Madrid police quell student protest riots

By JIM DENNEY

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MADRID, Jan. 28, 1967 (Spl.)—Rioting broke out today for the third time in two days at the gigantic University of Madrid. Several hundred students met in repeated clashes with two units of the Spanish Armed Police.

In the two days' melee a number of students and police were injured by flying rocks and glass. Six policemen were knocked unconscious by the volleys of projectiles from the student protestors.

The clashes on both days were immediately precipitated by the students' blockage of traffic on the main arteries of Madrid's University City. The stoppage of traffic was a preliminary move in the holding of a demonstration to protest the arrest of students' leaders and, said one key demonstrator, "the face of the Spanish University."

Facultad Row

Friday's action centered first in the courtyard of the Facultades (areas of study) of Philosophy and Letters and of Law. Students from the two facul-
tades moved out into the main street that runs by the build-
grings and proceeded to block traffic. Several minutes later this group was set upon by the police swinging billy clubs.

The students broke and ran for the facultades, where, because of the Spanish tradition of autonomy of the university, the police are not allowed to enter. Within minutes, the students began to attack the hand-
ful of police with rocks and bricks.

Rocks and Clubs

The students again held sway until the arrival of police rein-
forcements and a water tank truck. The police attacked with rocks and clubs once again, and in an unprecedented move, pursued the students into the Facultad of Law after being given permission by the Dean. Several protestors were arrested.

By late afternoon, the police had left in significant numbers. A number of events similar to those earlier in the day then occurred in the Facultad of Sciences. By sundown, large numbers of police had routed the new demonstrators.

More Arrests

That evening, students joined Spanish workers in several demonstrations throughout the city to protest labor policies of the Franco regime. The police, however, had been forewarned and immediately broke up the groups. Leaders were arrested and carted off to jail.

The largest attendance at the demonstration was 2000 at one in Madrid. Similar demonstra-
tions were held in other parts of the country.

False Vote

These might seem as very strange occurrences in a country that just last month voted over 90% in favor of the re-
gime's new constitutional law.

It can be argued the vote last month was only in response to an overwhelming publicity campaign. The government spared no money in bringing the word to the masses. The word was: Vote Peace, Vote Progress; Vote YES! And there was absolutely no other line presented, no organized opposi-
tion allowed.

Si, Senor

And so, expectably, the vot-
ers' answer was "Si!"

But many people voted for the referendum because it did offer some change from the old pattern. And now, they are ex-
pecting some results. When none are forthcoming they turn to strikes and demonstra-
tions.

Labor Problem

The plight of the Spanish worker is that he has virtually no say in the running of labor affairs. And, amid the Spanish economic boom, prices are sky-
rocketing while the wages re-
main the same. The regime controls the entire wage scale.

The students are protesting a worsening situation in the area of student organization and the state of the university in general. Complications have arisen since the general elec-
tions of the officially supported Professional Asociaciones of Students — called APEs — in late fall of 1966.

Suppression

Over the Christmas holidays, a 19-year-old delegate from the Free Union (anti-APE in Ma-
drid's Facultad of Political and Economic Sciences was arrest-
ed for membership in an "il-
licit organization."

Also, delegations within the official structure of the APEs, notably those of Madrid, Salamanca, Seville, and Santiago de Compostella, have refused to recognize national President Orga-Escos, generally thought to be the regime's puppet. These delegations call for elec-
tion of a new president by a national council.

Resentment in Madrid

To complicate matters, the national APE council, in which membership is not on a popular basis, has called for the expul-
sion of the APE president of the District of Madrid for par-
ticipation in the voting for a Free Union delegation. This has caused a great deal of re-
sentment among the delegates in Madrid, the nation's largest university.

But Madrid is not the only place of conflict on the uni-
versity level. In Santiago a full professor was arraigned before a court for giving a spe-
cial lecture on the state of the Spanish university. A student

was arrested in Barcelona for participation in a Free Union there. And in Bilboa, a heavy industry center, a student lead-
er was refused entrance to the university after he participated in a workers' demonstration.

Overcrowding Headache

The lack of facilities, the small number of professors, and the overcrowding of classes — some lectures have over 5,000 students enrolled — add to the dissatisfaction of the Spanish students.

The situation will get worse before it gets any better. As one student remarked, "And the warm weather hasn't even be-
gun."

More to Come

For the rest of this weekend, an uneasy peace has been sig-
naled. But, already class strikes have been called for next week. And with the convening of a Session Extraordinary of the District Congress of students on Monday, more agitation is promis-
ed. And, to be sure, this will lead to more violence.

Unfortunately, however, there are no indications that it will do much good. Change, if it is to come, must reach from Franco and his top aides.

And the Generalissimo, ac-
cording to a joke among the Americans at the University of Madrid, was singing a song after the December referendum that goes, "My reign in Spain stays mainly just the same."