

Now that the Trustees have once again failed to stop the research which we oppose, A3M is faced with the perennial question: where does it go from here.

From my viewpoint, the answer is straightforward. Since the Board of Trustees hasn't stopped the research, we must try to stop it ourselves, just as we did at AEL. Only now the target is the counter-insurgency, classified, and Vietnam war-related research at SRI. This means a long struggle probably lasting through next year. As a first step, we can try to stop the research at SRI's building on Hanover Street where a good part of this research is done.

Compared to other proposals likely to be discussed, this one has four advantages:

1, Even if we only succeed in closing SRI-Hanover for several hours on several days, we will have made it much more difficult for the death research to continue and much more difficult for the Board of Trustees to locate a buyer. Corporations will be wary of buying an institute likely to be the target of militant demonstrations.

SRI staffers have revealed that A3M has already pressured some counter-insurgents to seek other research. They also say that our movement has already cost SRI some military contracts because of the "unstable situation". Demonstrations explicitly directed against SRI should multiply these effects as well. They will also help us choose appropriate tactics for the rest of the quarter, next summer, and next year.

2, As long as we are interfering with counter-insurgency, classified and Vietnam war-related research we are winning because that is the goal of A3M. Another sit-in at Encina may force the Trustees to close the university, but will it reverse their decision about SRI?

3, SRI is conveniently near many of the Trustees' corporations, many of which are also engaged in war research. The effects of our demonstration may spill-over onto these targets thus increasing the pressure on the Trustees.

4, Demonstrations against SRI-Hanover don't automatically expose people to suspensions from school and six months in jail for violating an injunction. Unless there are good political reasons for doing so, it is silly to court (bad pun) stiff penalties.

How do we stop SRI-Hanover?

It's unlikely that the moral force of a thousand, or even several thousand people peacefully picketing the building will convince SRI's administrators to close-up shop. It's also unlikely that we will be able to seize SRI-Hanover as easily as we took AEL or even Encina. SRI-Hanover's relatively few doors will certainly be locked and protected by police long before we get there. I'm not ruling-out the possibility of the entire movement or some exemplary affinity groups breaking into SRI-Hanover at some point in the demonstration. I'm just saying that we shouldn't count on this at the beginning.

Our initial approach should be one of blocking the entrances to the building before the researchers arrive in the morning. When the police attempt to clear the entrances, our response should be similar to that of the demonstrators at the Oakland Induction Center in Stop the Draft Week. At Oakland, affinity groups sprung up. They blocked the streets with cars, garbage cans, benches and sometimes themselves. This created traffic jams making it difficult for the buses loaded with inductees to reach the Center. If the police chased them, the demonstrators simply extended the perimeter. The groups were mobile enough to minimize the dangers of encirclement, arrest, or tear-gassing by the police. We can do the same thing around SRI-Hanover.

From my viewpoint the considerations underlying such a demonstration are based on our intention to stop the research at SRI-Hanover because that research facilitates the exploitation, oppression and death of the people of S.E. Asia. If it were possible to wish the building and its contents---the piles of classified documents, notebooks, data, etc---out of existence, that would be splendid. But that is not a meaningful alternative at present. Our present situation is such that property damage---broken windows, destroyed files, messed-up air conditioning---helps stop this research by discouraging future buyers and additional contracts.

Similar considerations hold for the researchers themselves. Ideally we would probably like to wish most of them into socially useful jobs.

Perhaps some of them should be tried as war criminals by the Vietnamese and Thais, just like the U.S. tried Nazi criminals at Nuremberg. But neither of these is a meaningful alternative at present. Our situation is such that harrassing these researchers helps stop their research. Dig, harrassing these guys doesn't mean that we use their own fragmentation bombs, nerve gas, land mines, etc on them. It doesn't even mean that we plan to beat them up. It does mean that we may have to obstruct their paths, deflate their tires and perhaps jostle them a bit. My experience on picket lines elsewhere and in Oakland is that in the great majority of cases that is all that harrassment involves. Confronted by a group of students blocking the street an occasional driver may try to run them down or jump out of his car with fists flying. In these cases--hopefully few--affinity groups may want to protect themselves.

I have spelled out these considerations in detail so that discussion of this proposal can be as frank and candid as possible. But I want to emphasize that my own experience has been that no discussion can completely dispel the very real fears and apprehensions that even veterans of this kind of demonstration feel before undertaking one.

There are two objections to this proposal. One should be ignored; the other should be discussed extensively. The irrelevant one: we may alienate the researchers at SRI Hanover. The vast majority of the researchers at that building can't be alienated from us any more than they already are. As some of the affinity groups who have leafletted at SRI-Hanover found out, those guys really dig counter-insurgency, classified, and Vietnam-war-related research. Those men who dislike their work will welcome our pressure as an excuse to try to change it. Ditto for all the other researchers at SRI-Ravenswood who have shown us some support. We make them look much more moderate.

The relevant one: there are lots of tactical difficulties with trying to shut-down SRI-Hanover. The Oakland demonstrations were successful because they gave the movement a sense of its own power, showed how community blossomed in the course of physically confronting an oppressive system, and dramatically raised issues for the entire country. The actual functioning of the Induction Center was delayed only several hours.

In some ways, Downtwon Oakland was more favorable terrain than we face at Hanover Street. The streets of downtown Oakland provided the cans, benches, and cars to block the streets. The relatively short, densely populated blocks made it easy for the affinity groups to avoid the cops by mixing with the population. In other ways, we now have an easier task. We need block only three streets to create large traffic jams. At Oakland, all the police had to do was get a handful of buses to the Induction Center; here they will have to get several hundred people through our lines.

Our ingenuity and numbers will help us overcome the relative desolateness of Page Mill Road and Hanover Street. Like AEL, and unlike Encina, the reasons behind our action will be widely understood, just as we ourselves understand them. An increasingly large number of people now realize that winning the demands requires audacious tactics. I believe that 1000-1500 people from the Stanford community will participate in a demonstration of this type and that support from the rest of the Bay Area will double or triple that number.

If this meeting adjourns early enough, I suggest that we begin to close down SRI-Hanover early Thursday morning. If this meeting runs very late Wednesday night, we may want to wait until Friday because because we may need Thursday to locate props (benches, chairs, saw-horses) for our Hanover Street theatre, gather suitable clothing, set-up a tactics committee, and thrash out some of the tactical problems among ourselves. In any case, this week's demonstrations should be considered as a learning experience and as a way of mobilizing our support all over the Bay Area. Over the weekend with the aid of the publicity from our first demonstrations, we can organize this support. By Monday we should be ready to shut-down SRI-Hanover. We'll get by with a little help from our friends.

---Bill Hewlett

(last night's coordinating committee meeting suggested that real names on audacious proposals was going out of your way to invite all sorts of legal prosecution)