

UNITED FRONTS AT STUDENT STRIKE CONFERENCE

Honesty Questioned

by Bernard Farber, Roosevelt SDS

While there are many developments worthy of discussion in regard to the Student Strike Conference held at the University of Chicago, December 28-30, some of which I hope to discuss later after consideration, one thing that seems to necessitate immediate attention is the question of the "united front" formed at the conference, the political basis of such a "united front" and whether this basis is within the framework of SDS politics - very broadly defined.

The NAC resolution upon which SDS observers Fred Kushner of Roosevelt, and Steve Kindred of U. of C. were empowered to act instructed them to relate to the conference that SDS was willing to cooperate with a "program which has a clear political focus of organizing against the draft and the war both on and off campus with a secondary, but clearly stated, position against the 2-S and which has a sufficiently long range perspective to allow the development of real, solid organizing programs which might culminate in a national action."

Although I realize that Kindred and Kushner will in all probability be preparing a report, I feel that it might be valuable for someone else to relate how they presented SDS's position to the conference. Kindred was given a chance to present the first speech to the plenary session on the afternoon of the first day. He began by reading the NAC resolution and stating that it was not an attempt to formulate policy but a gathering of April, June and September NC resolutions.

SDS has been charged, Kindred continued, with a "failure to provide concrete political leadership to the anti-war movement" - a charge which he accepted as partially true, but attributed to "growing pains" in the organization. Through demonstrations, Kindred said, we have learned 1) the potential force of an opposition but 2) the inadequacy of demonstrations if they are "one-shot" affairs, reactive to the initiatives of the Johnson administration and simply "shout slogans at people." Kindred characterized our major task as that of organizing a "conscious democratic political left" that would aim at taking power.

Kindred recognizing that "we're at a turn-

ing point. We have to move. That's clear," but urged "adapting our strategies to the necessities of the future." Specifically, he saw no reason for a separate student mobilization, which would lead to "separatism, compartmentalization of the movement," and discussed the problems which develop from a seemingly endless string of demonstrations - being unable to develop permanent programs because we're always worrying about getting the money for the buses to Washington, the signs for the picket lines, and fighting the internal sectarian slogan hassels.

Kindred concluded by calling for local demonstrations on April 15 - the same day as the Spring Mobilization, with a moratorium on demonstrations until October when we could "stage the biggest International Days of Protest that Johnson has ever seen." Kindred called for opposition to the "class privilege represented by II-S", being explicit about discussing imperialism and relating it to the structure of our society, developing "complete thoroughgoing resistance to the draft that offers people an alternative" and offering a "socialist alternative to present American economic and political structure."

Kindred was followed by Bettina Aptheker of the CP, who discussed the role of the university in American society, specifically vis-a-vis defense contracts, ideological apologists, chemical research, etc, and dealt with reasons for apathy in the anti-war movement, putting forward the hypothesis that it was a result of an inability to see immediate results of political work, as was occasionally seen in civil rights or free speech struggles.

Eugene Groves, president of the National Student Association (NSA) delivered a speech calling for "working within the system" to end the war through "broad electoral coalitions" of labor, civil rights, religious and student groups. Sidney Peck of the Spring Mobilization Committee and the Inter-University Committee for Debate on Foreign Policy (IUC) gave a short history of the student movement.

At this point, Kindred jumped over a row of chairs and, face red said that he felt "used", that Bettina and the plenary were not discussing the question of whether

or not to hold a student mobilization, and the political basis upon which it would be called, and he was afraid that "tomorrow we'll be presented with a continuations committee, six campus travelers, and a date."

At his point, discussion scheduled to end at 2:30 was extended for the entire afternoon to allow discussion. Personally I would agree with Kindred that the speeches delivered by Aptheker and Peck had little substantive political content in terms of discussing tactical things. Kushner spoke about the inability of campus organizers to do much unless they were able to relate the war to conditions directly affecting students lives, and his need to take more from the discussion than "just that there's a mobilization on such and such a date and you ought to come, kids, if you're decent human beings."

On Thursday, Kindred related that the NC had not considered the strike proposal and had specifically voted against the April 15 Spring Mobilization. He said that he was, speaking personally "disaffected by the decision of my national council . . . and since I don't belong to a democratic centralist organization, I have no qualms about saying so."

The conference went through the strange process of first voting upon a general statement of aims, in entirety, with the chairman promising that additions to the statement would be allowed later. After the statement was passed, an announcement was made that the plenary would recess while the steering committee worked out the call

for the action and discussed implementation.

At this point, I strenuously objected, reminding the chair of his previous ruling: Bettina made a motion to provide for additional debate then and additions to the statement. The body voted her resolution down - with YSA voting as a body against it and the DuBois Club seemingly splitting down the middle.

The addition to the statement I was proposing, after consultation with Kindred, Kushner and several others, read "Abolishing & defeating the draft, and opposing the governments tactic of dividing students from the rest of the population through the special class privilege of II-S"

At various times in the conference, this question was discussed - or rather the reason why we should not discuss it was discussed. The YSA said that this was a united front, that people in the room had all sorts of differences on the question of II-S and that it was disunifying to discuss - that we were there to build the broadest possible coalition of groups opposed to the war. It seems to me that this is a phony argument, that it is an attempt to avoid discussing just what these differences are and what they flow from. As I told the steering committee following that session, the conference had the perfect right to reject SDS's position on II-S, but not before thoroughly discussing it. The YSA and half the DuBois Clubs in effect voted against discussing it. The YSA's

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Social Radicalism and Pompous Change national conference workshop agenda

Defining the student and his institutionalized role of meaninglessness.

