

THE NEW

RADICALS

IN THE

MULTIVERSITY

Students for Democratic Society
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SDS

the new radicals in the multiversity

**an analysis
and strategy
for the student
movement**

by carl davidson

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introduction

The student movement has come under criticism from both the right and the left for its lack of a coherent ideology and strategy for social change. While there is certainly a great deal of truth in this criticism, my sensibilities tell me that this lack may be more to our advantage than to our disadvantage. To my mind, the great strength of the New Left has been its unconscious adherence to Marx's favourite motto — doubt everything. The student movement is young and inexperienced; yet, it has shown great wisdom in maintaining the principle that political truth must come from political experience. Ideology is not something sucked out of thumbs, nor found in this or that set of political catechisms. Rather, political analysis and strategy is something that grows slowly out of years of political experience and struggle. It must find its beginnings and maintain its deepest roots in people's day-to-day life-activity, for it is social reality that we are trying to understand and change.

In deepening that understanding of social reality, we must always remember that "The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question." ⁽¹⁾ Too often we are bogged down in theoretical disputes when the only way we can answer those questions is in *practice*, in political experimentation, in action. This is why we must remain open on many political questions. But this is not to say that we should only "do what the spirit say do." The concept of practical-critical activity (i.e. *praxis*) is three-sided: we must *act*, then *reflect* on the activity, and finally *criticize* the activity. The process of action, reflection, and criticism must be repeated again and again. The body of knowledge, ever changing and expanding, that grows from this process emerges as an ideology. Finally, the process is historical; it develops over a period of time.

It is for these reasons, as well as the fact that we are young and politically inexperienced, that we must emphasize an ongoing *practical-critical activity* over and above any allegiance to theoretical certitude. I hope that my following remarks on theory, strategy, and tactics will be taken in this context. All my assertions come from a limited experience; and, as such, are open to criticism, revision, and the acid-test of political practice.

the present malaise of education

"Happiness Is Student Power" was the most catching slogan emblazoned on the many banners and picket signs during the Berkeley Student Strike in December, 1966. But, as most college administrators know only too well, Berkeley and its rebellious student body is not an isolated phenomenon among the vast variety of American campuses. Far from being an exception, Berkeley has become the paradigm case of the educational malaise in the United States; and, in the last few years, that malaise has been transformed into a movement. Indeed, a spectre is haunting our universities — the spectre of a radical and militant nationally co-ordinated movement for *student power*.

Students began using the slogan "student power" soon after black people in the civil rights movement made the demand for "black power." Are students niggers? After studying the history of the Wobblies and labour syndicalism, students started thinking about student syndicalism. Are students workers? Power for what? Just any old kind of power? The university is a clumsy and uncoordinated machine, engulfing and serving thousands of people. Do students want to be administrators?

Obviously the cry for "power" in and of itself is a vacuous demand. Student power is not so much something we are fighting for, as it is something we must have in order to gain specific objectives. Then what are the objectives? What is our program? There is much variety and dispute on these questions. But there is one thing that seems clear. However the specific forms of our immediate demands and programs may vary, the long-range goal and the daily drive that motivates and directs us is our intense longing for our liberation. In short, what the student power movement is about is *freedom*.

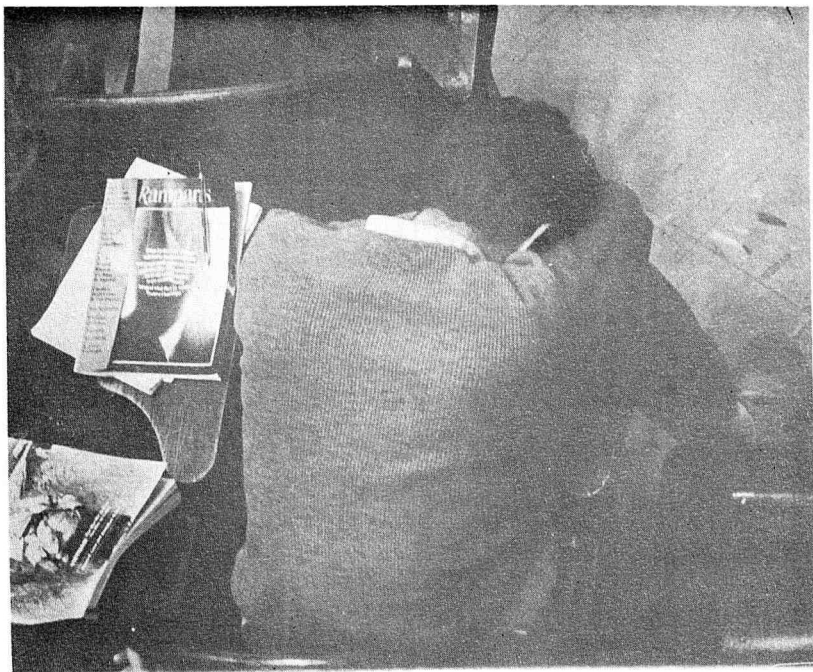
But aren't students free? Isn't America a democracy, even if it is a little manipulative? To answer those kinds of questions and many others that are more serious, it is important to look more closely and come to an understanding of the malaise motivating our movement.

