

With this in mind, it would seem that we should ignore student governments and/or abolish them. While this is certainly true in the final analysis, it is important to relate to student governments differently during the earlier stages of on-campus political struggles. The question we are left with is how do we render student governments ineffective in terms of what they are designed to do, while at the same time, using them effectively in building the movement?

Do we work inside the system? Of course we do. The question is not one of working "inside" or "outside" the system. Rather, the question is do we play by the established rules? Here, the answer is an emphatic no. The established habits of student politics - popularity contest elections, disguising oneself as a moderate, working for "better communications and dialogue" with administrators, watering down demands before they are made, going through channels - all of these gambits are stacked against us. If liberal and moderate student politicians really believe this kind of crap, then we should tell them to try it with all they have. But if they continue to make this ploy after they have learned from their own experience that these methods are dead-ends, then they should be soundly denounced as opportunists or gutless administration puppets.

We should face the fact that student governments are powerless and designed to stay that way. From this perspective, all talk about "getting into power" is so much nonsense. The only thing that student governments are useful for is their ability to be a temporary vehicle in building a grass-roots student power movement. This means that student elections are useful as an arena for raising real issues, combatting and exposing administration apologists, and involving new people, rather than getting elected. If our people do happen to get elected as radicals (this is becoming increasingly possible) then the seats won should be used as a focal point and sounding board for demonstrating the impotence of student government from within. A seat should be seen as a soap-box, where our representatives can stand, gaining a kind of visibility and speaking to the student body as a whole, over the heads of the other student politicians.

Can anything positive be gained through student government? Apart from publicity, one thing it can be used for is money. Many student-activities funds are open for the kinds of things we would like to see on campus: certain speakers, films, sponsoring conferences, etc. Money, without strings, is always a help. Also, non-political services, such as non-profit used-book exchanges, are helpful to many students. But in terms of radical changes, student government can do nothing apart from a mass, radical student power movement. Even then, student government tends to be a conservative force within those struggles. In the end, meaningful changes

can only come through a radical transformation of both the consciousness of large numbers of students and the forms of student self-government.

### Reform or Revolution: What Kind of Demands?

Fighting for reforms and making a revolution should not be seen as mutually exclusive positions. The question should be: what kind of reforms move us toward a radical transformation of both the university and the society in general? First of all, we should avoid the kinds of reforms which leave the basic rationale of the system unchallenged. For instance, a bad reform to work for would be getting a better grading system, because the underlying rationale - the need for grades at all - remains unchallenged.

Secondly, we should avoid certain kinds of reform that divide students from each other. For instance, trying to win certain privileges for upper classmen but not for freshmen or sophomores. Or trying to establish non-graded courses for students above a certain grade-point average. In the course of campus political activity, the administration will try a whole range of "divide and rule" tactics such as fostering the "Greek-Independent Split," sexual double standards, intellectual vs. "jocks," responsible vs. irresponsible leaders, red-baiting and "non-student" vs. students. We need to avoid falling into these traps ahead of time, as well as fighting them when used against us.

Finally, we should avoid all of the "co-management" kinds of reforms. These usually come in the form of giving certain "responsible" student leaders a voice or influence in certain decision-making processes, rather than abolishing or winning effective control over those parts of the governing apparatus. One way to counter administration suggestions for setting up "tripartite" committees (1/3 student, 1/3 faculty, 1/3 administration, each with an equal number of votes) is to say, "OK, but once a month the committee must hold an all-university plenary session - one man, one vote." The thought of being outvoted 1000 to 1 will cause administrators to scrap that co-optive measure in a hurry.

We have learned the hard way that the reformist path is full of pitfalls. What, then, are the kinds of reformist measures that do make sense? First of all, there are the civil libertarian issues. We must always fight, dramatically and quickly, for free speech and the right to organize, advocate, and mount political action - of all sorts. However, even here, we should avoid getting bogged down in "legalitarianism." We cannot count on this society's legal apparatus to guarantee our civil liberties; and, we should not organize around civil libertarian issues as if it could. Rather, when our legal rights are violated, we should move as quickly as possible, without losing our base, to expand the campus libertarian moral indignation into a multi-issue

political insurgency, exposing the repressive character of the administration and the corporate state in general.

The second kind of partial reform worth fighting for and possibly winning is the abolition of on-campus repressive mechanisms, i.e., student courts, disciplinary tribunals, deans of men and women, campus police, and the use of civil police on campus. While it is true that "abolition" is a negative reform, and while we will be criticized for not offering "constructive" criticisms, we should reply that the only constructive way to deal with an inherently destructive apparatus is to destroy it. We must curtail the ability of administrators to repress our need to refuse their way of life — the regimentation and bureaucratization of existence.