STUDENTS AND SOCIAL CLASSES

What is the student mentality and how much of it is imposed by Standard Oil; or why do students seldom act in their own self-interest; or why has the society institutionalized an educational system where the self is a null quality; or why do doctors (9 out of 10) recommend Wheaties, Aspirin, and inner-tubes as a breakfast for those who would come to this workshop?

THE ECONOMICS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Who benefits from research funds, contracts, department and administrative red tape, student social services, birth control pills, and dorm vending machines? What is the role of funding in determining educational policy? What is the role of funding? Who is money? Can basic resource allocation progress beyond bargaining between student employees and teachers unions, taking into consideration the relevancy of the campus-business schizophrenia?

THE JUNIOR COLLEGE

What is the pattern of economic control in the junior colleges - a tad, a bit, or a bunch too much? (circle one) What organizational problems are posed by the in loco parentis fiat given the maxim that parents often have kids.

THE HIGH SCHOOL

Has the change in the public conception of the "college student" provided high schools with an alternative behavioral model assuming however that the stimulus-response graph has not been jarred by either recent atom bomb tests in Mississippi, or by the Administration's administrative blunders of under-estimating by 15,000,000,000 the cost of this years war? What types of anti-draft stuff have been tried with high schools?

WHITE RADICALS AND NEGROES ON CAMPUS

Is there a danger that white people exist? Is there a danger that black people exist? Is there a danger that this workshop really exists?

PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Why do new schools flop? Do campus based educational innovations serve as catalysts to institutional change or do they merely co-opt dissent? In other words, perhaps the intense innovational fervor merely heats brain-beakers to near hysteria before they spill out and crack up.

THE CAMPUS, THE DRAFT, THE MILITARY, THE SOCIETY, THE BOOKSTORE, THE SALT-SHAKER

What have been the relative merits of campus draft protests (eg. cub, wolf, bear, lion, or eagle) as opposed to burning flags? How do you (or wife) deal with the military and the CTC on campus? How do you abolish military research?

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Why, and to what extent, and in what ways is the University's GL-70 the vanguard of the status quo, which of course is in some fashion an adjunct to the educational and political bureaucracies; hence is this demand for the abolition of grades progressive or revolutionary?

STUDENTS AS CATALYSTS

Should students organize within poor white communities and labor unions as opposed to fucking? As a major program?

STUDENT POWER

Simply put, the primary question or concern is: how? or is it should? or maybe can???

ORGANIZING TOWARD STUDENT SYNDICALISM CHEERFULLY

What would be the efficacy of a national student union? Should New Left Notes be sent as a bonus to charter members? What activities would it engage in and promote? Would it deal with larger social diseases as well as power on the campus? Would it be only a lobby or a real political force? Would it be an all-left coalition? Strawberry? Would it be exclusionary? Would locals be autonomous? Would it be organized from the bottom-up, rather than top-down as in NSA? What relations would it have with international groups? Oral? Unions?

STUDENT RADICALS AND ELECTORAL POLITICS

Should radicals participate in electoral politics? If so, under what conditions? If not, what alternative should they offer to those concerned with social change? Should radicals support the move toward a third party? If so should they organize themselves as a constituency or as catalysts? In those leftist campaigns where students have been particularly important (such as the CNP campaigns) what effect has the campaign had on the campus? What effect could a student syndicalist movement have on the move toward independent or third party politics?

" . . . do you, Mr. Jones"

changes in our thinking

—Nick Egleson

A campus based student movement is increasingly possible. The events of recent months, and even more dramatically those of recent weeks give ample testimony. Last spring Buffalo, Chicago, and Madison had major movements around ranking and testing for the draft. This fall Berkeley and Michigan have been the scenes of major student strikes and large protests. In the last weeks San Francisco State College conducted a large boycott of student dining facilities. New York University, Downtown held a strike over tuition increases, and Hunter in New York seems on the verge.

Changes in our thinking in the conditions of the university indicate that these campuses will not be the only ones to be subject to student movements. In recent months we have put new substance in strategy and tactics for a student movement. Earliest 'university reform programs' (SDS has had them in the past) stemmed from the same analysis of the university which we now put forward, but had only the barest guesses at tactics and no neat strategy. We said, "maybe an issue could be made of class size, or course irrelevance." And we know that eventually we wanted to raise the issue of student control but that seemed, then, like something so far off as hardly to deserve speculation. Our strategy is still simple, but at least it is there: take a small issue and immediately raise the question of student control. Take the draft exam, as at Buffalo or Madison, and ask for a vote and structure to make future decisions. Take ranking, as at Chicago, and ask for a referendum. Take the price of food, as at SF State College, and ask for student control of the corporation which runs the lunch room and book store.

A New Courage

At the same time that we have learned to go beyond immediate demands to basic ones, we have learned to put into practice tactics which before were only speculations. Prices in cafeterias have always been high, tuition has been rising for many years. We now have the courage to think we can raise these issues. (It is worthwhile to note, so that we don't chalk the new awareness up to sudden genius, that it has grown naturally out of recent developments in this country. The war was an easy thing to protest against, because the issues were so clear, the inhumanity so overpowering. The war became an issue on the campus (ranking, germ research, police training, testing) and the protest was easily brought within the campus. And once the issue of control was raised on war-centered issues, like ranking, it could be raised in other areas as well.)