What do American students think of the educational institutions in which they live an important part of their lives? The most significant fact is that most of them don't think about them. Such young men and women made up that apathetic majority we called the "silent

generation" in the 1950's. While the last few years has shown a marked and dramatic growth of a new radicalism, we should not forget that the apathetic and the cynical among the student population are still in the majority. But this need not be discouraging. In fact, we should view that apparant apathy among the majority of students with a certain qualified optimism.

What makes people apathetic? My feeling is that apathy is the *unconscious* recognition students make of the fact that they are *powerless*. Despite all the machinations and rhetoric used by hot-shot student politicos within administration-sponsored student governments, people's experience tells them that nothing changes. Futhermore, if and when change does occur, students fully recognize that they were powerless to effect those changes in one way or another. If this is in fact the case, then why shouldn't students be apathetic? The administration rules, despite the facade of student governments, of dorm councils, and of student judicials. And when *they* give us ex-officio seats on *their* academic committees, the result among most students is that deeper, more hardened kind of apathy — cynicism.

The apathetic students are correct *as far as they go*. They are



Boredom....

photo by Peter E. Sutheim

powerless. The forms given us for our self-government are of the Mickey Mouse, sand-box variety. I would only be pessimistic if a majority of students really accepted the illusion that those institutions had meaning in their lives, or that they could significantly affect those institutions. But the opposite is the case. The apathy reflects the *reality* of their powerlessness. When that reality confronts the lie of the official rhetoric, the contradiction is driven home — and the apathetic become the cynical. What that contradiction — that daily living with a lie — all adds up to is a *dynamic* tension and alienation. And that, fellow organizers, is the necessary subjective condition for any revolution.

It is important to understand that students are alienated from much more than the social and extracurricular aspect of their education. In fact, their deepest alienation is directed at the education process itself. The excerpts that follow are from a letter written to the New York Times by a young woman student:

I came to this school not thinking I could even keep up with the work. I was wrong. I can keep up. I can even come out on top. My daily schedule's rough. I get up at 6:30... After dinner I work until midnight or 12:30. In the beginning, the first few weeks or so, I'm fine. Then I begin to wonder just what this is all about: am I educating myself? I have that one answered... I'm educating myself the way *they* want. So I convince myself the real reason I'm doing all this is to prepare myself; meantime I'm wasting those years of preparation. I'm not learning what I want to learn... I don't care about the feudal system. I want to know about life. I want to think and read. When?... My life is a whirlpool. I'm caught up in it, but I'm not conscious of it. I'm what *you* call living, but somehow I can't find life... So maybe I got an A... but when I get it back I find that A means nothing. It's a letter *you* use to keep me going... I wonder what I'm doing here. I feel phony; I don't belong... You wonder about juvenile delinquents. If I ever become one, I'll tell why it will be so. I feel cramped. I feel like I'm in a coffin and can't move or breathe... My life is worth nothing. It's enclosed in a few buildings on one campus; it goes no further. I've got to bust. ⁽²⁾

Tell the truth. Every American student knows that's the way it is. Even our administrators recognize what is going on. In 1963, a year or so *before* the first Berkeley insurrection, Clark Kerr prophesized, "... the undergraduate students are restless. Recent changes in the American university have done them little good... There is an incipient revolt..." ⁽³⁾ Kerr is not only concerned about the students. He also casts a worried glance at the faculty. "Knowledge is now in so many bits and pieces and administration so distant that

