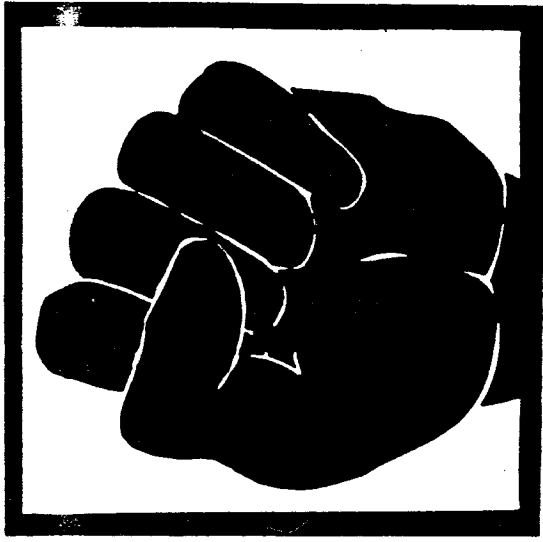


SOS:101 FROM THE INSIDE

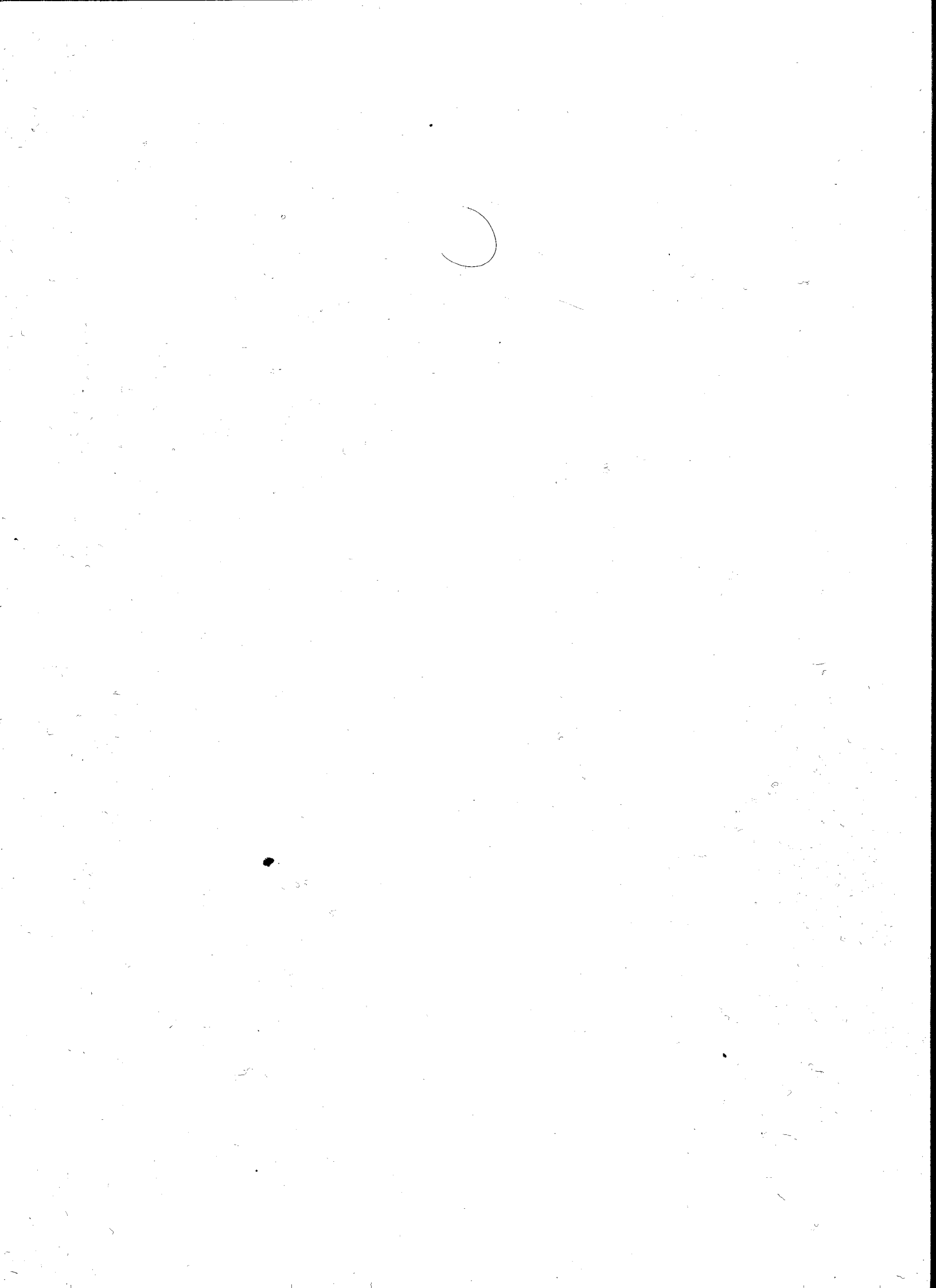


DENNIS O'NEIL
FOR THE STUDENT COMMISSION
OF FREEDOM ROAD
SOCIALIST
ORGANIZATION



PIRATE PRESS

philadelphia



Organization & Tactics

The movement will outstrip the level of organization, but organization is indispensable for building the struggle and maximizing the gains.

Two particular problems that arise when organization is absent or weak: the enemy, the media in particular, get to determine the terms of the struggle; the tactics, even the leadership; and backwards patterns from capitalist society as a whole are free to replicate themselves, like the assumption of leadership by educated white males.

Slow, patient work lays the basis for upsurges. Consider the widest range of tactics, from vigils and letters to the editor right up to building seizures and, uh, uncivil disobedience. When the struggle is hot, don't be too timid.

Student activists should try to build multi-national organization, but white students should understand and RESPECT the need of minority students to develop nationality-based forms. Build alliances.

Consciousness

The consciousness of individual activists and the movement itself tend to proceed from a view of perfecting America to one of fighting U.S. imperialism and transforming society, from reform to revolution.

The student movement can't, and can't afford to, exclude revolutionaries and communists, but folks should keep an eye on the agenda and behavior of organized groupings in their midst.

The tasks of the student movement include not only building struggle and developing analysis, but constantly broadening the struggle and promulgating new analysis.

Don't slam the door behind you.

SDS | From 101 | the Inside

by Dennis O'Neil

LESSONS OF SDS

Students & Society

Students can make big changes in the world, both as a social force in themselves and as a starter motor for other forces in society.

The student movement is at its strongest when it's in alliance with other strata and sections of society.

Student radicals can draw nurturance from progressive aspects of mass culture, and the culture of resistance they help develop.

The Student Movement

Students move around big social issues.

Students move around moral questions and ideals, including the view that the university should serve knowledge and the interests of the people, not the ruling class.

Students move as well around their own self-interests, which more often than not are opposed to those of the powers that be.

But when these elements come together, as when the draft was extended to college students during the Vietnam war, the movement reaches its broadest range.

Twin errors in this regard arise again and again in the student movement: abandoning the campus for struggles in the "real world" and focussing narrowly on "student power" issues.

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Thanx to Cammy-cam, the Chipster, Erk, and Long Tom.

student movement of today. You can trace linearly the descent from SDS through '70s activism in groups like the Attica Brigade right up to the Progressive Student Network. A lot of the things you do, you do either because you've studied, or because it's the received wisdom embodied in the student movement and in organizations like the PSN. The tactics—from the first building seizure until it became a major tactic—took us three years. Now, people know. If the struggle is at that level and you've got the forces, people grab a building. That's a lesson people have learned. Like in Madison, people said, "What, the university already divested? Isn't there a state capital building here? They haven't divested. . . ."

Those are some of the victories of SDS, and here are some of its lessons.



As a public service, and a convenience to you, the reader, the publishers are including *Lessons of SDS* in a handy "klip-out" format. It is typeset in a larger point size for ease of reading, even in conditions of low light.

