Interrupt 6

Newsletter of Computer
Professionals for Peace

APRIL 1969

DEMONSTRATE TO END THE WAR

The New Nixon is sounding more and more like the Old LBJ. Nixon has given his "last warning" to the rebels in Vietnam not to "escalate". Recent reports cast an interesting light on this warning.

ESCALATION (?)

W. Averell Harriman, former chief United States negotiator in Paris, was quoted by James Wechsler in the New York Post, March 7th, as having said that the current enemy attacks were essentially a response to U.S. actions, rather than a deliberate move to affect the peace talks. The N.Y. Times reported on March 23, that U.S. troops began "patrolling more aggressively and engaging the enemy far more frequently" than before the halt of bombing of North Vietnam on Nov. 1st of last year. In the same article a high ranking officer described the current fighting as part of General Creighton W. Abrams strategy of "total war". "The strategy since last fall has been to press the enemy simultaneously on all fronts, to fight the V.C., to go after their infra-structure, hit the main forces when possible, and extend the pacification program".

Senator McGovern in a speech before the Senate (N.Y. Times, 3/18/69) stated: "While the North Vietnamese responded to our bombing halt by withdrawing 22 full regiments from South Vietnam, we were preparing a great extension of our own offensive operations in the South. Air, marine, and ground engagements increased in number and intensity." The Senator pointed out that the total number of battallion size operations undertaken by South Vietnamese and American troops has climbed from 820 in November to 1077 in January.

FACT OR FANTASY

The administration is reaching the point of desperation in threatening "retaliation" for an escalation which the U. S. itself initiated. Ten thousand American soldiers have died since the Paris talks began and the total now stands at 33,065. In the face of this fact, Charles Mohr has reported that recent enemy gains have been greatly understated by official reports (N.Y. Times. 3/13/69). A much more extensive report of NLF successes appeared in the London Times of February 27. Nicholas Tomalin reported that the official sources claimed "light damage" from an attack at the base at Cu Chi. He reported that NLF soldiers actually penetrated 10 barbed wire barriers and then damaged three and destroyed nine large Chinook helicopters valued at $16,000,000. The destruction reportedly took five minutes. It is obvious that our government is inclined to tell us less than the truth.

CRISIS AT HOME

The cost of the war is being felt more painfully at home. In response

ACTION ⊕ NOTES

MARCH 4

Leafletting started early - 8:30 to 10:00 in the morning - on Wall St., Midtown and Uptown. We spread out and hit areas with many programmers, in an attempt to let them know that something was happening, that we existed, and that we cared.

The leaflet, "SCIENCE FOR LIFE OR DEATH", proposed three major points:

- End the Anti-Ballistic Missile System...
- Oppose other ill-conceived and hazardous projects...
- Scientists and professionals, review the consequences of involvement in military research and development
  Use your skills to solve the critical problems of hunger... etc., etc.

At 11:30 we gathered at Rockefeller Center. This was the time to question, discuss, challenge and be challenged. Two tables with buttons, leaflets and petitions, placed just south of the mall opening on 5th Avenue between 49th and 50th Streets, served as the hub. From this point, spokes of people spread out to leaflet and get petitions signed. The petition was addressed to Senators Javits and Godell, stating that the undersigned were against the ABM and the misuse of science.

Not everyone was busy with leafletting, so there was time for those interested in our position to question and get answers. The occasional heckler was there, but the majority of people approached seemed interested in what was said, and a few good discussions started.

A splash of blue was added by the two policemen assigned to us. They waited on the sidelines, in vain, for any disorderly conduct. 320 signatures were collected on the petitions.

The tables, leaflets, petitions and people packed up shortly after 2:00, when the sidewalks began to clear. Many of the CPPers left then to attend a teach-in given at NYU. It was offered in keeping with the scientist's work stoppage across the country.

The day was stimulating and challenging both in concept and fulfillment.

* * *

Spring Joint Computer Conference

The SJCC will be held at the Prudential Center in Boston May 14 through May 16. We hope to have an organized CPP presence there, to raise the issue of the Vietnam War and the broader questions of the responsibility of scientists and technicians to society. Our actions will probably include distributing relevant literature and holding a rally in cooperation with the M.I.T -based March 4th Movement, to be addressed by several scientists and others well-known for their stands on non-complicity.