The changes in the campus conditions which make student movements more possible go beyond the simple intersection of campus and war issues which produced a new willingness to raise demands in our own surroundings. The disturbances on campuses, chiefly at Berkeley, struck fear to the hearts of university administrations over the entire country. That fear became itself a condition which sets the stage for campus movements. The fear has two effects.

In the first place it makes administrators, even good liberals, more prone to make sorry mistakes. Recently, for instance, an administrator at the University of Michigan caught between regential pressure to turn the names of students over to the HUAC, and simmering student discontent with his action, delegated to himself power to override any student-government passed rule, and power to make, in his own name, any regulation. He made illegal any demonstration which interfered with the 'orderly functioning of the university'. His actions were part of the cause for the recent mass demonstrations on his campus.

In the second place the fear makes the administrations more vulnerable and more willing to give in. Some time ago U. of Michigan SDS put up next to a Marine recruiter a table over which was a sign saying "sign up here for war crimes." An arrow beneath the sign pointed to the Marines. Below the sign was the definition of war crimes accepted by the US at the Nuremberg trials, and below it were articles from the US press documenting US violations. The sign drew crowds for a week. Within an hour of its appearance the board of regents of the U. of Michigan were in session, debating the question, 'can we ask SDS to take down the signs?' They were so cautious in their formulation of the question because J. Edgar Hoover had informed them that their own campus was to be the next Berkeley. As

a result of their deliberations the sign stayed and the Marines, in the future, had to rent space for recruiting, just like any other off-campus organization. Administrative fear, rather than actual force, created a student victory and an incentive for further student demands.

The situation has produced humor as well as incentive. The students at Buffalo (SUN-YAB) returned last fall to find a health insurance plan had been instituted which was mandatory and for which students had to pay a fee. In addition there were reports of nepotistic connections between the university administration and the owners of the insurance firm. The editor of the school paper, *The Spectrum*, rang up the deans office and said words to this effect: 'This is Taylor at *The Spectrum*. We have been getting many complaints about the mandatory health insurance program, and I am afraid if it is not made voluntary in the very near future there might be trouble. . . . and SDS and Berkeley . . . ' and hung up the phone. Half an hour later he got a call back from the deans, so the story goes, with word that the program was now voluntary.

Student movements are increasingly possible. We can see them, we have the first concrete ideas of strategy and tactics, and we have the power which stems both from student willingness to act and from administrative unease. We have not solved all the problems. Small liberal institutions have yet to see any major campus-based movements. Antioch. Swarthmore, Reed and their ilk may harbour large radical contingents, and may have been involved in off-campus activities in a large scale, but they have been unable to confront their administrations, or to broach questions which affected the rest of the student population. But we are making progress in some areas we had earlier written off as impossible. At the large urban commuter university we once wrung our hands in despair. The food boycott at just such a school—San Francisco State College—points a way, as does the tuition issue at NYU.

So what? Couldn't a student movement strive only for a perfect ivory tower? Or could it have a political impact on the country? Or could it help to build a movement for radical change?

We can rest easy, I think, that from the start the movement has not been for the perfection *in vacuo* of our own academic wonderland. Even in its origins the student movement has been closely tied to issues in the larger society. Veterans of the Mississippi projects were heavily represented in the first flare-ups at Berkeley and elsewhere. The involvement of students to date has been largely over the war. Even when the student movement concentrates on the campus it has most frequently centered on issues which stem from an intersection of the academic and the exterior world: from ROTC recruiters at Cal and U. of Maryland, from CIA recruiters at Columbia, from ranking and testing at a number of schools, from the low wages of employees at Columbia, Missouri. It may be that as the focus shifts to more campus centered issues some of the wider vision will be lost. But for that to happen the movements will have to buck a history of involvement in larger issues and an existing leadership whose vision is not a narrow one of student power for its own sake.

The student movement is not in danger, at this point, of raising issues only of concern to students. But can the student movement have an impact on the larger society? We have already had that impact. The first impact (or the one movement of which they are different facets) has been to open up for the first time in two decades the possibility of significant dissent in the United States.

We should not despise good things even when they come from strange places, and so at this point there is a story of an experiment conducted at the holy of academic holies, Yale, which is of some relevance to the question of dissent. The experiments were conducted roughly as follows (Source: Milgrim, Stanley; *Human Relations*; Vol. XVIII, No. 1; 1965; pp. 57-76.; Milgrim, Stanley; *Journal of Personality and Social Psyche*; Vol. 1, No. 2; Feb., 1965.) A subject, call him Fred, arrives at the appropriate building on the campus. He is told the experiment he has been requested to participate in involves learning theory. Fred is introduced to another person whom he is told is a fellow subject. They draw straws to determine who will be teacher and who pupil. Because the other subject is actually part of the experiment and the drawing is rigged, Fred invariably becomes the teacher. The two are led into a room con-

taining a large chair equipped with straps and electrodes. Fred's companion is strapped to the chair and the electrodes attached. Fred is then led into another room. The room has no windows but it does have an inter-com which connects it with the room with the chair. Fred's room has also a panel of buttons labelled in steps from fifteen to four hundred fifty volts. Below each voltage label is a descriptive label which says at one end 'barely perceptible' and ranges through 'strong tingling' to 'painful' and finally to 'caution, severe pain'. Fred is given a forty-five volt shock so he has some idea of what will be going on. Fred is then told to read a programmed series of questions into the intercom. Everytime he hears a wrong answer he is to increase the shock level one stage.