When our universities are already major agencies for social change in the direction of 1984, our initial demands must, almost of necessity, be negative demands. In this sense, the first task of a student power movement will be the organization of a holding action — a resistance. Along these lines, one potentially effective tactic for resisting the university's disciplinary apparatus would be the formation of a Student Defense League. The purpose of the group would be to make its services available to any student who must appear before campus authorities for infractions of repressive (or just plain stupid) rules and regulations. The defense group would then attend the student's hearings en masse. However, for some cases, it might be wise to include law students or local radical lawyers in the group for the purpose of making legal counter-attacks. A student defense group would have three major goals: 1) saving as many students as possible from punishment, 2) desanctifying and rendering dis-functional the administration's repressive apparatus, and 3) using 1) and 2) as tactics in reaching other students for building a movement to abolish the apparatus as a whole.

When engaging in this kind of activity, it is important to be clear in our rhetoric as to what we are about. We are not trying to liberalize the existing order, but trying to win our liberation from it. We must refuse the administrations' rhetoric of "responsibility." To their one-dimensional way of thinking, the concept of responsibility has been reduced to its opposite, namely, be nice, don't rock the boat, do things according to our criteria of what is permissible. In actuality their whole system is geared toward the inculcation of the values of a planned irresponsibility. We should refuse their definitions, their terms, and even refuse to engage in their semantic hassles. We only need to define for ourselves and other students our notions of what it means to be free, constructive, and responsible. Too many campus movements have been co-opted for weeks or even permanently by falling into the administrations' rhetorical bags.

Besides the abolition of repressive disciplinary

mechanisms within the university, there are other negative reforms that radical should work for. Getting the military off the campus, abolishing the grade system, and abolishing universal compulsory courses (i.e., physical education) would fit into this category. However, an important question for the student movement is whether or not positive radical reforms can be won within the university short of making a revolution in the society as a whole. Furthermore, would the achievement of these kinds of partial reforms have the cumulative effect of weakening certain aspects of corporate capitalism, and, in their small way, make that broader revolution more likely?

At present, my feeling is that these kinds of anti-capitalist positive reforms are almost as hard to conceive intellectually as they are to win. To be sure, there has been a wealth of positive educational reforms suggested by people like Paul Goodman. But they are anti-capitalist as well? For example, we have been able to organize several good free universities. Many of the brightest and most sensitive students on American campuses, disgusted with the present state of education, left the campus and organized these counter-institutions. Some of their experiments were successful in an immediate internal sense. A few of these organizers were initially convinced that the sheer moral force of their work in these free institutions would cause the existing educational structure to tremble and finally collapse like a house of IBM cards. But what happened? What effect did the free universities have on the established educational order? At best, they had no effect. But it is more likely that they had the effect of strengthening the existing system. How? First of all, the best of our people left the campus, enabling the existing university to function more smoothly, since the "troublemakers" were gone. Secondly, they gave liberal administrators the rhetoric, the analysis, and sometimes the manpower to co-opt their programs and establish elitist forms of "experimental" colleges inside of, although quarantined from, the existing educational system. This is not to say that free universities should not be organized, both on and off the campus. They can be valuable and useful. But they should not be seen as a primary aspect of a strategy for change.

What then is open to us in the area of positive anti-capitalist reforms? For the most part, it will be difficult to determine whether or not a reform has the effect of being anti-capitalist until it has been achieved. Since it is both difficult and undesirable to attempt to predict the future, questions of this sort are often best answered in practice. Nevertheless, it would seem that the kind of reforms we are looking for are most likely to be found within a strategy of what I would call "encroaching control." There are aspects of the university's administrative, academic, financial-physical, and social apparatus that are potentially, if not actually,

useful and productive. While we should try to abolish the repressive mechanisms of the university; our strategy should be to gain control, piece by piece, of its positive aspects.

What would that control look like? To begin, all aspects of the non-academic life of the campus should either be completely under the control of the students as individuals or embodied in the institutional forms they establish for their collective government. For example, an independent union of students should have the final say on the form and content of all-university political, social, and cultural events. Naturally, individual students and student organizations would be completely free in organizing events of their own.

Secondly, only the students and the teaching faculty, individually and through their organizations, should control the academic affairs of the university. One example of a worthwhile reform in this area would be enabling all history majors and history professors to meet jointly at the beginning of each semester and shape the form, content, and direction of their departmental curriculum. Another partial reform in this area would be enabling an independent union of students to hire additional professors of their choice and establish additional accredited courses of their choice independently of the faculty or administration.

Finally, we should remember that control should be sought for some specific purpose. One reason we want this kind of power is to enable us to meet the self-determined needs of students and teachers. But another objective that we should see as radicals is to put as much of the university's resources as possible into the hands of the underclass and the working class. We should use the student press to publicize and support local strikes. We should use campus facilities for meeting the educational needs of unsurgent organizations of the poor, and of rank and file workers. Or we could mobilize the universities' research facilities for serving projects established and controlled by the poor and worker, rather than projects established and controlled by the government, management, and labor bureaucrats. The conservative nature of American trade unions makes activity of this sort very difficult, although not impossible. But we should always be careful to make a distinction between the American working class itself and the labor 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 defense department hi-relings — 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 Burning 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 a radical trade union of TAs a crucial part of any strategy for change. We should see this kind of labor 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 labor 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 classroom 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 classwork, 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 was 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: Radicalization 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 Situation-

ists 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 Defense 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 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, etc.) 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 labor 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 grassroots 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 Situationist, 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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