A meeting has been scheduled in the War Memorial Auditorium for Wednesday night, May 14th, to form a new ACM Special Interest Committee or Group on the Social Implications of Computing, and we urge all interested people to attend. ACM membership is not necessary

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The Air Force Seeks Psychiatric Help

by Joseph Schwab

I am a programmer for the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene at Rockland State Hospital, a New York state psychiatric hospital. I took this job because I thought that it fulfilled these three criteria: non-involvement in supporting U.S. military and foreign policy, non-profit orientation, and opportunity for professional achievment.

One day a few weeks ago I was asked to go to the conference room for a seminar. When our staff has assembled, three men from Rome Air Development Center (RADC), a U.S. Air Force installation in Rome, N.Y., were introduced. The first speaker began by noting that some of their previous seminars had been criticized for being uninteresting but that they had changed their presentation so as to make it more interesting. I certainly found the first part of his presentation to be "very interesting"--as he glibly described some of the projects in which RADC has been and is engaged. According to his own words, these projects include: work related to Southeast Asia (its exact nature not being described), intelligence, pattern recognition and analysis, information systems and information retrieval, mapping and graphics, radar, acoustics, and aerial photography. (Some of the specific details that he did give include: 1) They are doing "little work" on a "state of affairs" project that studies "trends in social and political ideology in foreign countries"; 2) They are "following" the work by Prof. Salton of Cornell U. (formerly of Harvard U.) and by the Rand Corp., Systems Development Corp., and Stanford Research Institute on large data bases; 3) They are using "Isodata", developed by Dr. Jeff Baugh of Stanford Research Inst., for pattern analysis; and 4) They are using "Plot 3-D", developed by Stanford Research Inst., for mapping and graphing.) The only humorous aspect of the day involved by thinking that "handprint recognition" (another area that RADC is working on) was computerized analysis of fingerprints, whereas a colleague later informed me that it refers to computer recognition of hand-written characters.

One of the RADC speakers stated that RADC had developed a large information system and would like to use data from the data bank of information on patients in Rockland State Hospital and other state psychiatric hospitals in New York and New England for testing its information system. I subsequently expressed my repugnance at RADC's support for U.S. policy and my opposition to any cooperation with RADC to a number of my co-workers (several of whom share my position and feelings) and to two of my supervisors. So far, according to my supervisor, a decision has not been made concerning a joint project with RADC.

What have I learned from this matter? That can best be stated by the following questions that it has caused me to consider: 1) Is it possible to work in the computer field (or in any other field involving scientific research and development) without having one's work quite possibly wind up aiding governmental policies of militarism and military intervention, oppression, and repression? (My answer is "No", unless one works on jobs that involve no attempt at any new developments or techniques--e.g., writing a standard accounting program. Two points that I was not aware of--and may not have wanted to be aware of--previously are:(a) Any project that receives Federal aid, as does ours--

and, in fact, a Special Interest Group welcomes members from disciplines other than computer-oriented fields. If you plan to be at the SJCC, or would like more information, contact Ed Elkind at 663-8661 or Paul Millstein at 675-8490.

* * * *

As we timidly predicted in our March issue, there has been an increase in the level of participation amongst our membership. New faces abound at meetings. John Carnal attended his first on March 12th and was sufficiently moved to commit his impressions to paper.
--Ed

March 12 Meeting

by John Carnal

I pushed the big black button underneath the peephole in the door. Someone opened the door and smiled "another programmer for peace", at once a greeting and a self-description. We exchanged strangers' smiles. I felt self-conscious. The most important thing for me became finding a place to put my coat.

I returned to the living room which was about half filled with people. There were still several places to sit other than the floor. Being a courageous liberal I sat down next to the only black person there. He didn't seem to know anyone either so we introduced ourselves and began an awkward conversation. He works for the City as a computer operator. He got his job through the efforts of some people who were to show up later. They ran a course he attended and helped him find a job. As the room filled with voices and faces we ran out of things to say to each other. Before

the meeting started I glanced around the room: 1) Most of the men have beards. 2) All of the women seem attractive. All but a few of these strangers look like they have been out of college a couple of years. They looked about the way anybody does after he's worked all day, a little tired but something was there besides weariness. The look a man's face shows when no one is watching suggests his thoughts. The people here this night really wonder if our America is going to hell.

A man who looked like he had been out of college more than a couple of years started the meeting. It was the regular old business/new business stuff but done without self-importance. Six or seven people made reports about committee activities. What had happened or what was planned. People asked questions and made suggestions. Everyone was to the point and good humored. The longest time anyone held the floor was when a keypunch operator, another newcomer, talked about how difficult it was for her to get her parents to a demonstration against the war even though they hate the war. It was an open yet directed meeting. Decisions were made. It lasted about an hour and a half.