The answers he hears are, of course, a series of tape recorded responses. They begin with simple answers, but as the questioning continues and the number of wrong responses and the level of the shocks increases, the replies become more filled with protests: "I didn't realize it would be like this," "Let me out. I have a bad heart I did not tell them about."

The point, clearly, is to see at what point Fred refuses to inflict further shock. It is a question of when he will dissent from the structure of the experiment, and from the requests of the experimenter who is in the room supervising him and requesting that he continue.

Milgrim (the fellow who designed the experiment), and associates took a poll of their profession prior to running the experiment asking for predictions of the point at which the subjects would rebel. Most placed the cut-off point at about 150 volts, when the protests became severe, and most predicted that not more than 2% of the subjects would push the last button.

When the experiments were run 63% of the people involved pushed the last button. Milgrim & Co. then began to try to find what would reduce the staggering willingness of subjects to inflict torture. One step was to remove the experiment from the august halls of Yale, and remove the sanction of the university surroundings. In a rather run-down office under the name of an unknown firm there was a slight, but not significant increase in the level of dissent. When (back at Yale) Fred was placed in the same room as the 'pupil' (who acted out the anguish of the shocks), and when the pupil, although strapped to the chair, could lift his hands off the electrodes unless Fred held it down, the percentage of those who would go through with the experiment dropped to a mere thirty per cent.

Group Response

The experimenters then began to have groups of naive subjects conducting the experiment—reading the questions and pushing the buttons. And they found that when one member of the group, either on his own or because he was in on the experiment, refused to go any further then the rest of the group would refuse as well, even though the loss of one member of the team did not hamper the experiment. When one member of the team said no, others were willing to say no as well. And that, to get back to a more political framework, is part of the task we fulfill: saying "No."

We are all familiar with the immediate, short range correlary to this experiment in the political field. When we take an action on campus, whether it is saying no to uniformity by forming a chapter at Bowling Green, Ohio, or saying no to exploitative food prices at SFSC, other people stand up and say no with us. New people come out of the woodwork.

The movement is continually reinforced by

ideas that originate in one part of it and are applied in another. The idea, the possibility of protest in the south, as well as the experience of it, was an important part in sparking campus protests. Dissent in one place created the possibility for dissent elsewhere, and dissent materialized on the campus.

Take, as another peculiar example, the housewife movement. Could it have occurred during the early or even late 1950's? It could not have, and did not, not simply because it would have been red-baited, or because prices were never high during that period. Part of the reason could have been that the possibility of dissent was not there in the mind of the public. (Not that there is anything inherently radical about the housewife demands.) The point is only that they have made what for many of them must be the first truly political move of their lives. The notion that people can act to have some control over their own lives, even if at present they act out of mis-conceptions or false consciousness, is an important beginning to the rebirth of political life in this country.

Understanding Power

This development of a nascent political sense, which could never, in itself, justify a student movement, is not the same as a movement for radical change. There are ways, however, that the student movement has had an impact which lays a base for such a movement. Consider first the effects on students involved in such movements.

They learn much more than the possibility for dissent. They come to have, first of all, a better understanding of power. Or, even more basic, they come to see that power exists. Most people, even people in the movement, fail to see the power around them. We are apt to think that the failings in our own lives are either chance or our own fault. Even when we understand that the system, and the power which its existence exercises on our own lives, is partly to blame for our predicaments, we still invariably feel that our own lives are more screwed up than any one else's. We fail to see the extent of the power operating to shape our existence.

Student movements, because they are at the very least statements that the same problems confront us all, demonstrate to us that there exists life-shaping power outside of us. Awareness of such power is the consequence of the perception of problems as social, rather than personal, and is therefore the second vital step in the process of politicalization.

But in the case of students involved in campus movements the process is carried much further. The nature of the power is made clear. Students at Cal and other places know that the regents, not themselves, have power. They have come to see that with regard to the campus the regents misuse their power. And they are then more able to suspect and to learn that the regents, who own not just the university but much of California, misuse their power in all the areas they control. And in this way a political realization which transcends student power and the narrow domain of the university is created by a student movement.

A student movement creates an understanding of power in other ways. The assumption of up against which we come constantly in political arguments is the assumption that we do live in a democratic society. People assume that the labels attached to our system have a cognitive meaning. Campus movements break down

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NEW LEFT NOTES

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High Schools and the Ban on the Student Press

by John H. Bennett

The high school reform movement in Riverside has reached a critical stage. United Students has exhausted the possibility of winning the right of free press by negotiations. A campaign to bring extensive pressure to bear upon the entire school administration is clearly what is needed. The only question is "how?"

People are beginning to urge United Students to tackle some other issues instead - issues which they believe offer greater possibilities of success. I believe that these people are overlooking some important considerations, like the nature of the free-press issue and the amount of support it has already won, the purpose of United Students itself, and the very character of the system against which United Students is struggling.

The free-press issue, which involves the right of students to distribute literature on campus without the approval of the school administration, is basic to the entire movement. By placing all publications under its censorship, the administration has been able to prevent any effective student dissent from being organized. As long as United Students must depend primarily on the spoken word to get its message across on campus, it will be unable to reach a large number of students in a relatively short period of time. As long as such censorship continues, students in general will be unable to develop a significant voice in their own education.