SDS 101

Introduction

Since the upsurge in the student movement of the 1960's, students all over the country have continued to organize and resist the powers that be on their campuses and off the campuses. While the movement has ebbed and flowed at different periods of time, it has more or less maintained itself since the Vietnam War era. As people graduated and otherwise left the campuses, new activists came forward. But some of these students who left the campuses became active in other movements, and some became revolutionaries who continue to support, work with and sometimes participate in the student movement.

This pamphlet is the product of the Student Commission of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, a merger of three revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organizations in the U.S. Many members were once active on campuses all over the country and helped to create the Student Commission, maintain and build it and give guidance to the students in the present period. The Student Commission of FRSO consists of some of the best, most committed student activists in the movement today, and the revolutionary perspective these activists bring to the movement has proved invaluable.

This pamphlet is an edited version of a lecture on the lessons of the student movement at the UW-Madison in the fall of 1986 given by FRSO member, Dennis O'Neil.

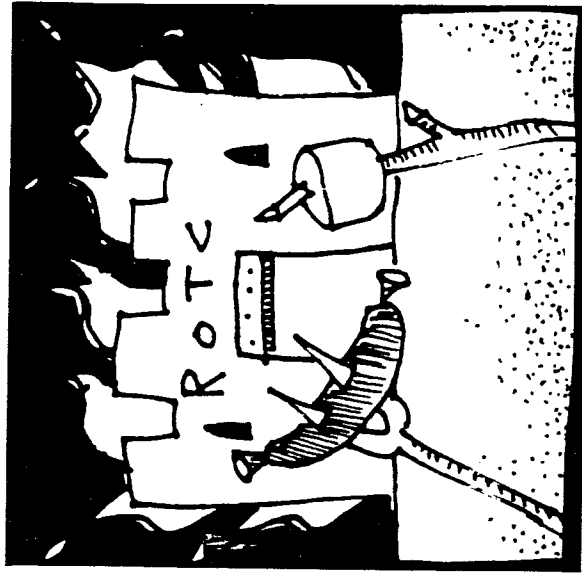
The discussion that followed the presentation was a response to questions faced by student activists today about where the movement comes from.

where the movement has been, what has worked, what hasn't, what are the mistakes and what are the lessons for student organizing in the 1980's and beyond. Unsatisfied with mainstream media attempts to interpret this history, students turn to veterans of the movement who understand the importance of and the role of students in helping to create the basis for revolutionary change. The socialist revolutionaries of the FRSO are ready and able to answer many of these questions.

Through learning our history, we begin to see that the student movement is strong today, although it faces many difficulties and challenges, and has the potential to grow into a real force in transforming U.S. society. While we have much to learn about the student movement of the 1960's we have to reject such notions as "creating the new SDS" or "going back to the 60's." And we should argue against being characterized as hippies or "left-over" 60's radicals.

We are well organized, and we have the benefit of learning directly from those who were involved before us—their failures and successes, the mistakes and the lessons. We need to know where we're from and how we got to where we are from a Marxist-Leninist perspective before we can effectively build today the movement of tomorrow. We hope this pamphlet, second in a series of three FRSO Student Commission pamphlets, is a start in that direction.

Kris Penniston
Student Commission,
Freedom Road Socialist Organization



IN THE FIRST
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The student movement played a big role in ending the Vietnam war, in making it impossible for the military to prosecute it. The Vietnamese obviously did the main thing, but the anti-war movement and the student movement were an enormous ally. And the U.S. military is still damaged as a result. Read interviews with the Pentagon. They say "We don't want to go to Nicaragua. Not unless there's national unity." It's the Reagan ideologues who want to invade, saying it'll just be a few advisors for a year. The Pentagon is much more cautious.

The women's movement may be the movement least recognized for its effects, but the one that has arguably created the broadest, deepest changes in American post-war society. And many of the germs of the women's movement came from within SDS, while many of the leaders were trained and developed in SDS, struggle both against sexism in society and internally in the group.

Finally there are many individuals and groups who came out of SDS and continue to struggle for a revolution, for socialism in the United States. A lot of local trade union leaders, community leaders, theoretical types, Left activists of all kinds—a body of organizers which was trained by SDS—are still out there doing the best they can to change this country.

The heritage is there in a number of ways, not the least of which is the

200 campuses shut down, and meetings held in many more. A couple days later of course the kids were shot at Kent State. People got beaten up in New York by construction workers who were paid to leave their jobs and do it. But students were not intimidated. It just upped the level of struggle hugely.

It was the thing people had dreamed of a few years before—a total student strike. Nixon pulled out of Cambodia early. The universities were falling over themselves giving away concessions: you want a free campus, great; you want to appoint professors, fine; you want open admissions, you got it. We won all kinds of stuff as a result of the May upheaval. They were giving away the store because they were scared to death.

It kept on. On May 14 at Jackson State College in Mississippi, white police opened fire on a crowd of Black students, murdering Phillip Gibbs and James Earl Green. More students killed, and more struggle resulted. And this was not little struggle. In College Park, Maryland, people took over U.S. Route 1 and blocked it for two days, letting no traffic through. There's a major highway in Vietnam to Saigon called Highway 1. So the slogan in Maryland was "Highway 1, Highway 1, take Saigon and Washington."

The first week of May, 1970, thirty ROTC buildings burned down around the country. Thirty of them! Several were fairly collective efforts: you had a couple thousand people out there with weiners and marshmallows saying, "Hey, go for it!"

And in the midst of this, there was no SDS. SDS had made this possible, had created the conditions, but there was nothing left to lead it.

The upsurge fell apart. The universities co-opted it. Administrators said "O.K. . . . everybody gets an A, no finals, everybody go home, see you in the Fall, get a summer job. A lot of tricks were used that could have been seen through and resisted if SDS or some organization had been there. Much greater advances could have been made.

Despite that setback, the victories of SDS and of the '60s student movement are still with us. Open admissions still exist on a lot of campuses, even though the policy is constantly under attack. Minority and women's studies programs also still exist, also under attack. Black students who struggle today against a wave of racist attacks are standing on the shoulders of those who went before them. Reform of the university and change of its character has occurred, like the removal of the in loco parents crap. Colleges all over this country used to have no blue jeans rules. I'm not lying, it was bad.

SDS From 101 | The Inside

This pamphlet focuses on the history of SDS. SDS was far and away the largest organized form taken by the white student movement during the period of the '60s. Very conveniently, it was technically founded in 1960 and fell apart in 1969, so it covers the decade nicely. SDS' history has a lot to say not just about the overall development of the student movement but also about "the movement" as a whole during that period. And since I was in SDS I can speak a little more authoritatively about that experience.

I should mention here the definitive book on SDS, called *SDS*, by Kirkpatrick Sale. He was never in SDS, but he did bookoo research. It's flawed in any number of ways, but it is the definitive work for people who want to know what happened to SDS.

Why think about SDS at all? The point is not for today's student activists to feel bad that SDS was such a giant thing and the student movement now is not as strong. And the point is not that we must set ourselves the task of building a new SDS. History does not work like that. Movements change and develop, they affect the conditions which brought them into being, and when the conditions no longer exist for them to play a role, they change again or tend to fall apart. That's what happened to SDS. There are a variety of conditions which existed when SDS came into being which don't exist now. So even if people wanted to, there's no way to replicate the experience of the '60s.

I want to single out some important preconditions to those events of the '60s. The first is that aging types like myself are, more than today's students, children of the American Century. We grew up in the baby boom. We grew up in the 1950s, a period with which you are probably familiar from your television viewing of "Leave It To Beaver" and "Ozzie and Harriet" reruns. That really was white America's prevalent self-image—maybe not quite so white bread, simplistic and stupid, but close. We grew up in a period when U.S. imperialism was far and away the dominant power in the world, and the country was very rich because of that position. Let me put in the obvious and nearly ritual caveat: whole sections of the American population were totally untouched by this prosperity, especially Black people and other oppressed nationalities, and the great majority never got more than some crumbs, relatively speaking. It was an historically anomalous period, lasting from 1945 to 1970 or so, leading into our present-day economic, political and social stagnation and turmoil.