Measure your concern against your involvement.

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TO: CPP Membership
FROM: Service group
SUBJECT: Project status

The mailing system designed for the Fellowship of Reconciliation is in the final stages of debugging.
Next, we intend to make a version of this system available for the Universities Committee on the Problems of War and Peace.
For further information, please contact Stuart Davis, 523 E. 85th St., N.Y.C. 10028.

Nixon's Own A.B.M.

by Bill Weiss

The ☐ NIKE-X
☐ SENTINEL   is a system to protect   ☐ the cities
☐ SAFEGIARD   ☐ some of the cities
                                          ☐ the Minuteman silos

                        ☐ Russians
            from the   ☐ Chinese
                       ☐ accidental launchings.

It's all the same to Bell Telephone (sixth in defense contracts in 1968, $775,920,000, according to Drew Pearson), the prime contractor of the ABM. Ten years of research and development will soon be put to use.

At his news conference on 3/14, President Nixon announced that work would proceed on the Safeguard ABM system.

Tom Wicker on 3/16 in the New York Times offered two reasons for Nixon's decision. The first is the military and the defense establishment's desire "to keep up with the State of the Art." The second reason is the "credibility" of the nation's "commitments." Nixon fears the political interpretation that other nations might place on such a reversal of major policy. Wicker attacked Nixon's ABM logic by saying that currently the U.S. would be able to destroy 50 million Russians and 70% of their industry after receiving an attack which destroyed all U.S. ICBM's and 2/3 of the Polaris force. He adds that if the safeguard is deployed it can easily be overpowered, by increasing the number of Soviet ICBM's. Wicker ends with, "The content and the manner of Mr. Nixon's presentation suggest that he has no intention of letting his safeguard plan turn into a full-scale ABM system-- any more than Lyndon Johnson upon intervening in Vietnam intended to end up with 500,000 troops in action."

On March 24, Mr. Laird spoke before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and invoked a NEW Soviet threat--the SS-9. Mr. Laird estimated that the Soviets have 200 SS-9 missiles deployed and should have 500 deployed by 1975. The Secretary said the SS-9 is capable of carrying a 20-25 megaton bomb or three or four smaller warheads. Based on the SS-9's accuracy and war head, "this weapon can only be aimed at destroying our retaliatory force." Laird concluded from this, the SS-9 should be classified a "first-strike weapon." Senator Symington, in the debate with Laird, recalled that, "only a few months ago we were told by Dr. Alain Enthoven (former Assistant Secretary of Defense for systems analysis) that the SS-9 was built for a second-strike defence." Senator Fulbright said Laird was indulging in the "technique of fear" to sell his Safeguard program.

John Finney (New York Times, 3/24) on the SS-9 pointed out some contradictions in Laird's SS-9 contentions:

1) "The CIA believes the SS-9's warhead to be about 5 megatons."

2) On the rate of deployment of the SS-9, Secretary Clark Clifford in January predicted the deployment rate "will be considerably smaller over the next two or three years. After that our estimates become less firm."

3) On accuracy Finney says, "other intelligence estimates do not credit the missile with such high accuracy." Mr. Packard

Science

Testing A Moral Issue

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Thirty years ago scientists in America responded to the nation's call and pitched in to build the atomic bomb. As the weapon neared reality, a few scientists — men like Leo Szilard, Niels Bohr, James Franck and Eugene Rabinowitch—were overcome with doubt about whether this fearsome device should ever be used on human beings.

Their efforts to dissuade the Government from using the bomb on a populous city ended in failure—partly because the large majority of scientists who produced the weapon worried little more about its implications than factory worke[r] automobile product worry about traffic Many of these men came to regret their inaction. Even in the detachment of the quest for

THE MARCH FOURTH MOVEMENT

THOUSANDS OF SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS, troubled by their role in war applied research, halted their work on campuses across the country Tuesday to ponder the misuses of scientific knowledge. About 30 computer programers demonstrated on New York's Fifth Avenue and 49th Street (above) to protest the misuse of science for military purposes. Asserting that "we will not progr[am] death," the technicians handed out literature and circulated petitions.

