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By Bill Barlow and Peter Shapiro
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The order from the Chancellor's office that George Murray be suspended may have been "unprecedented," to use President Smith's term, but it did not take place in a vacuum. Across the United States, the educational system is slowly being torn apart by its own internal contradictions. For years the schools have sought to perform a variety of functions: production of trained manpower, reinforcement of social stratification, technological research and development, ideological manipulation, and inculcation of young people with "acceptable" or "manageable" social values, prejudices, lifestyles, and ways of looking at the world. In certain areas--specifically, the ghetto schools--they have even sought to be institutions of incarceration, keeping kids "off the streets." At the same time, they have tried to maintain the pretense of real education, occasionally redefining the concept of "education" to minimize the conflict between it and the social functions mentioned above. In any case, the ruse has failed miserably. A last ditch attempt to slavage the New York public school system with a Ford Foundation-inspired decentralization plan has resulted in a brutal and vicious teachers' strike which has thrown the city's schools into a state of chaos. San Francisco's high schools are also threatening to close, wracked with violence, racial turmoil, and disaffection, conflicts which show no sign of being resolved. Administrators threaten to "get tough"; teachers threaten to walk out; students, lacking the power of either teachers or administrator search vainly for ways to articulate their grievances. Reagan and Rafferty talk of "taking over" the University of California, which is going through a series of abortive upheavals. And the Trustees of the California State Colleges, taking their cue from the politicians, have begun in earnest their systematic clampdown on any and all forms of student activism--whether it be the anti-war agitation of SDS, the educational innovation and community organizing of the BSU and the student programs, or the simple and seemingly innocuous attempt by students to plan a human-oriented and badly needed college union in the midst of a stultifying campus environment.

In New York, perhaps, the conflicts have come closest to crystallizing. For some time it has been clear that the schools in urban ghettoes like Harlem are in a hopeless situation. Thousands of black and brown kids have been forcibly removed, for six hours a day, from their daily lives and placed under the jurisdiction of petty functionaries who could not even begin to meet their needs, even if they wanted to. They wake up in the morning with rats and roaches crawling under the bed, dress and go to schools where they are told to accept a series of facts which are both totally alien and totally useless in terms of their daily experience. Failing to "learn," they suffer the consequences. Attempting to rebel, to make their needs known, they are met with repression. Driven further down, they respond with resentment, deliberate "stupidity," perhaps even minor acts of vandalism and violence. The institution tightens its grip; they must be "controlled" at all costs. The situation is self-perpetuating.

The rebellion against the schools became political. Parents recognized that their children were slowly being destroyed. Marches and boycotts were organized. The tactics became more extreme. A kind of small-scale civil war was imminent. Something had to be done.

The response of the Ford Foundation was a tentative plan for "decentralization," giving the community--rather than the huge, unwieldy bureaucracy of the school district--a measure of control over the schools. But this threatened the security of both the bureaucrats and the teachers. They fought decentralization tooth and nail and, when it was instituted, struck. They put themselves at loggerheads with the community. They charged anti-semitism (the teacher's union is predominantly Jewish). The community charged white racism. The Ford Foundation sat back and watched while two groups that have traditionally been exploited by the school system began to tear each other to pieces.

In San Francisco a similar situation seems to be developing. But the powers-that-be are considerably less enlightened or sophisticated than the Ford Foundation. The SFPD's notorious Tactical

Squad patrols the hallways of Balboa High School. At Lincoln High, the cops are plain-clothesmen, actually teachers imported from other schools. Isolated students perform isolated acts of violence, generally against teachers or fellow-students; lately, however targets have been selected a bit more carefully and deliberately. Poly students, meanwhite, tried to organize and did succeed in staging a peaceful and impressive march on City Hall. The reaction from Superintendent of Schools Robert Jenkins was apoplectic. "Student marches and demonstrations will not be tolerated," he said. "Police action will be requested whenever necessary and those responsible will be subject to prompt disciplinary action including permanent expulsion. We welcome suggestions, but students are in no position to make demands." Jenkins went on to blame "outside agitators" for the unrest in the schools, and concluded, "Unauthorize persons will not be permitted in school buildings and those who incite students or threaten teachers will be turned over to the police to be prosecuted."

(Incidentally, it is worth noting here that a group of Mexican-American students in Los Angeles who organized a successful student strike protesting the decimation of their cultural heritage by the school system were not merely expelled, but indicted for conspiracy).