Those of us who grew up in that—who grew up white and not starving—thought that was the norm. It was all we had ever known. So our views were very much colored by that kind of America, an America of great prosperity and promise.

The second thing is simple demographics—the baby boom. The birth rate started going up in '45 or so and makes this bulge in the graph: that's us, the pig in the python. As far as I know, we are the largest generation that has ever been produced in the United States. And in addition, it was produced under these specialized conditions of prosperity and relatively unchallenged U.S. world dominance. So we had a very strong generational identity. This again is not quite the same situation faced by students today. You can pick on your parents for not having bred more in the '60s so there would be more of you, but it's too late.

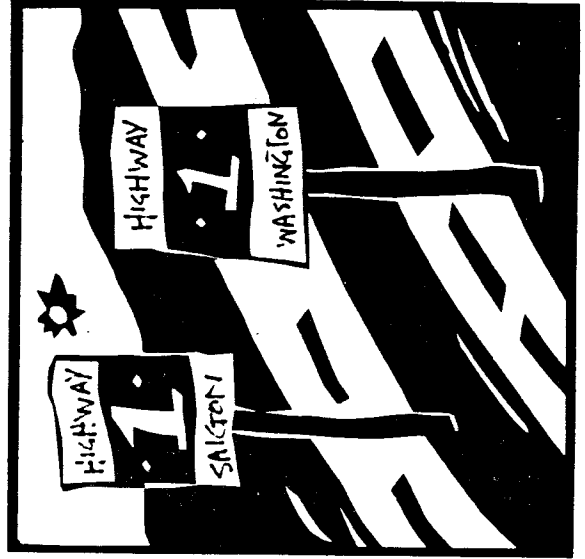
The third thing that's very different is the Vietnam war. There are now classes on college campuses, they've got the Nam comic book, Paul Hardcastle's song "19," and so on: there's a lot of interest in Vietnam. It's hard to describe how important that was, but the schism in American society that arose as a result of the Vietnam war went deeper and broader than any split in the American body politic since the Civil War. It was massive and affected everyone's life. Everyone had opinions on it—not set opinions, and often conflicting opinions in the same person. It affected how everybody in America thought about the country, the world and often their own lives. The struggles of today—Star Wars, anti-apartheid and so on—are extremely important, but they do not have the same effect among the American people

and other oppressed nationalities were fighting and dying. That was what it meant to be a revolutionary, and they had to put themselves in that kind of position where they were fighting and risking death, or they were not real revolutionaries.

The other group coming out of the split, RYM II, also basically left the campuses. They went to small cities, organized working class youth, took jobs in plants, built collectives, ran local underground newspapers, and became the core of a lot of the communist organizations that formed in the '70s, a couple of which our group, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, is descended from.

The PL SDS was run as a total front group. It was a dud, and it fell apart. They technically had the name because the others dropped it as they left the campus, but it meant nothing.

The irony came in May, 1970. There was a big demonstration in New Haven, Connecticut to free Panther leader Bobby Seale. About 20-25 thousand people were there on May Day weekend. The day before the demo, Nixon invaded Cambodia. The rally put out a call nationwide to campuses for a student strike. There were three slogans: U.S. out of Cambodia and Vietnam; end campus complicity with the war machine; free Bobby and all political prisoners. Within a day there were something like



universities, fearing they'd get bought off. What you were to do is ally with campus workers. I was doing work at this time at Taft High School in the Bronx. I could just see me going out and telling kids, "Well look, we're not going to try and get you into college, you really don't want to do that. Why don't you get a job in the cafeteria, then we'll unite with you and support your struggle." This was very racist.

Early in the convention it became clear PL had a lot of votes. RYM had already had internal splits, but united to oppose PL, and brought in the Panthers to strengthen their case. In the course of his speech, the Chicago Panther spokesman ran in more explicit terms the 'girls say yes to boys who say no' position on the role of women in the revolution. His expression was "Pussy Power"—outright in those terms. The place went up; things were not where they were at a few years before. The women's movement had grown. Many of the best women leaders and activists in SDS had already started to leave the organization to work in outfits like Redstockings and New York Radical Feminists, the earliest groups of the revolutionary feminist movement in this country. Nobody was about to go for this kind of remark, and the hall erupted into a mad house. PL had a fairly terrible line on the women question, which was that only stable monogamous relationships between persons of different genders leading rapidly to marriage and reproduction of new little workers is representative of the true proletarian cause. But, on the other hand, they knew Santa Claus when the Panthers came down the chimney and handed them the convention on a platter. So they started shouting, "Fight Male Chauvinism." Everything exploded.

RYM people, realizing they were in the minority, adjourned to another room and threw PL out of SDS. Because PL had more votes, there was no other way you could do it. I should mention that only two groups were ever thrown out of SDS, and both were essentially around issues of racism. The other was the Labor Committee of New York SDS which supported the racist 1968 New York City teachers' strike against community control. You may recognize the name of their leader, Lyndon LaRouche. So SDS had a fairly good record on who got bounced.

What was left of SDS? The RYM forces immediately split. Half became Weathermen, who went out to organize fighting white youth in the belly of the beast. And when the youth didn't rally around quickly enough, the group fell into symbolic terrorism—blowing up men's rooms in major imperialist institutions. This happened, in my opinion, largely out of the politics of white guilt. Vietnamese were fighting and dying. Black people



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as did the Vietnam war.

So these three factors, the post-war era of U.S. world domination and prosperity, the baby boom, and the Vietnam war were some of the specialized conditions which were important in determining what happened in the '60s, and again show why you can't just replicate that decade out of an effort of will.

Another crucial element that was a precondition for SDS was the civil rights movement. I bring this up separately because, although connected to the other factors, it is more than a specific feature of a relatively short historical period. The long struggle of Black people for survival, for equality, for justice and for freedom has been the main motor of popular struggle and social progress in the U.S. again and again and again since the 1600s. The exclusion of Black people in the North from the general prosperity and the destruction of Southern family agriculture which helped make that prosperity possible both fueled the Black upsurge in whose shadow SDS grew up. During the late fifties and early sixties, the main form that upsurge took was the civil rights movement in the South, while the late '60s saw the urban rebellions of the North. Throughout the history of SDS its development would be led and conditioned by developments in the Black Liberation Movement.

You can trace the history of SDS, if you want to start at any one time, to the very beginning of the 1960s: February 19, 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Four black college students sat down at a Woolworth's lunch counter. They each ordered a cup of coffee. They were not served. They said they would sit until they were served their cup of coffee. This of course triggered the famous sit-in movement. Within a month, 30 campuses throughout the South had had similar demonstrations. Things took place in the North as well where chains, Woolworth's among them, had racist hiring policies even if they'd serve anyone who sat at the counter.

More than anything else, this was the first blow in the student movement that was to come. Around this time, there was a bizarre little adult left grouping called the League for Industrial Democracy. It was a bunch of cold war socialists, people who thought you had to line right up with the United States government against the Soviet Union, that the Cuban revolution was a horrible development, and so on. But they said they wanted socialism. They had a youth group called the Student League for Industrial Democracy. In 1960 that group changed its name. Some of the kids in it, and there were not many, didn't like the adult group that much, thought they were a little off, a little ridiculous. Also the name was a problem—wandering around campus talking about industrial democracy in 1960 did not get you anywhere.

So they shifted gear a little and called themselves Students for a Democratic Society. The people in it focused on this student-based eruption of anti-segregation struggles in the South. They said "that's what we're going to do." And they did. People went south in the civil rights movement. People organized support for it in the Northern campuses and the group grew. In a couple years it had maybe 12 campuses, and probably several hundred paying members by '62 or so. For the most part it was at small, elite colleges like Oberlin and Bard, Ivy League schools, and some of the loftier state colleges like the University of Wisconsin at Madison for example. It tended to be grad student types who were reflective thinkers about how society was going.