At present, the only time that literature can be distributed just off campus is before and after school when students are in too much of a hurry coming and going. Before "IT" was banned, a single copy distributed on campus was sometimes shared by as many as twenty different people. Several teachers even used articles from "IT" as subjects for classroom discussions. Now that the on-campus ban is in effect, however, this is virtually impossible and the newspaper itself is surrounded by an atmosphere of fear.

Because of this oppressive atmosphere, most of the support on campus has been forced underground, where it has become ineffectual and difficult to measure. Nonetheless, a number of teachers on various campuses have privately indicated that they are in sympathy. Numerous students on every campus have been demanding their next copy of "IT" as if it were an inalienable right. The editors of the Rubidoux High School "Talon" have modeled their new editorial policy after "IT" in spite of their principal's threat to dismiss them from their posts. And some students at Poly High, who have not been sympathetic with United Students, were recently talking about starting an underground newspaper of their own.

The free-press movement has had considerable impact on other parts of the community as well. Inspired directly by United Students and "IT", a group at Riverside City College has organized a college-reform party, and is in the process of publishing the first issue of its own student magazine. A surprising number of students and professors at UCR are avid readers of "IT", and are following the movement with interest. During the last several weeks, a number of unsolicited supporting letters have found their way into the Riverside Press. And in the last few months, an organization of sympathetic parents has come into being.

Given such potential support, there are several reasons why the free-press issue can be especially effective in mobilizing students. The banning of "IT" affects every student on every high school and junior high school campus in the city. As a city-wide open forum, "IT" offers these campuses a genuine and concrete service not provided by the regular student newspapers. Not long ago, "IT" was actually being distributed on campus, with obviously beneficial, rather than detrimental, effects on the academic atmosphere. Then "IT" was banned, and a liberty which its readers were once able to enjoy was taken away. To say the least, many students are still unable to appreciate why the administration did this. Cognizant of these facts, members of United Students are understandably proud of their publication, and are so committed to the idea of a free student press that they are consider-

ing unusual risks in order to help make it a reality.

The fundamental goal of United Students, in my opinion, is to make the public schools truly democratic. In order to achieve such a radical goal, United Students is now in the process of building a radical, democratic movement. Those who argue against ever confronting the present system, and those who argue against confronting it except with overwhelming support, are arguing for a different kind of movement with inevitably different kinds of goals. Those who argue against confrontation altogether don't think that the present school system is "as bad as all that," which makes me wonder just what kind of system they believe should replace it. As for those who argue against confronting it except with overwhelming support, they want things too easy. I am afraid that in the midst of their pessimism, they have made their actions so dependent on their chances of success that they may never even try - which makes me wonder just how much they value the kind of changes they advocate.

The character of the institution that United Students is up against is truly frightening. A lawyer representing the Riverside City School Board said in court recently "It is obvious that students have their rights . . . but in our zeal and enthusiasm to educate them, something has to give". Tragically, the thing that invariably "has to give" are the rights of students, and there are plenty of local rules, state laws, and court decisions to enforce this. As far as I know, there is no issue involving basic student rights that is now negotiable within the Riverside school system. In fact, I know of very few that might conceivably be won inside the courts. If United Students were to pursue any other issue involving a basic student right, it would probably end up running into the same wall again. The fundamental problem, therefore, is what to do about the wall.

As I have said before, virtually all the support that United Students has on campus has been frightened into "hiding". To bring that support out into the open is going to require a lot more than verbal persuasion. Since most students have been stultified into resigning themselves to the status quo, it will take the shock of a dramatic event to stimulate even the half-hearted into active involvement. Unless the administration initiates some kind of "atrocious", the dramatic event will probably necessitate civil disobedience.

In the case of the free-press issue, civil disobedience would involve exercising the very right that is now being denied by the school administration: the right of students to distribute literature on campus without first having to submit it to censors. Civil disobedience in this case would also involve the willingness or suffer some very harsh consequences, including expulsion from school. That would not mean, however, that whatever punishment was inflicted should not be protested in the most vigorous way by parents, teachers, and students alike. Since expulsion is a strong possibility, prior steps should be taken to enable anyone who is expelled to continue his education in the Riverside area, so that he will not be lost from the movement. For this purpose, students at the University could be enlisted as tutors to teach within the framework of the original "free high school". If during a school boycott some Negro parents were able to organize a freedom school for as many as three-hundred children, certainly parents of United Students members could organize a school for as few as thirty.

The more students involved in the civil disobedience, of course, the more impact it is likely to have. Although there can be no hard, fast rule as to the minimum number that United Students should muster before ever attempting such action, I believe that as few as fifteen students could make a considerable dent, and that as many as thirty could crack the issue wide open. Before the civil disobedience is committed, as many students as possible should be informed of what the action involves and why it is being done. After the civil disobedience has occurred, they should be informed of exactly what the administration did, and especially of what they can now do to help. Only by channelling the support that emerges can United Students proceed

beyond the initial confrontation with greater strength and effectiveness.