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

The school system comes down hard on everybody, but it comes down especially hard on black people and brown people. While all students are victimized by alienation, manipulation, coercion and exploitation minority students must suffer the additional indignity of being expected to permit their own social and cultural identities to be rejected or wiped out completely while they accept as their own the white-middle-class standards of their oppressors. They are at the bottom of the heap in American society, and the schools are one more means of insuring that they will stay there. In New York most white students attend private schools, a luxury few black or Puerto Rican parents can afford. Thus, the inferiorities of the public education system act most directly upon the minorities. In San Francisco, too, non-white students comprise over half the population of the public schools. Yet the colleges remain lily-white; even at SFSC, the ratio of non-white students is barely more than ten percent. This is not merely due to lack of tuition money. Minority kids come out of the ghetto schools totally unequipped to meet the necessary standards of college education. Most of them have been channeled into vocational training or courses for "slow learners" anyway. And it is not uncommon for black high school students to be unable to read simple English.

It was to this situation that the Special Admissions program, a concession won from the Administration during last May's sit-in, sought to address itself. The program would have created vacancies for 427 Third World students to enter the college with normal entrance requirements waived. Implementation of the program has been abortive, to say the least. 128 of the vacancies have remained unfilled, and the Administration is threatening to do away with the program entirely at the end of the semester, claiming it "lacks the funds" to extend it. The Administration did loosen its purse strings, however, to provide the Athletics program with a generous sum of money, taken from the slush fund of the Frederick Burke Foundation, to make up for its loss of an Associated Students subsidy. The AS Legislature had decided it had better things to do with its money than subsidize the PE Department. The administration obviously has a different set of priorities.

Another program with similar purposes, the Black Studies Institute, is likewise being crippled by administrative chicanery. The rationale for Black Studies is essentially that there is no point in black or brown students coming to the college if the education they get there is basically an extension of the irrelevant tripe they got in high school. With the help of sympathetic professors, and in spite of intransigent and reactionary department heads like Ray Kelch, the BSU succeeded in setting up individual courses in various departments geared to the educational needs of black students. But these courses are not coordinated under any kind of formal program that is recognized by the Administration. At the beginning of the semester the Department of Black Studies was "legitimized"--in name only--by President Smith, but it had no faculty, no curriculum, no power to grant degrees. And in an old fashioned display of Jim Crow, its coordinator, Nathan Hare, was given a salary which was only two-thirds the sizeof that of the lowest paid white faculty

members with comparable jobs. Efforts to get the program operating on a de facto basis have been met as-ever with chronic stalling.

Much of the delays on both the Black Studies and the Special Admissions programs have been due to arguments over who should control them--the students or the Administration. But the sacking of the Special Admissions program has its own unique significance. The program was adopted not in the usual manner, on the administration's terms, but because a group of militant students sat down in the Administration Building and "disrupted the normal functions of the university." Another concession won by the student demonstrators was that Professor Juan Martinez be rehired by the College: Martinez was given a salary all right--but he has not been permitted to teach any courses. The College is presently dropping $14,000 of the taxpayers' money down a manhole essentially to prove a point: that there is nothing to be gained by the exercise of "student Power" that is, disruptive tactics do succeed in getting concessions from the powers that be, that success is only momentary because the administration reserves the right to undo it all once the demonstrations have abated And if it doesn't kill a program, it reserves the right to dictate its scope and direction by assuming full control of it. President Smith is engaging in a kind of agit-prop theater, one which attempts to instruct its audience in the True Nature of Power.

Smith's attitude has nothing to do with any intrinsic merits or demerits of the Special Admissions program. But its consequences are still deadly. One of the things George Murray said in his speech in the Commons last Monday that the sensationalized newspaper accounts of it did not mention was that the white power structure continues to determine which black students may go to school, how high a level of education they may attain, what form their education will take, and what cultural/political/social bias it will attempt to promulgate. If this doesn't meet the needs of black people, too bad. It does meet the needs of the white power structure, whose principal aim is to see to it that the existing power relationships in our society will remain unchallenged. As it happens, under "the existing power relationships," black people don't seem to have any power. As it happens, neither do students.

CHANCELLORS AND TRUSTEES

A few weeks ago, Chancellor Dumke was extensively interviewed by "U.S. News and World Report". The overriding theme of the interview was (you guessed it) law and order, and how it should apply to American campuses. Dumke predicted that a new day was about to dawn in the California State College System. Protestors and agitators would be expelled. Violations of college law would not be tolerated. Moreover, the Trustees and the Chancellor intended to assume direct control over student activities in order to insure that the State College campuses not be taken over by a tiny minority of "communists, anarchists and nihilists"whose credo was disruption for its own sake. It was a typically American rationale for repression, yet the events of the past few weeks tend to demonstrate that Dumke had others in mind in addition to the small "anti-social" minority. For he and the Trustees now seem intent on coming down on students in general, and specifically on those student activities which assume some amount of cultural and political autonomy.