side effects of technology as air and water pollution threaten mankind's continued wellbeing, even survival.
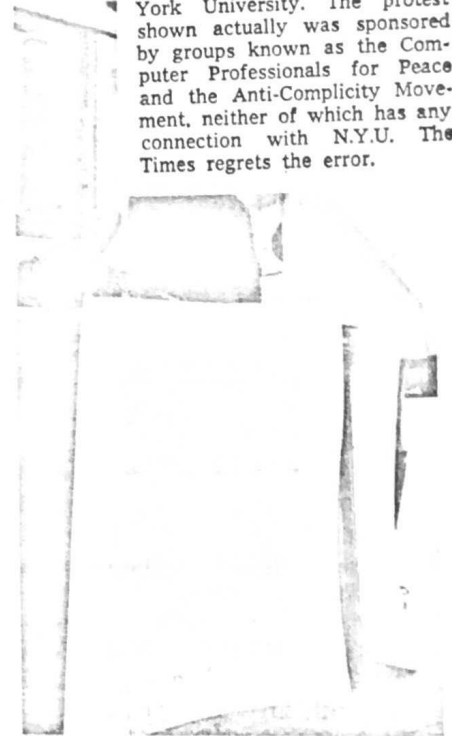
It was with such questions in mind—and with the haunting experience of the atomic bomb in the background—that scientists across the country paused briefly last Tuesday to consider their role. Many underscored their concern by closing their [la]boratories for the day.

[Fe]w scientists argue that the [gover]nment should not support [research.] Rather, many com[plain that] it places an undue [emphasis on] the military appli[cation of res]earch while such [so]cial problems as [pollution] and overpopulation [cou]ld benefit from the bil[lions] spent on war technology.
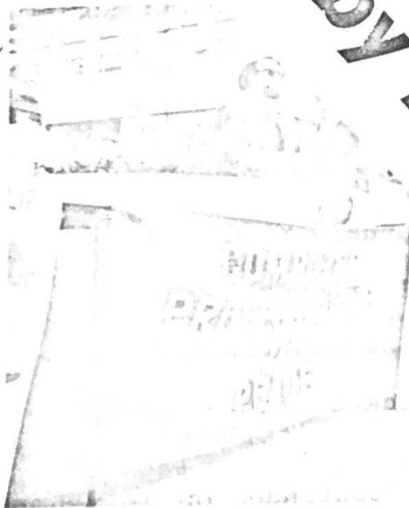
Whether anything permanent will come out of Tuesday's protest remains to be seen. But to some observers the very fact that scientists —in the past content to express their misgivings in 30-page letters to the President — could organize sufficiently to carry off the protest was an indication that they had achieved a new militancy that [will have to be reckoned with.]

A Correction

A caption in this section March 9 incorrectly identified a group of persons protesting Government "misuse of science" as being associated with New York University. The protest shown actually was sponsored by groups known as the Computer Professionals for Peace and the Anti-Complicity Movement, neither of which has any connection with N.Y.U. The Times regrets the error.

Rockefeller's budget cuts, Harlem Hospital is planning to close its doors and City University is threatening to cancel all admissions for next September. In other parts of the country, whole school systems have closed for extended "vacations" due to lack of funds. Even those with relatively high incomes are feeling the bite of increasing inflation. In general the problems of our cities are merging into a generalized crisis of our entire society. We must recognize that we cannot cure these symptoms without ending the war.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

THIS WAR MUST BE ENDED. OUR TROOPS MUST BE WITHDRAWN. THE KILLING MUST STOP.

NOW!

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE MUST MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD -- THEIR OPPOSITION SEEN.

JOIN CPP ON APRIL 5 - SATURDAY 1:00 PM. MARCH AND RALLY TO END THE WAR.

APRIL FIFTH DEMONSTRATION

ASSEMBLE : 38th Street, West of Broadway at 1:30
We will be marching with the other professional groups.

MARCH : Up 6th Avenue to Central Park

RALLY : At 4 P.M. at the Central Park Bandshell

SPEAKERS :
Mrs. Kathleen Cleaver
David Dellinger
Professor Howard Zinn
There will also be a GI on active duty

Ossie Davis will introduce the speakers.

JOIN us in the CPP contingent.

"U.S. aid to South Vietnam has reached a peak and will start to level off".

Defense Secretary
Robert S. McNamara

N.Y. Times, May 12, 1962
(9000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, remember?)

credited the missile with an accuracy within six-tenths of a mile.