faculty members are increasingly figures in a 'lonely crowd,' intellectually and institutionally." ⁽⁴⁾ The academic division of labour and depersonalization among the faculty is more than apparent to the students. Incoming freshmen scratch their heads, trying to understand any possible relevance of many of the courses in the catalogue, some of which they are required to take. Also, some of the best belly-laughs are had by reading the titles of master's and doctoral theses, like one granted a Ph.D. at Michigan State University: "An Evaluation of Thirteen Brands of Football Helmets on the Basis of Certain Impact Measures." ⁽⁵⁾ What's worse, even if a course seems as though it might be relevant to our lives, like Psychology or Political Science, we are soon told by our prof that what we'll learn only has to do with the laboratory behavior of rats, and that "political science" has nothing to do with day-to-day politics. A student from Brandeis sums it up nicely, "By the time we graduate, we have been painstakingly trained in separating facts from their meaning... No wonder that our classes, with few exceptions, seem irrelevant to our lives. No wonder they're so boring. Boredom is the necessary condition of any education which teaches us to manipulate the facts and suppress their meaning." ⁽⁶⁾ Irrelevancy, meaninglessness, boredom, and fragmentation are the kinds of attributes that are becoming more and more applicable to mass education in America. We are becoming a people required to know more and more about less and less. This is true not only for our students, but also for our teachers; not only in our universities, but also in our secondary and primary schools — private as well as public.

What should education be about in America? The official rhetoric seems to offer an answer: education should be the process of developing the free, autonomous, creative and responsible *individual* — the "citizen," in the best sense of that word. Furthermore, higher education ought to encourage and enable the individual to turn his personal concerns into social issues, open to rational consideration and solution. C. Wright Mills put it clearly: "The aim of the college, for the individual student, is to eliminate the need in his life for the college; the task is to help him become a self-educating man. For only that will set him free." ⁽⁷⁾

But what is the reality of American education? Contrary to our commitment to individualism, we find that the day-to-day practice of our schools is authoritarian, conformist, and almost entirely status oriented. We find the usual relationship between teacher and student to be a disciplined form of dominance and subordination. We are told of the egalitarianism inherent in our school system, where the classroom becomes the melting-pot for the classless society of America's "people's capitalism," where everyone has the opportunity to climb to the top. Again, the opposite is the case. Our schools are more racially segregated now (1967) than ever before.

There is a clear class bias contained both within and among our public schools — not even considering the clear class nature of our private schools and colleges. Within the secondary schools, students are quickly channelled — usually according to the class background of their parents — into vocational, commercial, or academic preparatory programs. Concerning the class differences among our public schools, James Conant remarks in *Slums and Suburbs*, "...one cannot imagine the possibility of a wealthy suburban district deliberately consolidating with other districts to achieve a truly comprehensive high school in which students of all abilities and socio-economic backgrounds will study together." ⁽⁸⁾ Even if they did consolidate, the problem would only be rationalized, rather than solved. Who knows? Maybe the class struggle would break out on the playground.

Finally, what about that traditional American ideal that we were all taught to honour — the legend of the self-educated and self-educating man? It seems to me that rather than enabling an individual to initiate and engage himself in a continual and coherent life-long educational process, our public programs are the sort where an individual is merely subjected to a random series of isolated training situations.

From individual freedom to national service, from egalitarianism to class and racial hierarchical ossification, from self-reliance to institutional dependence — we have come to see education as the mechanistic process of homogeneous, uncritical absorption of "data" and development of job skills. But it is something more than that. The socialization and acculturation that goes on within American educational institutions is becoming increasingly central in the attempts to mold and shape American youth. This is mainly the result of the declining influence and, in some cases, the collapse of other traditional socializing institutions such as the church and the family. The schools, at all levels, end up with the job of maintaining, modifying, and transmitting the dominant themes of the national culture.

Quantitatively education has been rapidly increasing in the last few decades; but, as it grows in size, it decreases *qualitatively*. Rickover states in *Education and Freedom*: "We end up where we began a hundred years ago — with an elementary vocational education for the majority, and a poor college preparatory course for a minority of students." ⁽⁹⁾ Conant, who is quite concerned with the plight of the 80-85% of urban non-college bound high school students who are "social dynamite," places as a primary goal of education, giving these students "...the kind of zeal and dedication... to withstand the relentless pressures of communism." ⁽¹⁰⁾

What about our school teachers? How is the nation faring on that front? Over 30% of the students in U.S. colleges and universities

are going into primary and secondary education. However, despite the quantity, Mortimer Smith remarks in *The Diminished Mind*, "...the teacher-training institutions... are providing us with teachers who are our most poorly educated citizens." (11) While the job of teacher should command the highest respect in any society, many of us are well aware of the fact that in relation to other parts of the university, the college or school of education is considered to be the intellectual slum of the campus.