The initial indication of this was the Trustees handling of the proposed SFS College Union. After students had voted to finance the Union from their own pockets, after they had hired a world renowned architect (Moshe Safdie) and sunk $100,000 into the groundwork for his proposed structure; after all this, the Trustees voted to throw the whole thing out because it wasn't "compatible with the present architecture at SF State." Dudley Swim, who led the fight to have Safdie's plan rejected, went so far as to say that students at State "didn't deserve" a new college union...even if they were willing to pay for it themselves. Swim, a recent Reagan appointee to the Board, has also set himself up as high censor of student publications, in order to insure that they don't abuse "college policy". He has already attempted to suppress the Long Beach State publication that ran an article about growing pot; and it is certain that much more will be heard from Mr. Swim in the near future.

With the College Union disposed of, the Chancellor and the Trustees are already moving on another front. Undaunted by the defeat of the Harmer Bill in the State Legislature, the Chancellor's office has drafted an even more sweeping proposal. Where the Harmer Bill would have subjected the administration of student body funds to

outside control, the Chancellor's proposal attemptstto bring not only student funds, but also most student activities, under the jurisdiction of the Trustees and/or the Chancellor. Every budgetary item, every student activity or organization would have to be approved by them; and nothing could bd approved if the Chancellor or the Trustees felt it to be contrary to "college policy." If implemented, the Chancellor's proposal could virtually wipe out the Experimental College, the Black Students Union, the Community Involvement Program, TWLF, MAX, the Community Services Institute and the Tutorial Program. Moreover, it would end student control of the Bookstore and Commons, and it would seriously cripple all student publications.

In addition, the Chancellor's office has also prepared a revision of Title 5, section 41301 of the Administrative Code, regarding student discipline. The proposed revision spells out seven conditions for the suspension or expulsion of students, most of which are directly related to political demonstrations. These include "disruption of the normal functions of the college", "unauthorized entry into college property", "damage to property...under the control of the Board of Trustees", and "failure or refusal to comply with the directions of college personnel". Yet even with these new reprisals due to be passed on by the Trustees this month, the Chancellor has found it politically expedient to suspend George Murray in such a manner that the true nature of his ambitions and his use of authority become clear. The question relevant to the Murray suspension, besides its legality, is not who has the authority to suspend; but rather why the suspension took place when it did?

THE MURRAY CASE

On the surface, George Murray was suspended because of the content of a speech he made in the Commons last week. Those who heard the speech, and who are familiar with the rhetorical style that Murray and other Black revolutionaries have been using for the past year, know that it was essentially a demand that the administration end its subtle strangulation of the Black Studies program. Readers of the Chronicle and Examiner, however, heard no such thing; they were told only that Murray ahad avocated an armed attack on college officials in conjunction with the Black Student's strike on Novembei 6th. On the basis of this "information," Dumke issued orders to can Murray, various law enforcement agencies began "criminal investigations which came to nothing, Mayor Alioto made a series of inflammatory statements, and President Smith "defied" Dumke for a total of twenty-four hours.

Of course, Murray's "crimes against the state of California" are many. He is the Minister of Education for the Black Panther Party; he advocates that Black people should carry guns for self-defense; he took a trip to Cuba this summer; and he maintains that the men who control the institutions of this state are racists in need of being "offed" by whatever means necessary. It is basically for these "crimes" that Murray is being prosecuted. Not for unlawful activities or "unprofessional conduct," but because he maintains a political perspective and is identified with a political party both of which are anathema to the prevailing ideology of this country. If nothing else, the controversy over Eldridge Cleaver at U.C. Berkeley should have indicated that the moment Murray opened his mouth, he would become the welcome target of those same politicians who demanded that Cleaver be denied access to U.C. Berkeley. On the basis of the Cleaver affair, establishment politico ranging from "reactionaries" like Reagan and Rafferty to "liberals" like Cranston and Alioto (and even our own Urban Whitaker) have been demanding that Black Panthers be barred from our college campuses. The outcry against Murray and Cleaver is symptomatic of a hysteria which is being generated strictly as a means of persecuting the Black Panthers.

The argument over Murray was never whether or not he should be suspended. On the local level, President Smith maintained that he and the faculty should have the authority to fire Murray. His rationale was that by "following the proscribed procedure" of "due process", Murray's expulsion could be made in an atmosphere of "normality." Due process was the method by which the charges of "unprofessional conduct" could best be launched against Murray, who then would have to face a trial by faculty. Academic professionalism is, of course, a concept which is deliberately left so v e that it can easil be defined to meet the given needs of a

political situation. Like the charge of "un-American activities," the charge of "unprofessional conduct" is impossible to prove, and equally impossible to disprove. In a crisis situation where the accused has little support among the faculty (such as the Gerassi case last year), "due process" becomes nothing more than a handy vehicle through which the administration can dole out the necessary reprisals. Had Smith gotten his own way, Murray would have been dispensed with while at least the facade of justice could have been maintained.