The Port Huron Statement of 1962 (an edited version of which was recently reprinted in *Socialist Review*) was SDS's unity statement. It said, "We need to build a new left wing in United States politics." This was undeniable, because in the 1950s there wasn't any left wing to speak of in U.S. politics. Adlai Stevenson, a very mild liberal Democrat, ran against Eisenhower in 1956 and got chewed right up.

mation of society from the campus. SDS split into two factions. One was called RYM, Revolutionary Youth Movement, while the other was WSA, Worker-Student Alliance, which was PL. WSA said that the main thing students should do was unite with workers, if they could find some to do it with, and support strikes and the like. But it was an off-campus focus for the most part. Same with RYM, which said, "Let's organize a revolutionary youth movement, college kids are part of it, but mainly let's go get working-class kids—high school students and the youths on the corner with the six-pack." The 1968 Chicago experience was important here. It showed that adolescents do have a lot of contradictions with the system.

Now Sale's book SDS focuses way too much on the national leadership and how they became the revolutionary communists who outstripped the rank and file. In fact, in chapter after chapter, the core of SDS—which was thousands of people—became communist. Inside our SDS chapter at NYU Uptown we had sort of a mini-collective called "Cadre," an impressive sounding name. We really didn't quite know what it meant, but it sounded "bad." We studied the Manifesto, Mao, and did other things you do if you think revolution is around the corner.

At the same time, huge numbers of people were left behind while we were running around preaching the coming proletarian revolution and waving Mao's Little Red Book. It was slamming the door with a vengeance. A lot of people who even thought the problem was the whole system of U.S. imperialism found this last little bite hard to get past the old epiglottis. So we became sort of "core cadrified".

This then was the contradiction: there was a crying need for a mass, radical student organization, but the activists who made SDS go needed something else. We needed revolutionary organization that built the struggle in every section of society. And because there was nothing else out there, because we had been cut off from the revolutionary tradition in this country by McCarthyism, by the collapse into liberalism of the old CP, and by the blanded-out fifties, we tried to turn SDS into that kind of revolutionary organization. It couldn't be both things, and soon enough it was neither. It was nothing. Everything fell apart within a matter of months.

At the Chicago SDS convention in June, 1969—the last one—PL packed the house. Kids of millionaires in the group chartered planes and flew in people from their strong base areas. At this point, they were pushing a particularly odious line called the "campus worker-student alliance." This included rejecting the idea of open admissions for minority youths into the

whites, didn't much want to work with them, and didn't want them in the groups. Now here were some young, gutsy, thoroughly revolutionary Black people who said, "Yeah, let's make some alliances, let's work with SDS." This was done particularly by some of the more politically conscious types like Fred Hampton in Chicago. So that was a factor in the core of SDS becoming communist. A bad side of this development was the white chauvinist tendency of SDS to declare the Partners the enemy of the Black nation and downplay or ignore the need to support a range of forces in the Black Liberation Movement, and to understand its overall character.

The final factor was Progressive Labor, which had come in at a time when SDS was overall radical, rebellious, even sort of socialist. But PL came in and said "We're communists, we're Marxist-Leninists." It was a breath of fresh air. People thought maybe it wasn't so terrible after all, and decided to check it out. On the other hand, their politics were terrible, just awful. I'll itemize in a moment. People found that in the struggle against them, they had to learn. They had to be able to say, "Yo, you say you're Marxists, you say you're scientific socialists—this is hogshit. You're making this stuff up. It's wrong." In the course of the struggle against them, a lot of us developed into revolutionary socialists, communists, Marxist-Leninists, whatever.

A quick itemization shows PL's increasingly awful politics. Vietnam: PL was against the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese took aid from the Soviet Union which PL at that point said was not socialist, was an enemy of the world's people, etc. They used to talk about something called the Moscow-Washington-Hanoi axis! It doesn't work like that. The Black Liberation Movement: they said racism was bad, but Blacks were not oppressed as a nation or a national group. They were sort of oppressed as workers and specially oppressed, but all nationalism was reactionary. All forms of Black people uniting themselves as Blacks, organizing separately, were reactionary. This didn't go down too well in SDS. PL also had this thing about the working class which was good, but was done in a very dumb and tailist way. Socially and culturally they were assholes. They were anti-gay, they didn't smoke dope, they said everybody should have their hair about a quarter-inch long, even if you were on campus. So struggling against them was one of the things that developed us towards Marxism.

We come to the demise of SDS. A lot of things were pushing activists away from campuses, particularly this whole idea that the revolutionary struggle was happening, and damn, we had to get off the campuses and do it out there. We knew that you couldn't effect a revolutionary transfor-

The second thing they emphasized was something they called participatory democracy. They said they believed in democracy and democratic institutions, but as practiced in the United States, they were a bit of a fraud. Everyday people didn't have much input into how the system was run, into the decisions that affected their lives, so SDSers wanted to create a model of democracy in which people participated. They wanted improved democracy.

Another important aspect of the Port Huron Statement was the view of universities as a force for social change. If the progressive grad students on their ways to being professors could wrest control of the universities, they could make them incubators for this new left and for the participatory view of society.

Again, people in SDS were very actively participating in the civil rights struggle in the South, in SNCC (the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), and in something called the Mississippi Summer, a multi-group effort including SNCC, CORE, SCLC, and NAACP which sent people down to organize for voting rights, other democratic rights and against segregation. In the early '60s, SNCC was the most important student group in the country. It had chapters in Southern schools, especially traditionally Black colleges, and to be in SNCC really meant taking part in voter registration

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and other civil rights organizing in the South. Elsewhere campus groups called Friends of SNCC were formed to do education, raise funds and recruit volunteers for the organizing work.

The thing to highlight here is that the basic vision of people in SDS was in keeping with the years—the early Kennedy years. They were way to the left of Kennedy, but they had a view which essentially bought the American dream. It said there were flaws in America, it was not as advertised, it was not the wonderful democracy it was billed as being, and their vision was to fight and create a left wing movement that would make the country live up to its ideals. By and large, the student movement historically starts out at that level, particularly for individual activists. Something goes wrong, something that outrages people. Yet they start with the idea that things are basically functioning, but just not living up to their billing. So they fight for society to live up to its promise.

Another lesson comes up early on in SDS. By 1962-63, people started saying if they were going to transform society, this thing about transforming the universities wasn't enough. We have to go out into the "real world," people said, off the campuses. SDS did. There was the ERAP, the Educational Research and Action Project. It consisted of particularly committed SDSers from several campuses who went and lived in poor communities, mainly in Northern cities like Newark, Chicago, St. Louis, and also Appalachia. They moved into dirt poor communities and said "We're going to organize poor people, a multi-national movement of poor people against these conditions we're discovering exist."

Two things need to be said about ERAP. One is that it was mainly a flop in its avowed purpose. The several pilot projects didn't spark a broad, multi-national movement of poor people resisting the system and demanding better conditions. Most of the people in it wound up back on campus a few years later doing student organizing.

The other thing is, it wasn't a total flop. People in those local projects learned a great deal about the society and became a good deal more cynical about the American dream, actually having lived in its belly for awhile. It also laid some roots. I don't know how much you follow Chicago politics, but recently Harold Washington, the independent Black mayor, won a majority on the city council after it had been controlled by the Democratic Party machine for quite some time. You can trace some of the electoral activity that happened there and won that victory all the way back to the 1963 and '64 ERAP project. There's a line that goes through that community organ-

tionaries, but communists. Clearly there had been a shift in political consciousness. Put in simplest terms, we had become revolutionaries, and we needed the science of making revolution, which was embodied in the theory and history of Marxism and Leninism. There were a number of factors in this new leap. One of them was that we thought a revolution was coming, not in three months or a year, but probably before a lot of us turned forty. If you'd been there, you'd have seen it go from a time of early demonstrations with only thirty people carrying NLF flags, to demonstrations in 1969 where there'd be contingents of several thousand people marching with the NLF flag, the Pathet Lao flag, red banners, and so on. Things were on the up and up. When Martin Luther King was assassinated, 100 cities went up in flames. The big time was coming.