To expect the student press to be liberated by one single confrontation would be like hoping for a miracle. A sustained campaign that will bring students, parents and teachers together on this issue, and organize them into an effective force, is obviously what is needed. How the civil disobedience will help accomplish this task can be summarized as follows:

1. *Dramatizing the issue:* the civil disobedience will publicly demonstrate the present iniquity in such concrete terms that it will be extremely difficult for people not to understand.
2. *Forcing the administration's hand:* the civil disobedience will force the administration into its very worst posture, thereby contributing to its demoralization and disillusioning many of its original sympathizers. Compelled to enforce an unjust rule in a very harsh manner, the administration will undoubtedly provoke people into coming to the defense of those it is punishing.
3. *Stimulating debate:* in bringing things to the surface in so dramatic a fashion, the civil disobedience is bound to stimulate a great deal more dialogue on the issue than has taken place so far.
4. *Demonstrating civil disobedience as a method:* I repeat: probably no issue involving basic student rights is now negotiable within the Riverside school system. Even Kevin had to commit civil disobedience in order to get the Good Grooming Code into the courts. In view of this, it is essential to the movement that students begin considering non-violent civil disobedience as a valid and justifiable method of fighting for their rights.
5. *Showing that the students mean business:* by openly taking some unusual risks, and publicly announcing that they are willing to suffer the consequences, the students will be forcing the administration, teachers, and parents to take their demands seriously.
6. *Inspiring others:* this is probably the most important effect of all. There are many potential supporters in the schools who do not have enough courage yet to commit themselves in even "little" ways, such as defending the cause in an argument, signing a petition, attending a United Students meeting, or distributing "IT" off campus. If these people see some of their fellow students risking their high school diplomas for the cause, their reasons for having been so reluctant will suddenly seem awfully trivial. Whether guilt-ridden or truly inspired, many will be prompted for the very first time to do their share.

True, not all of the results will be so encouraging. United Students and its supporters will have to face considerable antagonism from people who feel that authority should not be disobeyed at all. Driving such opposition out into the open, where it can be better dealt with, is a rather unpleasant, if necessary task. Furthermore, whoever participates in the civil disobedience must be prepared to undergo the worst punishment that the school authorities can administer: namely, permanent expulsion from school. A participant who was not prepared to undergo expulsion would be placing himself at their mercy; the school authorities need only threaten to kick that person out in order to force him back into line.

To most students, expulsion implies a future of deflated income, lowered status, and inferior jobs. Because of this fact, the threat of expulsion has been an extremely potent weapon in keeping them, and their parents, in line. The public school system now has a virtual monopoly on the education of the young. Compulsory education laws, and the cost and scarcity of satisfactory private school, actually force most young people, whether they like it or not, into the authoritarian environment of the public system. Once they are there, any bold and courageous attempts on their part to make that environment more democratic can get them thrown out on their ears, with seldom anywhere to turn. In a society so rigidly organized that a high school diploma is a prerequisite for a college degree, and a college degree is fast becoming a prerequisite for a comfortable income and job, it is no wonder that the threat of a dishonorable discharge from high school is able to coerce most students into giving up and simply "getting through". At Palisades

High School, the wide spread revolt against the Grooming Code obligingly collapsed when the principal announced that diplomas

from that school would not be recognized by colleges if the revolt continued. The truth of the matter is that young people have become so dependent upon the public school system to get them into the economy that they are being forced to support the system against their own interests. Only when they have become willing to try, if necessary, an alternate route to the future, will students ever be able to pose a serious threat to so coercive an institution.

Believe it or not, there are other ways of getting an education. If worse comes to worse and some students do get expelled, they can still continue their educations, get a high school diploma, and eventually get into college if they so desire. And there is no reason why they cannot do so in the Riverside area, so that they may remain actively in the movement and continue protesting the injustice of their expulsion. Correspondence courses and classes at Riverside City College could be taken toward acquiring a high school diploma. Extension courses at the University would be another possibility. The method that I particularly favor could incorporate all of these alternatives, but would be based primarily on small classes taught by UCR students within the framework of the free high school. Although there would probably be enough volunteers to cover most of the needed subjects, a few students in certain specialties could be hired to balance the curricula.

Now that members of United Students are contemplating civil disobedience, they find themselves in an extremely frustrating dilemma. On the one hand are the school authorities with their threats of expulsion, and on the other hand are the parents with their ultimatums, arguments, and anxious warnings. Unfortunately most parents have become as uncritically dependent upon the public schools as the students themselves. Even the most liberal parents, in their initial reaction to the possibility of civil disobedience, have acted as virtual agents of the school authorities. As a consequence, practically every student who is considering civil disobedience is now faced with the prospect of "double jeopardy" - that is, of being punished by his parents as well as by the school authorities.

It is very important that United Students understand why it now finds itself without any substantial support from parents. Most parents in this society have been led to expect a very standardized future for their children. Any threat of a significant departure from that future - involving income, home, family, job, status, education, and neighborhood - is likely to arouse considerable parental anxiety. Moreover, having been educated in the public school system themselves, and now finding the system extremely convenient in the raising of their children, most parents are convinced that it is basically good and are therefore opposed to any major changes. And finally, many parents are now finding themselves being dragged by their teenagers into a battle that they are not prepared to enter on their own initiative, a battle that promises to involve a considerable amount of their time, energy and perhaps even money. In their resulting confusion, parents are finding it much easier to clamp down on their own kids than to tackle the schools that are mistreating them.

Inevitably, it is the students themselves who must wrestle with the problem of getting the parents off their backs and on their sides. I may be run out of town for saying this, but a majority of the parents will probably have to be dragged into the battle against their wills if they are ever to come to their kids' defense. I fully realize that for many students this will mean disobeying their parents and suffering considerable anguish, if not punishment, in the process. But as a matter of conscience, it is ultimately up to them, not their parents, to decide. When Kevin first refused to shave his beard, he had to disobey his parents, and even appear before the school board without them, before he finally succeeded in winning their active support. Many students will not be able to follow their consciences, however, until they are given a great deal more encouragement than they now receive.