Finney suggests an interesting parallel, "the ABM debate was becoming reminiscent of the "missile gap" debate a decade ago. Then a "gap", which never materialized in fact, was created in political debate by using the most pessimistic assumptions about Soviet missile production capability."

Finney also notes that some prominent scientists opposed to the ABM see the Soviet decision to deploy the SS-9 as a reaction to the U.S.'s deployment of MIRV warheads (multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles). Because the U.S. plans in the near future to place three MIRV's on each of the 1,000 Minuteman missiles and 10 on each of the 656 Poseidon missiles--Polaris types, the Soviets fear the U.S. is going for "first-strike" capability.

Notice that all the talk today is about Russia: when the "thin" ABM was first proposed it was meant to be a defense against China. On the Chinese threat, Ted Kennedy said to a gathering of experts on China on 3/20/69, at the New York Hilton, "It (Nixon's ABM deployment) is likely to be seen in Peking as a new military provocation by the United States. From the Chinese perspective the only utility of an American ABM is to defend the United States against whatever feeble response Peking could muster after an American first strike against China."

I.F. Stone in his Weekly of March 24th, attacked the deception which has made Nixon famous. He said Nixon created the impression of whittling down Johnson's ABM system by one billion dollars. But in a briefing given the same day Packard, when asked, "can you explain why the cost of your system is nearly a billion and a half more than the previous system, yet it has possibly a half-dozen complexes fewer?" Packard replied, "in order to do the job that we believe needs to be done we found it necessary to provide additional capability in the system." He added that the new system would require more radars and more Spartan missiles than Sentinel.

Stone gives five propositions to understand the folly of the ABM:
1) The offense has an advantage in the nuclear game of "cops and robbers." He can think up an endless number of relatively cheap gimmicks--penetration aids, MIRV's and trajectory changes. All have a multiplier effect on defense complexes.
2) The offense can concentrate his forces, while the defense must spread itself out.
3) It is more difficult to defend Minuteman bases than cities. The firing of the ABM's may "black out" the circuitry of the Minuteman forces.
4) If the Soviets did launch an attack the U.S. would hardly leave the Minutemen in their silos and wait to see how the ABM's would work. The U.S. would trigger the Minutemen within the 20 to 30 minutes of warning time.
5) The damage done by the Spartans and the Sprints to the American people in trying to defend them is largely unknown.

Stone ends his Weekly with "how end alienation from democratic processes and peaceful change when they (American youth) see a President opt for such terrible waste against near unanimous scientific advice and in the face of social needs so urgent they threaten the future of our society?".

MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO JOIN CPP AT THE SPRING JOINT COMPUTER CONFERENCE IN BOSTON, MAY 14-16.

from the National Institute of Mental Health, must provide copies of its programs to anyone who asks for them; and (b) the programs of members of users' groups such as IBM's SHARE group, to which our installation belongs, are often written up and become available to all other members of the group.)

2) In a matter like this, what should you do and where should you draw the line? (If one is offered a job or asked to work on a project that is obviously and directly geared to furthering U.S. foreign and military policies, it is clear what an opponent of those policies should do-- either refuse to do the work or sabotage it. This matter does not offer such clarity. If my installation does agree to work with RADC, I may not be asked to work on it; yet, my work may somehow contribute to the project; if information from our data base is given or made available to RADC, then nearly all programmers and systems analysts at our installation will have helped or be helping RADC by writing programs for and planning the data base. My tentative position is to refuse to work on a RADC project and to refuse to provide any programs, data, etc. to RADC. Although such a position might well be the one that you would take and would consider quite adequate and even somewhat courageous, I do not feel comfortable even with it-- knowing how easily and insidiously my work may be used to further the policies that I so deeply oppose.)

* * *

C.P.D.A.

Computer Personnel Development Association (the CPP-sponsored free computer operations school) is still searching for funds. Money just does not seem to be available. It looks as if everything has been frozen - waiting for Nixon to make a move?

GENERAL   MEETING

The next general meeting of CPP will be held on Thursday, April 10th, at 8 PM at Paul Millstein's, 54 W 16th St, Apt 10E. Among other topics, we will discuss our plans for the Spring Joint Computer Conference in Boston in May. Come and participate in planning our future actions.

Name _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ I'd like to join CPP and enclose $10 membership fee.

☐ Please put me on the mailing list.

☐ Enclosed is $_____ to help towards mailing costs.

☐ Change of address

TO: Computer Professionals for Peace
      P.O. Box 1597
      Brooklyn, New York 11202