It seems clear that bourgeois education in the U.S. is in its historically most irrational and decadent state. Primary, secondary, and university systems are fusing together, thoroughly rationalizing and dehumanizing their internal order, and placing themselves in the service of the state, industry, and the military. Kerr is quite clear about this when he speaks of the "multiversity" making a common-law marriage with the federal government. John Hannah, president of Michigan State, was even more clear in a speech given in September, 1961, "Our colleges and universities must be regarded as bastions of our defence, as essential to the preservation of our country and our way of life as super-sonic bombers, nuclear powered submarines and intercontinental ballistics missiles." (12) The fact that none of the three weapons systems Hannah mentioned could have been designed, constructed, or operated without college-educated men proves that this is not just Fourth of July rhetoric. Hannah gives us an even better look at his idea of education in an article entitled, "The Schools Responsibility in National Defense," where he comments: "I believe the primary and secondary schools can make education serve the individual and national interest by preparing youngsters for military service and life under conditions of stress as well as preparing them for college, or for a job or profession... I would not even shrink from putting the word 'indoctrination' to the kind of education I have in mind. If we do not hesitate to indoctrinate our children with a love of truth, a love of home, and a love of God, then I see no justification for balking at teaching them love of country and love of what this country means." (13)

Hannah's comment about "...life under conditions of stress..." is related to a remark made by Eric A. Walker, president of Pennsylvania State University, a few years ago. There had been a series of student suicides and attempted suicides within a relatively short period of time. Many students and faculty members started grumbling about the newly instituted "term" system — a kind of "speed-up" — relating the stress and strain of the new system to the student suicides. Dr. Walker's response to this unrest was to comment on how the increased pressure on the students was a good thing, since it enabled them to "...have their nervous breakdowns early," before they graduated and had jobs and families when having a nervous breakdown would cause them more difficulties.

Despite the crass attitudes of so many of our educators, or the dehumanization of the form and content of our educational institutions; it would be a mistake to think the problems are only within the educational system. While it is true that education has been stripped of any meaning it once had, and Dr. Conant is reduced to defining education as "... what goes on in schools and colleges,"⁽¹⁴⁾ our system of schools and colleges are far from a point of collapse. In fact, they are thriving. The "knowledge industry," as Kerr calls it, accounts for 30% of the Gross National Product; and, it is expanding at *twice* the rate of any sector of the economy. School teachers make up the largest single occupational group of the labour force — some 3 million workers. Twenty-five years ago, the government and industry were hardly interested in education. But in 1960, the aggregate national outlay, public and private, amounted to 23.1 billions. As Kerr says, "... the university has become a prime instrument of national purpose. This is new. This is the essence of the transformation now engulfing our universities."⁽¹⁵⁾ In short, our education institutions are becoming appendages to, and transformed by, U.S. corporate capitalism.

Education is not being done away with in favour of something called training. Rather, education is being transformed from a quasi-aristocratic classicism and petty-bourgeois romanticism into something quite new. These changes are apparent in ways other than the quantitative statistics given above. For example, we can examine the social sciences and the humanities. The social and psychological "reality" that we are given to study is "objectified" to the point of sterility. The real world, we are to understand, is "valuefree" and pragmatically bears little or no relation to the actual life-activity of men, classes, and nations. In one sense, we are separated from life. In another, we are being conditioned for life in a lifeless, stagnant, and sterile society.

For another example, there is more than a semantic connection between the academic division of labour and specialization we are all aware of, and the corresponding division of labour that has gone on in large-scale industry. But it is important to understand what that connection is. It does *not* follow that because technology becomes diversified and specialized, then academic knowledge and skills must follow suit. André Gorz makes the relevant comment, "It is completely untrue that modern technology demands specialization: quite the reverse. It demands a basic 'polyvalent' education, comprising not a fragmentary, pre-digested and specialized knowledge, but an initiation — or, put more precisely, a faculty of self-initiation — into methods of scientifico-technological research and discovery."⁽¹⁶⁾ If it is not the new technological production that deems necessary the kind of isolated specialization we know so well, then what is responsible? Gorz spells it out again, "Capitalism actually needs shatter-

ed and atomized men..."⁽¹⁷⁾ in order to maintain its system of centralized, bureaucratized and militarized hierarchies, so as "...to perpetuate its domination over men, not only as workers, but also as consumers and citizens."⁽¹⁸⁾