However, the political situation proved to be too urgent for the time lag involved in "due process." The elections were about to take place, and the California Republicans desired the reappearance of one of their favorite issues...campus chaos and subversion. Murray was the perfect target, and if a confrontation followed over his suspension, so much the better. The Democrats, on the other hand, while having little love for Murray, still felt he should not be canned until after the election. But they failed because the Chancellor was in no modd for stalling. As the hatchetman, Dumke was hardly a neutral educator; with an inside track on being appointed as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Nixon cabinet, he had a direct stake in the success of the Republican strategy. What is important here, of course, is not whether Dumke's ploy succeeded--the objective conditions on campus which have produced the present crisis would remain the same regardless of the outcome of the elections--but simply that it gives us some idea of the way in which this college is used as a political instrument. It also shows how totally falsified the issues of the Murray case, as the official line would have us understand them, really are. For one thing, Murray has been using the same kind of rhetoric freely for at least a year, and not until very recently has there been any serious objection to it. For another thing, if the sentiments behind the uproar over "guns on campus" were really sincere, we would have gotten rid of Air Force ROTC long ago. Clearly the real question that is bothering the Establishment politicos--very few of whom are pacifists--is not whether or not there are funs but rather who has the guns. Even while they hysterically attack Murray (largely on the basis of a statement he never actually made), they continue to maintain that their own guns are inviolable. And so, for all the official efforts to confuse the issues of the case, certain larger issues have, as a result of those efforts, become unmistakeably clear.

CONCLUSION

Under normal circumstances the power relationships within the educational system are so murky, so complex, so seemingly self-contradictory that they bewilder even those most inextricably caught up in them. Though the faculty wields life-or-death power over the students, it is all but powerless with respect to its own needs. The administration rules arbitrarily, seldom if even accountable to students or faculty; dealing with it means either getting ensnared in endless negotiation, manipulation, red tape and "legal channels," or else throwing the campus into a state of chaos with disruptive demonst rations. Effectiveness is highly uncertain in either case. But the administration, too, responds to events without really being able to control them. The President's office performs a treacherous balancing act between the campus and the "outside world," the college community and the corporate/political elite. Above and beyond it all are the Chancellor, assorted politicians, and the Trustees--remote, unreachable, abysmally ignorant of the processes governing the day to day functioning of the educational machine. They relate to the campus through newspaper headlines--those they read and those they would like to make. But in a crisis situation, the power relationships crystallize, the buffers and go-betweens disappear. There is them and there is us. They watch our every move; they try to exercise strict control over our every act.

The American educational system is rapidly approaching a permanent crisis situation. The college has never been "neutral," as most of us are by now aware; it plays certain specific roles in perpetuating certain given conditions of American life. But when it is functioning properly, the college is invisible. The educational manipulation of the young is carried on in silence, the research and development in relative secrecy. The college must be invisible, if it is to be manageable; made visible, it is too unpredictable, its innate power too strong.

But if there is any uniform law governing human history, it is that people can only be expected to take so much shit. Beyond a certain point, they will balk at being processed, resent the discrepancies between what they are told and what they are able to perceive for themselves, rebel at their own energies being used against them, and demand an end to the contradiction between their basic needs and the basic realities of their lives. Christopher Lasch observed recently that "changes in the social function of higher education have made the University itself a source of social conflict." But when it becomes a source of social conflict, the University loses its invisibility. The price the power structure must pay for its services becomes too great to pay, and yet economic realities of technological society make it less and less able to do whtiout those services. No longer able to afford granting its subject even the most nominal kinds of power, the power structure becomes increasingly intolerable. The Trustees begin swinging their Big Stick.

This campus has experienced upheavals before; they have occurred with growing frequ ncy over the last eighteen months. But never have the issues been so sweeping or clear-cut, and never have the stakes been so high. If the Trustees' power play succeeds, the college will continue to reinforce institutionalized racism, exploitation, manipulation and thought control, but we will lose whatever powers we might have had to counteract it within the context of our own education. If we challenge it successfully, we challenge the whole economic and political fabric of the state of California, and we open the way for similar challenges elsewhere.

Several weeks ago Eldridge Cleaver was on campus. Speaking to a large and enthusiastic crowd of students, Cleaver tried, thoughtfully to link the problems of black people with the problems of students, the common problems of the disenfranchised and disenchanted. "We need history books," he said "that all people can relate to." In twenty-one days Eldridge Cleaver is scheduled to return to prison; in twenty days, barring effective action on our part, the Trustees will drive the final nail into the coffin of decent, meaningful, human-oriented education in the California State Colleges.

The crisis is upon us.