In the meantime, the parents deserve to be given a chance. Every effort should be made to inform them of the issues, to convince them of the need for civil disobedience, to suggest ways in which they can help, and to listen to their advice. Perhaps a number of parents will then be more inclined to appreciate what the students are trying to do. But it is certainly tragic that young people must now do the job that older people have so long ignored.

changes...

(continued from page 2)

that assumption. Students have been told that they have self-government. Student government, it is called. When that government is flouted — when student mandates on ranking are ignored, and the power of student government co-opted by administrators, as at the University of Michigan, students learn that the body that is called government does not necessarily have control. And I think that revelation allows people to question whether nicely labelled parts of their larger lives, including the democratic system of government, are not subjects of similar misnomers.

There is another, more important understanding of political process that grows from a student movement. Todd Gilin wrote, in the final issue of the SDS bulletin, an article which bears on this point. He had been doing a lot of speaking on the war. Constantly he was confronted with people who saw the Guerrillas as communists, controlled by the NLF, which was in turn controlled by its cadre leadership. That leadership, in turn, was controlled by the North Vietnamese Communist Party, whose leaders where, in turn, controlled by the Chinese Communists, whose leaders, of course, were part of the international Communist conspiracy.

Todd came to wonder why this conception of an insurgent political movement was so universally accepted. He suggested that people were applying to a foreign, unobservable situation models from their own lives. In the shop, orders come down from the foreman. And the foreman gets them from the section boss, who receives his from the plant manager, who gets his in turn from further up the line. In schools, pupils follow what the teacher says. She is backed up by the division supervisor, who is in turn backed up by a principal. In the democratic party, in Chicago or many other large cities, the party appears in the same light. A fellow shows up at the polls and is greeted by his friendly ward leader. The ward leader, the month before, had sent word up the party machinery which eventually sent down orders for a job in the country clerk's office for our friend's brother-in-law. And today, the ward leader hands our fellow a list of numbers — who to vote for — which in the same way were handed down the party machinery from those people in the smoky room who make the decisions.

People in our society live out their lives in authoritarian situations — in schools, jobs, politics. And so when they must confront unknown situations, they can conceive of them only in the models they have for their own lives — even if they have never articulated, in fact might deny the applicability of those models to their own lives.

What does a student movement show those involved about the nature of insurgency? It demonstrates that people can act on their own, without orders from the top. It, like other insurgent movements, gives people a new model in which to understand the actions of others.

If the implications of Todd's notion are applied to the building of a movement, they suggest that people will only understand insurgency abroad — and hence will only be able to request a decent foreign policy for this country — when they have begun to

shape their own lives. And, conversely, students who have begun to shape their own lives in student movements are developing the basis for an understanding of political developments beyond their ivory towers.

We have had more of an impact than to spawn people within the movement with rudimentary political skills. Some have applied those insights to their own lives. They have changed their life-roles. The changes range from the small, almost insignificant, to the symbolically momentous. We have altered the ideas which are the intellectual furniture of some professions. The current generation of political scientists are a new breed — even if they are new breed of a bad cat. Compare them with the political scientists who got their intellectual interior decorating in the early and middle 1950's. They are the ones who are the authors of the current basic texts, the ones who define politicians as 'brokers' or, alternately, as the grease in the gears of the machine. (Those descriptions come directly from a current student at Sacramento State loyal to their tradition.) And they are those who take that definition as both descriptive — where we concur — and prescriptive — where we rebel.

Friends in the academic world have assured me that that more recent additions to the political science establishment at least consider the idea that politicians should represent people. And I think maybe they entertain that idea because of the dissent which swirled around them and, at times, interfered with their studies, dissent both on and off the campus.

A slightly more significant change is the redefinition of the purpose of entire professions. I have a number of friends, former classmates, who are now teaching in large municipal public school systems. They understand that one key element in the education of children is that they learn to question authority, to question not just intellectually but from the depth of their beings. And that understanding gives them an approach to the profession of teachers which is radically opposed to the prevailing one. That understanding is simply a correlary of ideas that the Negro and student movement have centered on: people are capable of living free from external authority, of making their own decisions.

Still more significant is the creation of new professions. One, for instance, is that of institutional muckraker. It may be a profession which is simply revived after a long hibernation, but the best current practitioners have an insight which sharply distinguishes them from the most reknowned American clan which rose at the turn of the century. For this new breed may take an entire institutional component of the society, such as, for example, hospitals, and show not simply the horrors perpetrated on patients, but how the basic concepts and forms which govern hospital care produces institutions which view, and treat, the sick not as patients but as subjects upon whom to develop new ways of treating diseases (not treating people?)

These changes, these re- and new definitions seem to lead to change, if they lead that way at all, only in the very, very long run. Mr. America may learn a little more about power in poli-sci. Children may more ably question authority, and think their own felt needs common to others. We may have in detail that analysis of the way today's society mistreats the people who live in it, and have thereby the words to formulate demands and the knowledge of where to point them. These changes may not lead to change at all. They may only shore up the dike against the flood, unable to prevent the rain.