From this perspective, we can begin to understand that the educational malaise we as students and faculty have felt so personally and intensely is no aberration, but firmly rooted in the American political economy. In fact, the Organized System which Paul Goodman calls "compulsory mis-education" may miseducate us, but it certainly serves the masters of that system, the U.S. ruling class, quite well. As Edgar Z. Friedenberg wrote. "Educational evils are attributed to *defective* schools. In fact, they are as likely to be the work of *effective* schools that are being directed toward evil ends by the society that supports and controls them."⁽¹⁹⁾ Furthermore, he continues later in the same article, "Schools are a definite indication that a society is divisible into a dominant and a subordinate group, and that the dominant group want to teach the subordinate group something they could not be trusted to learn if left to themselves."⁽²⁰⁾ Clark Kerr would accept this, both for the society in general, which he divides into the "managers" and the "managed" and for the university. Kerr states: "The intellectuals (including university students) are a particularly volatile element... They are by nature irresponsible... They are, as a result, never fully trusted by anybody, including themselves."⁽²¹⁾ But Kerr doesn't dismiss us. Even if we are by nature irresponsible (perhaps because we can perceive the contradictions?) he considers us essential. "...It is important who best attracts or captures the intellectuals and who uses them most effectively, for they may be a tool as well as a source of danger."⁽²²⁾

I think we can conclude that the American educational system is a coherent, well-organized, and — to the extent that the rulers are still ruling — effective mechanism. However, it has turned our humanitarian values into their opposites and at the same time, given us the potential to understand and critically evaluate both ourselves and the system itself. To that extent the system is fraught with internal contradictions. Furthermore, the events comprising the student revolt in the last few years demonstrate the likelihood that those contradictions will continue to manifest themselves in an open and protracted struggle. As Kerr predicted, we are a source of danger and incipient revolt. And the fact that Kerr was fired and the police used in the face of that revolt only goes to prove that those contradictions are irreconcilable within the structure of corporate capitalism. As Quentin Hoare remarked in *New Left Review* #32, "...a reform of the educational system involves a reform of the educators as well, and this is a political task, which immediately ricochets back to the question of transforming consciousness and ideology through-

part 3

**the praxis of student power
strategy and tactics****socialism on one campus ...****an infantile disorder**

Perhaps the single most important factor for the student power movement to keep in mind is the fact that the university is intimately bound up with the society in general. Because of this, we should always remember that we cannot liberate the university without radically changing the rest of society. The lesson to be drawn is that any attempt to build a student movement based on "on-campus" issues only is inherently conservative and ultimately reactionary. Every attempt should be made to connect campus issues with off-campus questions. For example, the question of ranking and university complicity with the Selective Service System needs to be tied to a general anti-draft and "No Draft for Vietnam" movement. The question of the presence of the military on the campus in all its forms needs to be tied to the question of what that military is used for — fighting aggressive wars of oppression abroad — and not just to the question of secret research being poor academic policy. Furthermore, the student movement must actively seek to join off-campus struggles in the surrounding community. For example, strikes by local unions should be supported if possible. This kind of communication and understanding with the local working class is essential if we are ever going to have community support for student strikes.

radicalizing the new working class

If there is a single over-all purpose for the student power movement, it would be the development of a radical political consciousness among those students who will later hold jobs in strategic sectors of the political economy. This means that we should reach out to engineers and technical students rather than to business administration majors, education majors rather than to art students. From a national perspective, this strategy would also suggest that we should place priorities on organizing in certain *kinds* of universities — the community colleges, junior colleges, state universities, and technical schools, rather than religious colleges or the Ivy League.

One way to mount political action around this notion is to focus on the placement offices — the nexus between the university and industry. For example, when DOW Chemical comes to recruit, our main approach to junior and senior chemical engineering students who are being interviewed should not only be around the issue of the immorality of napalm. Rather, our leaflets should say that one of the main faults of DOW and all other industries as well is that their workers *have no control* over content or purposes of their work. In other words, DOW Chemical is bad, not only because of napalm, but mainly because it renders its workers *powerless*, makes them *unfree*. In short, DOW and all American industry oppresses *its own workers* as well as the people of the Third World. DOW in particular should be run off the campus and students urged not to work for them because of their complicity in war crimes. But when other industries are recruiting, our leaflets should address themselves to the interviewees' instincts of workmanship, his desires to be free and creative, to do humane work, rather than work for profit. We should encourage him, if he takes the job, to see himself in this light — as a skilled worker — and of his self-interest of organizing on his future job with his fellow workers, skilled and unskilled, for control of production and the end to which his work is directed. The need for control, for the power, on and off the job, to affect the decisions shaping one's life in all arenas; developing this kind of consciousness, on and off the campus, is what we should be fundamentally all about.

