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THE POLITICS OF THE STRIKE AT SF STATE

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While Stanford students were partying after a victory in Big Game, and going through the more arduous ordeal of exam week, the strike at San Francisco State continued to grow. The striking black and other Third World students have made demands in four general areas: admissions, financial aids, black and Third World studies, and control over all these by blacks and Third World people.

At first glance, the demands seem no more radical than those granted to black students at many other American universities. However, the differences in the situation of the college and the politics of the strikers distinguish SF State as a major political battlefield. Because SF State is part of the California State College System, the strike is an attack on Reagan, Rafferty, Unruh, et al. Any program which asks for a redirection of the resources of the State Government is a serious challenge to the priorities of a government controlled by and serving the interests of big business.

A more important and threatening demand is the demand for control. The College is designed to train people to fit into places in the existing social structure and to continue to accept authority couched in democratic rhetoric. By demanding control over the programs the strikers are refusing to recognize the authority of a power elite and creating programs which may run counter to the interests of those in power. The Black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front are not merely seeking educational reform to meet the needs of Third World students at State. They are proposing programs to meet the needs of their communities as a whole. This has been illustrated by their successful campaign to generate support from non-student black and third world communities. The demand for self-determination rejects not only the conservative "colonial" control of the ghettos and barrios, but opposes directly the liberal programs designed to fit black faces into the oppressive hierarchy. Many universities have been willing to grant "black studies" programs, as long as these programs can train black professionals, black administrators, and black capitalists--blacks culturally satisfied within a socially oppressive situation. Other schools are pushing "urban studies," in which highly-trained "doctors" treat the urban poor as "patients," who can merely describe their symptoms, with the specialists offering elitist prescriptions while denying democratic solutions, and denying the fact that many of the ghetto problems result from centuries of undemocratic exploitation of black people. By developing programs encouraging democratic solutions, and attacking the elite, the strike is providing a potentially revolutionary impetus in a struggle which often is manipulated by those in power to reinforce the status quo.

The reason we Stanford students should go to San Francisco State in support of the strike is not merely that Hayakawa is using police that are paid to beat our heads in Palo Alto, but that the demand for an autonomous school meeting the needs of Third World students is not merely an act of educational reform, but part of a world-wide struggle against the domination of what can aptly be termed the ruling class of U.S. Corporate Capitalism.

This much maligned group--or its representatives--has generously used police from the Palo Alto area to defend its interests at SF State. We must go, to struggle for ours.

SPEAKERS FROM STRIKING GROUPS AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE: Monday Night, January 6
8:00 pm
Tresidder Large Lounge

CAR POOLS TO SF STATE: Tresidder Parking Lot, Tuesday, January 7, 10:30 am.