The Vietnamese were an important influence here as well. We supported them and in a lot of ways they were our heroes. These folks in BF Goodrich sandals and black pajamas were taking on and beating the most powerful military machine in the world. They were, guess what, *commies*. We thought, "Say, if it works for them, it could work for us." Secondarily, there was the thing in China called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the early stages, it was this youth rebellion thing. College and high school kids were marching around tearing things up. We said, "Hey, that's us." The Soviet Union played little role for us. We saw them as the moral equivalent of the little old ladies and little old men with the "Daily World" at demonstrations. In fact, the Democratic Convention happening took place shortly after Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia to crush the reforms of the "Prague Spring." A lot of people in Chicago carried signs saying "Czechago." We stood with the Czech people against the invasion, because we stood for freedom from oppression.

The Black Panthers were another influence. Out of the ferment and rebellion taking place in the cities, up came the Panthers. The media, it must be said, did build them up, and it also creamed them. But they became a major force in the country. It started in the San Francisco Bay Area, but young, rebellious blacks all over the country said "Okay, sold. I want a pump action shot gun too, and I'm going to face down the cops and fight for the community." And the Panthers became *commies* of a sort. Not only that, but as far as SDS was concerned, they were about the best kind, because they were Black revolutionaries who saw a role for white revolutionaries. This was very important to SDS. We'd grown up out of the civil rights movement, and the more advanced white radicals understood why the revolutionary forces in the Black community had more or less rejected

The '67-'68 school year was great. Students tore up all over the place, including campuses nobody had ever heard of. You'd hear the University of South Montana at Pumpkin Squat just took over the gym. It was unbelievable. SDS had lost track; nobody knew how many members, how many chapters there were. There was no idea. The movement had totally outstripped organization. But the important thing was, people still identified themselves as SDS and with its politics. If you set up a group on campus, you called yourselves SDS.

Spring '68 was the Columbia Strike. Not that much was done there that hadn't been done already, but a couple of particulars were important. Again, there was the tie-in with the Black Liberation Movement and the Black community. One of the main issues of the struggle was that a gym not be built in the Morningside Heights neighborhood unless access was granted to residents of Harlem, next door to Columbia. The gym couldn't be an exclusive thing; it had to be open to the community. Furthermore, it was the Black student group on campus which initiated the first building occupation and then triggered more by asking white students to leave. The alliance of Black students and (mainly white) SDSers was tense and difficult, but it was crucial to the success of the Columbia struggle. The other important thing was that it was in New York as well, the center of the national media, so everybody was on teevee and in the papers.

The 1968 Chicago Democratic Party Convention that summer was another important event for SDS and for the movement overall. SDS initially wasn't going to Chicago at all, not with the icky Clean for Gene (McCarthy) kids. Then people read things in the papers like how the Chicago police announced they were bolting down the manhole covers within a mile radius of the Democratic Convention so the sewer system couldn't be used to attack it. People realized something heavy was going to come down, so SDS changed its line and sent people to organize among the McCarthy kids.

Something else important happened there. The bulk of the street fighting in Chicago was neither SDS nor the McCarthy kids. It was teenage kids from Chicago, Black and white. Kids were happy to have the change to kick some police butt, and did.

Some good songs came out of it, too. Dave Mason, Lightning Bolt, and "Did You Go To Chicago?" and Gar Moher, and the All-Nighters had a fine one, "What I Did On My Summer Vacation."

It was around this time that the core of SDS became not only revolu-

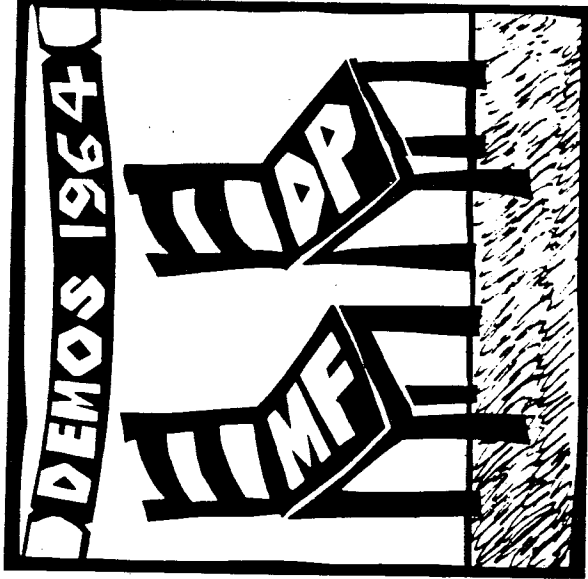
izing to youth groups in the Uptown neighborhood—the Young Patriot Party, Rising Up Angry—to the political organizing that carried those wards for pro-Washington candidates in the last election. The same thing was true in Newark where Tom Hayden, who was active in SDS at the time, did political organizing. (This was before he underwent the political shift which led Abbie Hoffman to say "Tom Hayden gives opportunism a bad name.") A new mayor was just elected in Newark, Sharpe James, who threw out the machine of Gibson, who was himself elected one of the first Black mayors in a major American city with the help of forces earlier mobilized by ERAP. Some of those people stayed active, recently worked on the Sharpe James campaign, and helped bounce Gibson.

So ERAP wasn't a total flop, but in a lot of ways it was a mistake to shift the center of gravity off campus the way people did.

Looking at the broader picture, what was going on in the period '63 to '65? A lot of changes. Kennedy was assassinated. That was a big shock to people. Although there wasn't much conspiracy theory going around then—the tramps on the hillside, the 18 bullet theory—it wasn't seen as an isolated lunatic, either. It was, "Something's wrong in America." This hadn't happened since McKinley, nobody had taken a pot shot at a president, much less succeeded. People were freaked out about it. It created sort of an unease.

In the South during this period, things got pretty nasty. SNCC workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, two white college kids from up North and a local Black man disappeared and turned up a couple weeks later in an earthwork dam. A woman named Viola Liuzzo, a mother from Detroit, was shot while driving a car. It became clear that the perfection of America was going to be a little bit of a longer-term task, and would face some deeper obstacles than people had thought about.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam war was heating up, and that became an issue during the 1964 presidential election. As you may recall, Kennedy's vice-president, a man named Lyndon Baines Johnson, as in "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?," had become president. After some internal struggle, SDS semi-supported Johnson. A lot of people didn't want to, particularly because civil rights forces put together the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which came to the Democratic convention and demanded the Mississippi seats. They were offered a token two seats while the main delegation of the racist party machine from down there would be seated. Their answer was put by Fanny Lou Hamer: "We didn't come all this way for no two seats when all of us is tired." A lot of people broke with the



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stration against the Dow chemical corporation, manufacturers of napalm (you know, the folks who "let you do great things"). It was a good, big, successful demonstration, and it was attacked by campus and local police. They beat the hell out of people. They dragged them off to jail. More people got outraged. There was a total boycott of classes, lasting two or three days and completely successful. It petered out, but the level of struggle was escalating way past what it had been.

A couple of days later, there was something called "Stop the Draft Week" in Oakland, California. The importance of this demonstration was that it went beyond protest. The purpose was to stop the workings of the selective service machine in Oakland. After four days of unsuccessful sit-ins, pickets and so on, on Friday 10,000 demonstrators took to the streets and began a day of running mobile combat with the cops, building barricades. They shut down all of downtown Oakland. It was a model for and a symbol of the shift from dissent to resistance that was taking place in the student movement.

Although the big fall demo of October 21st, 1967 was nowhere near as large as the one in the spring of that year, it was more militant. The demonstration marched on the Pentagon. I was in the middle of the march. There were all these Mobe marshalls announcing "Okay, we're in the Pentagon parking lot now. Anyone who wants to be symbolically arrested can go up to the front where there's a small hole in the fence where Norman Thomas, Dave Dellinger and whoever are going to get symbolically arrested." I got there, and there was a 40-foot stretch of fence torn down with people streaming up the hill toward the Pentagon. And there were the Mobe marshalls saying through bullhorns, "This is a great victory. We can now go up to the ridge and stop there." I caught the drift and went up to the ridge to see that people had smashed through, kept going and were now headed to the Pentagon steps. The Mobe marshalls were saying, "This is a great victory, we can be on the lawn now."