practical, critical activity: notes on organizing —

There are three virtues necessary for successful radical organizing: honesty, patience, and a sense of humour. First of all if the students we are trying to reach can't trust us, who can they trust? Secondly it takes time to build a movement. Sometimes several years of groundwork must be laid before a student power movement has a constituency. It took most of us several years before we had developed a radical perspective. Why should it be any different for the people we are trying to reach? This is not to say that everyone must repeat all the mistakes we have gone through, but there are certain *forms* of involvement and action that many students will have to repeat. Finally, by a sense of humour, I mean we must be life-affirming. Lusty passionate people are the only kind of men who have the enduring strength to motivate enough people to radically transform a life-negating system.

Che Guevara remarked in *Guerrilla Warfare* that as long as people had faith in certain institutions and forms of political activity, then the organizer must work *with* the people *through* those institutions, even though we might think those forms of action are dead

sort very difficult, although not impossible. But we should always be careful to make a distinction between the American working class itself and the labour bureaucrats.

the faculty question:

allies or finks? —————

One question almost always confronts the student movement on the campus. Do we try to win faculty support before we go into action? Or do we lump them together with the administration? What we have learned in the past seems to indicate that both of these responses are wrong. Earlier in this paper, I remarked on the kinds of divisions that exist among the faculty. What is important to see is that this division is not just between good and bad guys. Rather, the faculty is becoming more and more divided in terms of the objective functions of their jobs. To make the hard case on one hand, the function of the lower level of the faculty is to teach — a potentially creative and useful activity; on the other hand, the function of most administrative and research faculty is manipulation, repression, and — for the defence department hirelings — destruction. In general, we should develop our strategies so that our lot falls with the teaching faculty and theirs with ours. As for the research and administrative faculty, we should set both ourselves and the teaching faculty against them. Also, during any student confrontation with the administration, the faculty can do one of four things *as a group*. They can 1) support the administration, 2) remain neutral, 3) split among themselves, and 4) support us. In any situation, we should favor the development of one of the last three alternatives rather than the first. Furthermore, if it seems likely that the faculty will split on an issue, we should try to encourage the division indicated above. While it is important to remain open to the faculty, we should not let their support or non-support become an issue in determining whether or not we begin to mount political action. Finally, we should encourage the potentially radical sectors of the faculty to organize among themselves around their own grievances, hopefully being able to *eventually* form a radical alliance with us.

the vital issue of

teaching assistants' unions —————

Probably the most exploited and alienated group of people on any campus *are* the graduate student teaching assistants. The forces of the multiversity hit them from two directions — both as students and as teachers. As students, they have been around long enough to have lost their awe of academia. As faculty, they are given the worst

jobs for the lowest pay. For the most part, they have no illusions about their work. Their working conditions, low pay, and the fact that their futures are subject to the whimsical machinations of their department chairmen, make them a group ripe for radical organization. Furthermore, their strategic position within the university structure — makes them potentially powerful as a group if they should decide to organize and strike. If they go out, a large part of the multiversity comes grinding to a halt. The kinds of demands they are most likely to be organized around naturally connect them with a radical student power movement and with the potentially radical sector of the faculty. Furthermore, these considerations make the organization of a radical trade union of TAs a crucial part of any strategy for change. We should see this kind of labour organizing as one of our first priorities in building the campus movement.

non-academic employees:

on-campus labor organizing —

Almost all colleges and especially the multiversities have a large number of blue-collar maintenance workers on campus. Within the state-supported institutions in particular, these people are often forbidden to organize unions, have terrible working conditions, and are paid very low wages. Their presence on the campus offers a unique opportunity for many students to become involved in blue-collar labour organizing at the same time that they are in school. Secondly, since these workers usually live in the surrounding community, their friends and relatives will come from other sectors of the local working class. Quite naturally, they will carry their ideas, opinions, and feelings toward the radical student movement home with them. In this sense, they can be an important link connecting us with other workers, and our help in enabling them to organize a local independent and radical trade union would help tremendously. Finally, if we should ever strike as students, they could be an important ally. For instance, after SDS at the University of Missouri played a major role in organizing a militant local of non-academic employees, they learned that, were the union to strike for its own demands in sympathy with student demands, the university as a physical plant would cease to function after four days. It is obviously important to have that kind of power.

