential to Peking.

• In the face of increasing guerilla activity in both countries, Thailand and the Philippines seem more firmly attached than ever to American support.

• Even Malaysia, with British ground troops guarding her borders, called the U.S. her "greatest and strongest ally" during President Johnson's visit Oct. 30. Three days later, Prime Minister Tengku Abdul Rahman announced that

"Peking-oriented terrorists of the 'Malayan Liberation Army' were operating again in the peninsula's central highlands, 100 miles closer to Kuala Lumpur than they have since 1960.

And that about wraps up Southeast Asia, except for Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

THE NEUTRAL GAME

Cambodia, with strong support from France, has been leaning closer and closer to Peking. Observers in Saigon feel that National Liberation Front uses Phnom Penh as a major base for its activities in South Vietnam, and the American military seems increasingly inclined to treat Cambodian territory as an extension of Viet Cong controlled areas. Still, the official line from Prince Sihanouk is strict neutrality, and U.S. diplomats tread as lightly as possible on Cambodian toes.

Laos seems up for grabs, if anybody really wanted it. The Viet

Minh appear to control eastern Laos, (bordering North and South Vietnam) jointly with the Pathet Lao, who have strong ties with Hanoi.

Massive American aid has kept the western administrative capital of Vientiane conservatively neutral to pro-U.S., under the control of Prince Souvanna Phouma. But as John F. Kennedy is said to have remarked, Laos is not a land "worthy of engaging the attention of great powers". Its chief importance for some years has been as a staging base for guerillas operating in Vietnam.

CONCENTRATION

It is on South Vietnam that China and the U.S. are focusing all the in-

fluence and pressure they can bring to bear in a massive struggle for ideological political, diplomatic, economic and military control over this strategic border land.

The fact that China does not have ground troops operating in South Vietnam, and the fact that private U.S. commercial interests in Indochina are negligible (only about \$6 million in permanent investments), do not lessen the intensity of the conflict.

Similarly, in this international game of power politics, it is academic to argue over whether the Viet Cong is supported or dominated by Hanoi, or Hanoi by Peking. A victory by the Viet Cong would be a victory for

Ho Chi Minh and a victory for Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao.

It would prove the historical inevitability or the Victory of People's War, i.e. revolutionary war against the bourgeois nations, and restore to China her long-lost initiative as the dominant political force in Asia. It would make her a winner.

And it would make the United States the biggest loser in Asian history. It would be a stunning setback to "capitalist" as opposed to "socialist" technology. It would demonstrate the failure of Western-type political, economic, and social institutions in Asia. It would allow Mao to write Chinese characters on the wall. Losers don't last.

Activism

bogs down

Better red tape than dead

By ROBERT A. GROSS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The two-year-old Free University of Pennsylvania has more than 400 students, a wide-ranging curriculum, and faculty and administration support. But many of its organizers consider it a failure.

"The Free University is in trouble," say three members of the student-organized school's co-ordinating committee. "The majority of the courses are ill-attended, the creative thought is at a minimum in many courses, the minimal office work has not been done, and that which has been done has been done by very few people."

Although this analysis is disputed by other University of Pennsylvania students as overly pessimistic, it points up problems shared by a number of free universities across the country.

Founded in protest against bureaucracies stifling of learning in formal education, the anti-universities are beginning to meet the difficulties which college administrations face continually—lack of organization, funds and student interest.

In their reaction against the formal procedures used by colleges to handle almost

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all activities, the free universities allow their members complete freedom. Anyone can organize and lead a course, and anyone can attend—usually at no cost—and with no fear of grades.