We besieged the Pentagon, stayed there over night, faced by U.S. troops with loaded carbines, and we fronted them down. Nobody was shot, we didn't take over the Pentagon, we didn't end the war. But it was a mass thing, not a handful of people: tens of thousands of people swarmed up there. Twilight came and it was one of those magical moments like at the first rock concert where everybody started flicking their bics and holding them up in the twilight. Only this was draft cards. There were draft cards burning all over this lawn. It was pretty moving. Butane lighters just don't measure up.

Democrats then. But the majority in SDS didn't, so the semi-official slogan was "Part of the Way with LBJ" (the official Democratic slogan being "All of the Way with LBJ").

One of the main reasons for supporting LBJ was that the Republican Party candidate, that nut Goldwater, was going to get us in a land war in Asia. Subsequent events, particularly around Pleiku and the early part of 1965 when Johnson started bombing the north of Vietnam, more or less did in SDS as far as electoral politics went for the rest of its existence. The same went for a lot of us as individuals. I was 14 at the time and worked in this independents for Johnson thing, licking envelopes etc. I reached much the same conclusion, though I didn't know about SDS. Come '65 and the escalation of the war, I said okay, bag electoral politics. We've got to do this some other way. I think that was a general trend throughout the student movement.

Something else extremely important happened during this '63-'65 period. It happened at Berkeley. People probably know about the famous Berkeley student uprising. It's important to remember that—as so much of the student movement did at the time—that started around the question of what was going on in the Black liberation movement, at this time the civil rights movement. People had a table up on the Berkeley campus to raise money for

That summer, the Progressive Labor people in SDS started a summer working project. They were big on the working class. So they got a bunch of kids on campus, said "Yo, cut your hair, buy yourself a lunchpail, get a job in a factory for the summer. See how the working class lives, try to organize." Some people did well at it. A lot didn't. It was sort of a new experience, and folks had very little idea how to go about it. No huge advances in the class struggle developed, but a lot more kids in SDS started thinking about the working class and the class nature of society, started understanding more deeply that there were forces with greater potential for changing the world than students alone had.

By the fall of 1967, the pace of change in SDS, the student movement, the broader movement—which now included civil rights, poverty, all kinds of issues—and the country as a whole, was escalating. Inside SDS, the Vietnam war was still the main thing. The slogan was not "Stop the Bombing" or "Negotiations Now" or anything like that. It was "U.S. out of Vietnam." U.S. imperialism was now the enemy; it wasn't corporate liberalism anymore. We were with the Vietnamese fighting the common enemy. It wasn't because somebody came along and pumped this: view down our throats. It was experience that taught us. We went through the struggle again and again, and that's what people learned.

Women in particular inside SDS were drawing lessons. In the Fall of '67, I think there was one woman leader on the SDS national committee. People had learned from participating in the civil rights movement, the Black Liberation Movement—and suddenly new terms became current in SDS. Male chauvinism. Women's liberation. A term borrowed from other movements, but one which people increasingly clicked to—they said, "Yeah, that's right, that applies." Initially the struggle was just inside SDS for more representation in leadership, more recognition of contributions, less time brewing coffee and running mimeo machines and typewriters.

Even at this level, there was resistance. There was resistance from male leaders who didn't like this, because things were working well for them. There was resistance from women who hadn't seen the light yet and argued, "Sure, all this is true, but it's a side issue, the Vietnamese are dying, hey look, cluster bombs, defoliants, napalm. This is not that important." But something had been started, and a tide was in motion that was going to sweep everything before it in short order.

The school year started, October, 1967 at a quaint little school with an SDS chapter, the University of Wisconsin, Madison. There was a demon-

SNCC. The head of the university passed a ruling saying nobody could raise money for off-university projects. Friends of SNCC went ahead and set up one of their tables anyway. Cops came on campus to bust them. Unexpected by anyone, the campus erupted.

The police car where the cops had the guy who was busted (Jack Weinberg, also responsible for the "don't trust anyone over 30" statement), that police car was surrounded for 32 hours. The students wouldn't let them go. Thousands of kids sat down around the car. There was a strike, there was violence, police brutality, arrests, the whole schmeer.

After that, the white student movement in this country was never the same. It was the only sit-in on a Northern campus in that year of 1964. There may have been one or two in '65, in '66 there were maybe a dozen, and after '67 you couldn't even count them. Berkeley was a real trail blazer.

There is a lesson on organization from the Berkeley struggle. If you have a movement with an organization that's very weak, or you have a line against organization, you can run into problems. One of the problems is that the media gets to set your agenda for you.

In the Berkeley struggle, you had some of your cheery anarchist types who said, "Well the free speech movement is fine, but we want total free speech." So they called themselves the foul speech movement, wrote a lot of nasty words on signs—your various motherfuckers and so on—and marched around in front of the TV cameras. We're talking half a dozen airheads having a good time. Whoopee. This made front pages all across the country, and major teevue coverage. It became A Scandal: this is what these kids are really about, what they really want.

They're going to do this to us again and again. We have to be aware this will happen and deal with it. Because the media is a two-edged sword.

Still the coverage of Berkeley helped build the student movement across the country. Kids looked at it and said "God damn, that's right." The critique of the campus offered in the free speech movement struck home: this university is a great big impersonal machine, it eats up freshman and spits them out business administration majors four years later, after having removed their soul and much of their ability to think.

People didn't like that happening to them, and that was part of what factored into the Berkeley rebellion. A lot of SDS critiques started being directed at what they called the multiversity, this giant corporate machine.

The next big change came during April 1965 directly as a result of Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam war. SDS called a national demonstration in Washington, DC. A few things were important about it. It was the first time anybody had called a mass demonstration around the issue of Vietnam. Most Americans still had only a hazy idea of where Vietnam was, which was outside the boundaries of the continental U.S. The war was not yet a big issue.

The second important thing was that SDS said anybody who is opposed to the war and wants the government to cut it the hell out is welcome to participate in the demonstration. Outrage. Scandal. All the liberal and peace organizations had spent the last 20 years as part of a cold war consensus in the United States. Even among opposition forces, excluding communist organizations from participation was standard. The liberals *all* said "Wait, you don't have an anti-communist exclusion clause, and the communists oppose the war in Vietnam." SDS said "Dandy, they can come. That's what the demonstration is about—we're against the war." The liberals said, "But, but, they're COMMUNISTS."

This was not a very frightening thing to people in SDS at that time. The American Communist Party's financial base was fattened by dues-paying FBI agents and generous contributions from Moscow. Exposure to communists was largely to elderly veterans of struggles of the '30s handing out a nerdy paper free at demonstrations and still having trouble getting people to take it, and of course we didn't even know there had been struggles in the '30s, we were so cut off from our history.

So when people said to SDS "but they're COMMUNISTS," it was just not that frightening. People said, "Hey, we're into participatory democracy, they are part of this, they can come to the demonstration."

All support was cut off. SDS had gotten money from the UAW. No more. The senior League for Industrial Democracy cut them off and totally disowned them. Various right wing social democrats, Bayard Rustin and company, were trotted out to attack them. This flopped, of course. They were unable to isolate SDS; in fact they turned the demonstration over to us as a result.

The third important thing about the '65 demonstration was that its organizers developed a good tactic to build it—the teach-ins. They said, "All right, so nobody knows about Vietnam, we'll get the basketball court at the school, invite a bunch of speakers, hey, we'll invite the State Depart-



PLEASE CUT YOUR HAIR,
BUY YOURSELF
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GET A JOB
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to that." SDS called for a strike. There was more activity. More dorm canvassing. More getting up and speaking in classes. They drew up and publicized a detailed strike plan which included plans for an alternative school to go on if the campus struck. By March of '67, the university caved in.

So here we have an example of something that started small, with a fairly unsuccessful counter-exam being handed out, and got big.