the knowledge machinery and sabotage:

striking on the job —

One mistake radical students have been making in relating to the worst aspects of the multiversity's academic apparatus has been their avoidance of it. We tend to avoid large classes, lousy courses,

and reactionary professors like the plague. At best, we have organized counter-courses outside the class-room and off the campus. My suggestion is that we should do the opposite. Our brightest people should sign up for the large freshman and sophomore sections with the worst profs in *strategic* courses in history, political science, education, and even the ROTC counter-insurgency lectures. From this position, they should then begin to take out their frustrations with the work of the course while they are on the job, i.e., inside the classroom. Specifically, they should be constant vocal critics of the form and content of the course, the prof, class size, the educational system, and corporate capitalism in general. Their primary strategy, rather than winning debating points against the prof, should be to reach other students in the class. Hopefully, our on-the-job organizer will begin to develop a radical caucus in the class. This group could then meet outside of the class, continue to collectively develop a further radical critique of the future class-work, to be presented at the succeeding sessions. If all goes well with the prof, and perhaps his department as well, they will have a full-scale academic revolt on their hands by the end of the semester. Finally, if this sort of work were being done in a variety of courses at once, the local radical student movement would have the makings of an underground educational movement that was actively engaged in mounting an effective resistance to the educational *status quo*.

provo tactics: radicalizatization or sublimation? —

There is little doubt that the hippy movement has made its impact on most American campuses. It is also becoming more clear that the culture of advanced capitalist society is becoming more sterile, dehumanized and one-dimensional. It is directed toward a passive mass, rather than an active public. Its root value is consumption. We obviously need a cultural revolution, along with a revolution in the political economy. But the question remains: where do the hippies fit in? At the present time, their role seems ambivalent.

On the one hand, they thoroughly reject the dominant culture and seem to be life-affirming. On the other hand, they seem to be for the most part, passive consumers of culture, rather than active creators of culture. For all their talk of community, the nexus of their relations with each other seems to consist only of drugs and a common jargon. With all their talk of love, one finds little deep-rooted passion. Yet, they are there; and they are a major phenomenon. Their relevance to the campus scene is evidenced by the success of the wave of "Gentle Thursdays" that swept the country. Through this approach, we have been able to reach and break loose a good number of people. Often,

during the frivolity of Gentle Thursday, the life-denying aspects of corporate capitalism are brought home to many people with an impact that could never be obtained by the best of all of our anti-war demonstrations.

However, the hippy movement has served to make many of our people withdraw into a personalistic, passive cult of consumption. These aspects need to be criticized and curtailed. We should be clear about one thing: the *individual* liberation of man, the most social of animals, is a dead-end — an impossibility. And even if individual liberation were possible, would it be desirable? The sublimation of reality within the individual consciousness neither destroys nor transforms the objective reality of other men.

Nevertheless, the excitement and imagination of some aspects of hippydom can be useful in building critiques of the existing culture. Here, I am referring to the provos and the diggers. Gentle Thursday, when used as a provo (provocative) tactic on campus, can cause the administration to display some of its most repressive characteristics. Even something as blunt as burning a television set in the middle of campus can make a profound statement about the life-styles of many people. However, people engaging in this kind of tactics should 1) not see the action as a substitute for serious revolutionary activity and 2) read up on the Provos and Situationists rather than the Haight-Ashbury scene.

from soap-box to student strikes: the forms of protest

During the development of radical politics on the campus, the student movement will pass through a multitude of organizational forms. I have already mentioned several: Student Defence League, Teaching Assistants' Unions, Non-Academic Employees' Unions, and of course, SDS chapters. Another important development on many campuses has been the formation of Black Student Unions, or Afro-American cultural groups. All of these groups are vital, although some are more important than others at different stages of the struggle. However, for the purpose of keeping a radical and multi-issue focus throughout the growth of the movement, it is important to begin work on a campus by organizing an SDS chapter.

From this starting point, how does SDS see its relation to the rest of the campus? I think we have learned that we should not look upon ourselves as an intellectual and political oasis, hugging each other in a wasteland. Rather, our chapters should see themselves as *organizing committees* for reaching out to the majority of the student population. Furthermore, we are organizing for something — the



Berkeley students strike for control of the university

photo by Harawitz-Weir

power to effect change. With this in mind, we should be well aware of the fact that the kind of power and changes we would like to have and achieve are not going to be given to us gracefully. Ultimately, we have access to only one source of power within the knowledge factory. And that power lies in our potential ability to stop the university from functioning, to render the system dysfunctional for limited periods of time. Throughout all our on-campus organizing efforts we should keep this one point in mind: that sooner or later we are going to have to strike — or at least successfully threaten to strike. Because of this, our constant strategy should be the preparation of a mass base for supporting and participating in this kind of action.