The problem is that these redefinitions and new roles do not organize, or even specify an agent to bring change. Yet the movement, and the student movement, is in fact producing people prepared to organize. Part of the staff of JOIN, organizing poor Appalachian whites in Chicago, came to organizing through a student movement. They came beyond a rudimentary understanding of power and process to see the need for an agent of change, and to shape their lives accordingly. If the student movement continues to free people to take up such lives, it will serve to build a movement for social change.

A student movement enlarges the possibility of dissent, creates an understanding of power and of political process, and changes conception of life role for many in this generation. In so doing it helps build a larger movement.

STUDENT STRIKE CONFERENCE...

(Continued from page 1)

constant reiteration of the 'United Front' phrase becomes tiresome — and I think is dishonest. When the argument in the anti-war movement was that of negotiations versus withdrawal as a slogan, they were unwilling to submerge their own politics in order to maintain "unity", they were unable to refrain from insisting that everyone discuss it. They are always willing to institute "United Fronts" — but on the basis of their own politics! Not that this is necessarily wrong *per se*, but the rationales offered are dishonest.

The CP's youth director in the steering committee advanced what seemed to be a similar argument — that there were different positions on the IL-S and that it wasn't a relevant topic of discussion. The political shit that was going on behind the scenes, as far as I could determine was this: The Du Bois clubs, or at least important sectors of it, came to the conference supporting a separate student mobilization, which would aid them in building the DBC on campus — where they are generally weak, with regional exceptions. When the first meeting of the preparations committee met in Chicago, Kushner and I were astounded by the lack of preparation and preliminary work that had been done previously. Either Bettina was acting in a relatively independent basis in convening the conference, or the local CP and DBC's had few resources available to devote to it.

The YSA supported a mobilization maintaining a student character, but with a great emphasis on linking up with the April 15 Spring mobilization. The continuations committee office was moved to New York, partially because of YSA-SWP fears that an office in Chicago would be CP dominated and partially after consultation with SDS people who agreed that in light of the NC action it wouldn't be too cool an idea to maintain an office where the present one was — in the same building as the SDS NO. As a concession to SDS people and as a means of encouraging local SDS participation in the April 8th week, and the Spring mobilization, the conference passed a resolution encouraging local solidarity de-

monstrations with the April 15 mobilization.

Some analysts have theorized that the YSA's motivation for the united front tactic, the attempt to keep radical politics to a minimal extent in the calls for national actions, and their great interest in the Spring mobilization stems from their orientation *vis a vis* labor, which some seem to think is one of regarding SANE as the legitimate "cover" in this period for trade union peace activity, and indeed as an opening wedge for radicalization. Because of this, and their generally stated belief that the war can be ended through pressure politics activity, they attempt to limit the discussion of class aspects of the war, or it's imperialist character. The theory that the war can be ended without a general radicalization of the American working class, which is implicit in the "Bring the troops home now!" single issue approach is a negation of the YSA-SWP's generally expressed position (at least *within* the left) of opposing coalition politics and entering or attempting to influence bourgeois parties (ie. Democrats and Republicans).

The second issue of the "Bring the Troops Home Now Newsletter", founded and sup-

ported largely by the YSA, carried an article by Jens Jensen, in which he said "If you think it is time to make converts for Christianity, socialism, or the SPCA . . . then God bless you. But if you want to end the war, forget all your personal sectarianism. You will have a better chance then of promoting it later." This sort of perspective, in my mind, implies that they are suggesting that radicals hide their politics, engage in mass work of a moderate and "respectable" character and attempt to form and/or influence coalitions in the Democratic or Republican parties. One certainly is not building for a socialist alternative by forgetting the "personal sectarianism" of making converts to socialism!

These questions, in terms of tactical considerations might or might not be principled questions. Consideration of this approach might, in fact, find it to be the correct one in this period, although I seriously doubt it.

But SDS kids should understand the real argument behind the YSA's present fondness for united fronts and what I would call the basic dishonesty of their argument. I have related all that I heard, some of it undoubtedly being rumor and innuendo.

But it is best that accusations such as these come out into the open, so that the YSA can answer them. If this analysis of present YSA strategy and politics is not accurate, let's find out where. But let's bring the real political arguments into the open, and not hide behind the mask of real or imagined divisive differences.

The conference ultimately rejected the anti-IL-S provision. One interesting aspect of the conference was no apparent disunity in the DBC over the question of the spring mobilization, and indeed a number of questions, some DBC members arguing that it was not worth the expense and trouble of sending 30 kids from Minnesota to Washington or New York twice a year at an expense of \$3,000, and that such effort, money, and time should be spent organizing on the local level.

In conclusion, I'd just like to say that SDS should be careful in the coming period about just who and what it enters into coalitions and united actions with. United fronts are fine, at times, but my real hope for SDS is that we can organize openly and honestly, on the basis of our POLITICS, a movement to change this society. The building of a strong cohesive political left with a theoretical understanding of American imperialism, a principled stand against coalition with the "two" parties or their cohorts, and an insistence upon projecting it's politics into the community at large will interconnect the goals of both working to end the war and building the movement which must ultimately take power in this society. In the words of A. J. Muste: "like Abraham and other men of faith, we do not want to stay in or go back to the City — which is all we are, alas, familiar with and which is doomed.

This is the one temptation we must not succumb to. It is better to go out, not knowing whither we go, precisely because the city of peace and fraternity which we seek has yet to be built and must not be like what we now know and can readily describe." I would pose an analogy between the two cities and the two movements — the old and new left. Still searching for direction, we are nevertheless headed in the right direction and away from the idolatrous city.

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