In the spring of '67 there were the largest of the pure peace demos in New York and San Francisco. Martin Luther King spoke and came out directly against the war in Vietnam. This was very important—the open alliance of the mainstream wing of the Civil Rights/Black Liberation Movement with the anti-war movement. The more radical and more nationalist wing, SNCC, the Nation of Islam, etc. had already come out against the war. It strengthened things enormously. Although SDS didn't play a big role in the planning and speaking, still everybody's chapter went independently. That was just what you did.

At the end, people felt a little uneasy. It seemed like a dead end. We had hundreds of thousands of people. The crowd was marching past the U.N. while others were still mobilizing to leave Central Park. But it didn't end the war. People said, "Well, let's step this up. We've got to figure out what to do next."

to just go into the gray flannel mold they thought was being prepared for them in the university.

There's another slogan I want to point to here. It's informative because of changes that were to occur at a tremendously rapid rate over the next couple of years. It was a product of the anti-draft movement too. The slogan was: "Girls say yes to boys who say no." This was an indication of how people saw the role of women in the struggle. That was something on its way to changing very quickly.

Let me talk for a minute about a specific example of how things went, at Columbia. This is well before the famous 1968 Columbia eruption. I want to talk about how SDS worked, what they did on this draft business.

When the first ranking exam was held in the Spring of 1966, there was a national SDS campaign. They did a counter-exam, which had a bunch of questions like "Who said we shouldn't get involved in a land war in Asia? Eisenhower, Kennedy, blah blah"—they had six or seven names. The answer was all of the above. So some of it was humorous, and most was factual. It was handed out in front of all these exams. A couple places where people did their organizing well, there was a total boycott of the exams: everybody walked out. But mostly it was a flop. It was a good idea, and people at the exams maybe took it, read it, maybe were slightly influenced, but they took the exam anyway. It hardly threw a wrench into the wheels of the war machine.

But SDSers didn't give up. When they came back to school in the fall of '67, they agitated strongly on the campuses. They said they didn't want the university to report people's class rank to the draft—"We don't want this kind of complicity with the war machine." Again and again this theme of university complicity arises: the university not acting as the kind of university it should be. From work today around Star Wars and anti-apartheid, we know university complicity rings a bell with a lot of students. It certainly did at this time because it was the question of the draft—you might get dragged off.

So the university at Columbia stalled. They said they'd have a student referendum on it. SDS organized like bandits. They had rallies, they canvassed dorms, they went to every floor. It was constant activity. The referendum was like 8 to 1 against the university reporting ranks to the Selective Service System. The university stalled. They said, "Well, now we have to take it up in the student senate, now we have to this, now we have

SDS:
NOT WITH MY
LIFE
YOU DON'T.



ment. We'll invite the Pentagon, they can come in and defend what we're doing in Vietnam. We'll do some homework." They went out and did wicked homework, trained some experts, wrote pamphlets.

This had a big impact: it was a very good tactic. People started learning real quick what was going on in Vietnam. The result was a demonstration where SDS optimistically said there'd definitely be more than 5,000 people, and they might get seven or eight. You know how when you're calling a demonstration and you want to get press coverage in advance, you bogart and say it'll be bigger than you think. Well, at least 20,000 people showed up at that demonstration. Everybody was stunned. SDS included.

The anti-war movement in this country had started for serious and for real. And SDS at that point was in the leadership of it.

I want to add one thing here. A friend of mine named Mike Zweig, an SDS veteran and political economist, recently debated General Westmoreland on Vietnam at Stoney Brook. You know there are a lot of classes on Vietnam and a revisionist history being developed. Westmoreland's whole position is that we won the Vietnam war—you just didn't notice. We won it militarily, but we were stabbed in the back by chickenshit politicians and the weaselly media who played up the Tet offensive as a defeat when we really won it. I doubt many of you are too

influenced by that, but let's get a little clarity. When we had this April anti-war demonstration, two, count them, two, senators had voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution which gave Johnson war powers in Vietnam. 98 voted for it. The media, also, was for the war in Vietnam.

Throughout the history of the anti-war movement there was a continuing struggle about how much you let politicians who had recently seen the light (or the polls) set the tone of demonstrations from the platform. The general and informal SDS line was a non-sectarian one: we said they had a right to participate in demonstrations, but they would have to march at the end because they had come to the anti-war movement after everybody else. This was a little sectarian, but there was a big element of truth to it.

SDS was in the leadership of the anti-war movement in April 1965. By the fall of that year, they had lost the leadership, given it up, abdicated it. Why? A couple reasons.

One thing was our evaluation of the anti-war movement. We didn't see it becoming the force that it did. The line inside SDS, the main trend, was "We're carrying on the struggle now so we can stop the fifth, sixth or seventh Vietnam from now." We knew the U.S. would be engaging in adventures like this, but we saw a very slow, incremental building up of a movement. We didn't see how fast it would erupt as a result of developments.

Another thing was our unclarity about what SDS was. Was it based on the campuses? Was it a peace movement? Was it a multi-issue movement? And so on.

There was also a strong anti-organizational, anti-leadership, decentralist trend within the movement. Many people didn't particularly want a national campaign or even to take on national issues. Many just wanted to do their own thing on their own campuses. As a result, the leadership of the anti-war movement went more towards some individuals and some organized forces. The Socialist Workers Party, the largest Trotskyist organization in the United States, and the Communist Party were very active in building it up, along with other folks such as SANE, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, pacifist groupings and so on. SDS did not play a big role in the organized, formal, national, demonstration-type anti-war movement after this.

While SDS backed out of leadership, the anti-war movement erupted on campuses. In the fall of '65, there were anti-draft protests on dozens of campuses. SDS local chapters had called a lot of them, and probably over a hundred thousand people took part. This was a very good example of

generally the best way to advance their main demands, but it provided enclaves of support and solidarity in the midst of institutions which were racist and overwhelmingly white—except perhaps for the service staff. Even among progressive whites like those in SDS, the underbrush of white chauvinism made it hard to move, hard to function.

Meanwhile, the militancy and rebellious character of the rising Black movement in Northern ghettos changed SDS irrevocably. As the dream of integration proved insufficient to smash the reality of oppression and white supremacy, the vision of perfecting America faded and SDSers began to define themselves in opposition to the "American System." And non-violent tactics learned from the Civil Rights movement gave way to a militancy inspired by the fury and courage of the urban rebellions.

The Vietnam war had run into a little problem at this time—the Vietnamese. They were winning. As a result, more escalation, more bombing, more horror stories, more napalm, more defoliation. The cost in America was high: as Country Joe McDonald put it in "Feel Like I'm Fixin to Die Rag," "Be the first one on your block to have your boy come home in a box." A lot more boys were coming home in boxes. Throughout America, Vietnam had become impossible to ignore. Impossible not to think about. For a lot of people, this thinking took the form of "What's this about, what the fuck are we doing?"

In this context, SDS was part of a giant youth rebellion, which included the "counterculture" and hippie phenomenon, the English Invasion (the Beatles, Stones, Kinks, Who, Yardbirds, Animals etc.), and which occurred throughout the advanced capitalist countries. People started wearing their hair long, even when they didn't have quite enough hair to carry it off. This was the big social context for the movement. SDS people were not that late from anybody else. They did the same things, they listened to the same music, they smoked dope, they drew comfort from this feeling of youth rebellion and rejection. They had a shared generational identity reflecting the corrupt society which had come before.

That rebellion started being expressed again, particularly in the anti-draft movement. When the "We Won't Go" was a big slogan at this time, SDS put out a button that said "Not with my life you don't." This was one of the biggest, best-selling buttons, and people wore them all over. It was both a statement about the draft, and a more generalized statement about how people saw what they were going to do with their lives. They weren't going

SDS took a bit of a wrong turn at this point. I think it made a mistake. People got very heavy into student power kind of stuff. There was a pamphlet called "Toward a Student Syndicalist Movement". The idea was you organize students around being students, around student issues. Tuition hikes, bad food in the cafeteria, struggles to take over the student government—all of which have importance in their own right. But I think this clearly missed the boat on what the student movement was about at this time. So this call went out, but the struggle didn't really go like that. There was a student syndicalist movement in the sense that people had a student power orientation. But mostly they used their power to struggle against the war, against university complicity in the war, the draft, in support of civil rights, even in support of the urban riots that were starting to happen in Black communities. So this student syndicalism sort of fell apart, because it didn't work.