What are the organizational forms, other than those mentioned above, that are necessary for the development of this kind of radical constituency? The first kind of extra-SDS organization needed is a Hyde Park or Free Speech Forum. An area of the campus, centrally located and heavily travelled, should be selected and equipped with a P.A. system. Then, on a certain afternoon one day a week, the platform would be open to anyone to give speeches on anything they choose. SDS people should attend regularly and speak regularly, although they should encourage variety and debate, and not monopolize the platform. To begin, the forum should be weekly, so that students don't become bored with it. Rather, we should try to give it the aura of a special event. Later on, when political activity intensifies,

the forum could be held every day. In the early stages, publicity, the establishment of a mood and climate for radical politics, is of utmost importance. We should make our presence felt everywhere — in the campus news media, leafletting and poster displays, and regular attendance at the meetings of all student political, social, and religious organizations. We should make all aspects of our politics as visible and open as possible.

Once our presence has become known, we can begin to organize on a variety of issues. One arena that it will be important to relate to at this stage will be student government elections. The best organizational form for this activity would be the formation of a Campus Freedom Party for running radical candidates. It is important that the party be clear and open as to its radical consciousness, keeping in mind that our first task is that of building radical consciousness, rather than winning seats. It is also important that the party take positions on off-campus questions as well, such as the war in Vietnam. Otherwise, if we only relate to on-campus issues, we run the risk of laying the counter-revolutionary groundwork for an elitist, conservative and corporatist student movement. As many people as possible should be involved in the work of the party, with SDS people having the function of keeping it militant and radical in a non-manipulative and honest fashion. The party should permeate the campus with speeches, films, and leaflets, as well as a series of solidly intellectual and radical position papers on a variety of issues. Furthermore, we should remember that an election campaign should be fun. Campus Freedom Parties should organize Gentle Thursdays, jug bands, rock groups, theater groups for political skits, and homemade 8mm. campaign films. Finally, during non-election periods, the Campus Freedom Party should form a variety of CFP *ad hoc* committees for relating to student government on various issues throughout the year.

The next stage of the movement is the most crucial and delicate the formation of a Student Strike Coordinating Committee. There are two pre-conditions necessary for its existence. First, there must be a quasi-radical base of some size that has been developed from past activity. Secondly, either a crisis situation provoked by the administration or a climate of active frustration with the administration and/or the ruling class it represents must exist. The frustration should be centered around a set of specific demands that have been unresolved through the established channels of liberal action. If this kind of situation exists, then a strike is both possible and desirable. A temporary steering committee should be set up, consisting of representatives of radical groups (SDS, Black Student Union, TA's Union). This group would set the initial demands and put out the call for a strike within a few weeks time. Within that time, they would try to bring in as many other groups and individuals as possible without seriously watering down the demands. This new coalition would then

constitute itself as the Student Strike Coordinating Committee, with the new groups adding members to the original temporary steering committee. Also, a series of working committees and a negotiating committee should be established. Finally, the strike committee should attempt to have as many open mass plenary sessions as possible.

What should come out of a student strike? First, the development of a radical consciousness among large numbers of students. Secondly, we should try to include within our demands some issues on which we can win partial victories. Finally, the organizational form that should grow out of strike or series of strikes is an independent, radical, and political Free Student Union that would replace the existing student government. I have already dealt with the general political life of radical movements. But some points need to be repeated. First of all, a radical student union *must* be in alliance with the radical sectors of the underclass and working class. Secondly, the student movement has the additional task of radicalizing the sub-sector of the labour force that some of us in SDS have come to call the new working class. Thirdly, a radical union of students should have an anti-imperialist critique of U.S. foreign policy. Finally, local student unions, if they are to grow and thrive, must become federated on regional, national, and international levels. However, we should be careful not to form a national union of students lacking in a grass-



Clouds of tear gas billow up as students at Oberlin College surround the car of a U. S. Navy recruiter.
photo by Peter H. Martyn

roots constituency that actively and democratically participates in all aspects of the organization's life. One NSA is enough. On the international level, we should avoid both the CIA and Soviet Union sponsored International Unions. We would be better off to establish informal relations with groups like the Zengakuren in Japan, the German SDS, the French Situationists, the Spanish Democratic Student Syndicate, and the third world revolutionary student organizations. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we may be instrumental in forming a new International Union of Revolutionary Youth. But there is much work to be done between now and then. And even greater tasks remain to be done before we can begin to build the conditions for human liberation.

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