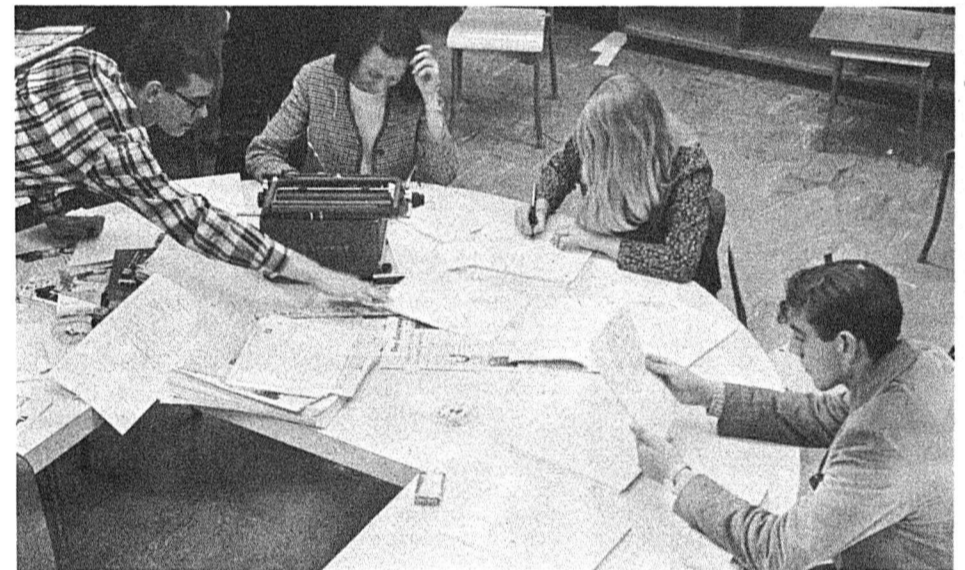
The bureaucracy is given little power: it registers students, arranges classroom space and handles necessary paper-work. When policy decisions have to be made, everyone can participate.

Yet, despite their success in involving students in education, free universities are beginning to feel the consequences of their extreme anti-bureaucratic assumptions—administrative work is not being done, and continuity of operations is in danger.

The nationally publicized 1,000-student Experimental College at San Francisco State College admitted recently it is broke and the outlook for additional funds is bleak.

Its organizers failed to write proposals for foundation and U.S. Office of Education funds, which it expected as sources of support.

The Experimental College began its operation last fall with an initial \$15,000 allocation from student government, which would have been repaid upon receipt of outside assistance.



DREARY PAPERWORK

... something activists aren't doing very well

But to receive any grants the college would have had to submit a written prospectus. And for activists more accustomed to organizing and agitating, the difficulties of writing a formal proposal seem to have been insurmountable.

So, with very little money in sight for the immediate future, Experimental College officials are beginning to take stock of their operation.

"We are going to be tighter about salaries next semester," says college director Cynthia Nixon, "partly because of the lack of money and partly because the work has not been up to par. The structure of the Experimental College will change slightly to a more centralized operation."

Continuity has been another major problem for free universities. The one-year-old Free University experiment at the University of Michigan was discontinued this fall because there was no one to lead it, according to Richard Cook a graduate student in philosophy, who taught a course at the Free U. last year.

Formal connections with the university can bring their own problems, as San Francisco State's Experimental College organizers have learned.

Besides the paradox of offering courses for credit in a system which it rejects, the Experimental College has to meet formal departmental requirements for acceptance of its courses.

"During spring, credit was given in special study courses in the Experimental College," according to Don Jones, a lectur-

er in psychology at San Francisco State. "They clamped down this fall."

"It might take as long to break up the evaluation network (grades) as it did to break up the plantation system," he said.

But most free university planners are uninterested in joining the formal educational system. Following philosopher Paul Goodman's original call for a seces-

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sion from the universities, their organizers seek to establish counter-institutions which will be far more attractive to students than traditional colleges.

Despite their many problems, students continue to be excited by the education experiments, and free universities are proliferating across the country.

More than 30 schools, involving over 3,000 students, have been started this year at colleges ranging from the University of Oregon to Northern Illinois University to Princeton University.

The idea has also spread to England, but with a surprising twist. After 50 persons founded a Free School in Notting Hill Gate in London, their initial enthusiasm waned, and the founders soon dropped the idea of holding classes. Instead they formed a Neighborhood Unit for community organization and to provide community services, and a Playground Unit to build a community play area.