Now let's set the context. We're into the second half of the Sixties, '66, '67. We have ghetto rebellions in Harlem, Watts, Detroit, Newark and so on. The civil rights movement had completely changed its character. As the Black struggle met fierce resistance among whites North and South, a less integrationist and more nationalist current took shape in the Black movement. By '65 or so, white organizers in the South had been told to go back North and organize their own; some whites couldn't understand this, but most tried to deal with it. When the slogans "Black Power" and "Black is Beautiful" began to be raised, a whole new revolutionary dimension was added to the civil rights movement, and conscious Black nationalism became a real moving force.

This development of the Black struggle beyond immediate goals of desegregation, integration and equal rights had repercussions on campus. Black students on most Northern campuses—and there were damn few at this point—began to develop nationalist groups and Black Power groups or to transform social organizations into more activist formations. These groups raised demands for recruitment of minority students and faculty, open admissions, scholarships. Black Studies and an end to the spectacular range of racist practices and traditions to be found on most campuses. These demands were supported by hundreds of SDS chapters. The Black student struggles of the '60s resulted in some of the most important victories of the student movement, victories which have been under attack for the last ten years and remain under attack today.

While a good number of Black students were active in SDS, most Afro-American activists focused their efforts in national forms. Not only was this

how things worked. The war had become a moral issue. What the U.S. was doing in Vietnam was, in ethical terms, nasty. They were killing lots of people, civilians especially, and they were using napalm. It was a big country beating up on a small country.

Then there was the element of self-interest. College students weren't getting drafted at this time, but college graduates were being drafted right pronto. And the war was escalating, with more people being drawn in all the time as the U.S. presence went up to 500, 600 thousand people. So there were big demos on the campuses.

At this point, a pattern was established which still exists today in the United States. You have a big, big spring demo and usually a big fall demo. By now, the issues have changed, it might be Central America, this or that. But pretty much any given year you can count on there being a large demonstration some time in April or May and another sometime in October or November. Sometimes they're called locally in 20 cities, but generally Washington or New York and San Francisco.

Within the fall demonstration in 1965 some new developments took place. People, including SDS members, marched with NLF flags, and that was a large step. They said, "Yo, not only is war icky and killing people not nice and not only is the United States doing a wrong thing there, but drawing the logical conclusion, these other guys are fighting for their country, they're fighting for national independence and liberation. And they're right. We stand with them." It was a scandal. There were 20 or 30 people at this time who marched with the NLF flag.

SDS made a speech at this demonstration. Carl Oglesby got up and spoke way at the end. It was in November, and a lot of people had gone home because it was cold. He said, "We have to name the enemy." And he did: corporate liberalism. This is not necessarily the enemy we think of now, but it was a giant step at that period, because SDS had grown out of American liberalism. Oglesby got up and said that hey, Kennedy was a liberal, and he got us into this. Johnson's a liberal, McNamara is a liberal. All of these people are corporate liberals. They are the enemy. They are who got us into Vietnam, they are who are dragging their feet on desegregation, they are who are preventing real social change in the United States.

A big leap in consciousness was taken in SDS. That speech was reprinted, and it became a most popular document. It went around the country; every chapter had copies and mimed it off. People read it, and studied up on it.

Also at this time there was the start in a mild way of a phenomenon which gets more serious later on: slamming the door behind you. People make a leap in consciousness and then develop an arrogant or contemptuous attitude towards those who haven't made that leap. At that point a lot of SDS people were bone-hard pacifists, against war, fighting, elbowing somebody in the cafeteria line, anything. They started to get a little isolated and were subjected to some contempt, some shit, because there was this new analysis: corporate liberalism, that's the enemy we've got to fight; maybe we're not against the Vietnam war just because war is not nice. It was minor at this point, but it got bigger.

Next thing the ruling class did, they stepped up the draft. They instituted something called the ranking system. If your grades in college weren't good enough, if you didn't pass this special ranking test, sort of an SAT test for all college males over 18, you were in trouble from your draft board which would send a letter of greeting. And you went to get your ass shot off in the Iron Triangle of Khe San or someplace like that.

As a result of this the anti-draft movement swelled. Sit-ins spread, and SDS played a big role in them. There were demonstrations on campuses, and a variety of forms of activity.

Something else interesting happened around this time. There was a student group that wasn't in SDS. It was called the May 2nd Movement. It was affiliated with a communist organization, Progressive Labor. You may be familiar with PL, since they're still around. They dissolved their youth group in order to send people into SDS. They figured having this little sectlet of their own was stupid when there was this big student group with hundreds of thousands demonstrating on campuses. That's where to go to build the struggle. So they went into SDS, and they were very hard working. They built up demonstrations, SDS chapters and so on. At that point the problems presented by this were fairly limited. The problems became severe later on and I'll talk about that.

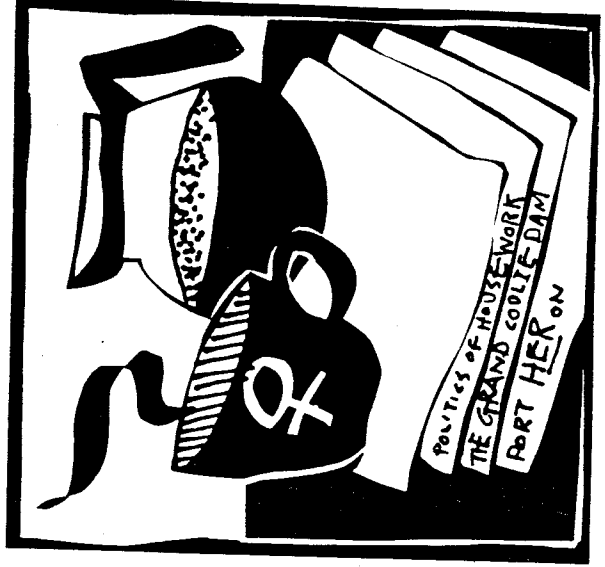
By the beginning of '66, SDS was big. It was on hundreds of campuses, and tens of thousands of students considered themselves members. Many didn't actually send in for their membership cards and pay dues, but they were in SDS. A variety of institutions grew up. There was a newspaper, *New Left Notes*, which came out technically weekly, but really anywhere from once a week to once a month. There was a theoretical magazine starting, *Radical America*. There was a publishing house, REP, the Radical Education Project, which was extremely important. If you root around in the used

book stores, sometimes they have pamphlet sections and you'll find old REP pamphlets. They're fascinating.

There was a pamphlet by Jerry Farber called "Student as Nigger": a highly influential call to high school students to rebel about how they were treated. (The concept is obviously flawed, but revealing. High school students as a group do not suffer the same oppression as Afro-Americans in this society. On the other hand, people identified with and looked for leadership and direction to the struggle of Black people against white supremacy and oppression.)

The first important documents of the women's liberation movement in this country, things people have probably seen reprinted in anthologies (such as Patricia Mainardi's "Politics of Housework"), first came out and were widely circulated as REP pamphlets. They got reprinted again and again. You've probably read Marge Piercy's books, *Vida* and *Woman on the Edge of Time*. One of the first things I know of that she published was a criticism of male chauvinism inside SDS called "The Grand Coolie Damn." An REP pamphlet, it was widely circulated; people grabbed it, ate it up, and fought about it.

There were free university forms. People said, we're just not going to transform the colleges. We'll set up free colleges. It was a time of great ferment.



STRUGGLE INSIDE
SDS: MORE
REPRESENTATION
IN LEADERSHIP,
LESS TIME
BREWING
COFFEE.