

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE STUDENT MOVEMENT THRIVES**

*You say you want a revolution, well, you know we all want to change the world. You tell me that its evolution, well you know we all want to change the world.*

*You say you'll change the constitution, well you know we all want to change the world.*

-The Beatles

#### **UNIVERSITY FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

In April of 1967, UT initiated disciplinary proceedings against six students involved in the anti-war protest held earlier that month against Hubert Humphrey. They were charged with "knowingly and willfully violating an order of the Chancellor." Simultaneously the UT administration revoked SDS official status on campus. In addition, the school called for the arrest of George Vizard, a non-student. Vizard was arrested by Austin police on an abusive language charge stemming from the Humphrey protest. The police brutally arrested him in the Chuckwagon, a cafe and radical hangout in the Student Union. Two others were arrested when they called the police "fascists" due to their treatment of Vizard. UT won a temporary restraining order which prevented the three from being on the campus. The arrestees suffered torn skin (from being dragged on their backs across cement) and one wrenched shoulder.

Of the six students against whom disciplinary action was taken, three were running on the radical slate for student government: Dick Reavis, Alice Embree and Gary Thiher. The others were Tom Smith, David Mahler, and John LaFeber. All were involved in SDS except LaFeber who was chair of the Young Democrats. Although they were charged with willfully violating an order from the Chancellor, they were not in violation of any university rule. That evening, over 250 outraged students and faculty members met to discuss the day's arrests and the implications of the university's denial of students' constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. In attendance were representatives of the UT Veterans' Association (UTVA), the Negro Association for Progress, the Young Democrats (YD), Student Religious Liberals, SDS, and the Graduate Students' Association. Together with unaffiliated persons, they founded the University Freedom Movement (UFM). They set up a steering committee and the eight committees to deal with the following: demonstrations, speakers, finance, distribution, press, organizations, grievance, and faculty contact (Vertical File - Demonstrations, Barker Texas History Center).

On Tuesday, the UTVA held an unauthorized demonstration on the Main Mall, distributing unapproved leaflets beforehand to replicate the SDS incident. An overflow crowd of over 500 gathered on the Main Mall while Embree was undergoing disciplinary proceedings (the Discipline Committee had severed the group into separate hearings and denied due process to the defendants). Many faculty members and representatives of the UFM spoke at the rally denouncing the arbitrary use of power on the part of the administration and the abridgement of the rights to free speech and assembly.

Frank Erwin, chair of the Board of Regents, personally appealed to the crowd not to "create on this campus the situation at Berkeley." Erwin claimed that the issue was not that of constitutional rights but that of the right of the administration to make and enforce

rules, and implied that he would expel troublesome students - "we don't need 27,000 students at this University," (*The Rag*, May 1, 1967).

After her hearing, Embree spoke to the crowd about the need for a student union outside the channels of the administration, criticizing the SA as powerless.

The demands of the demonstrators were: that UT not obstruct peaceful assembly, literature tables, leaflets or the receipt of donations at literature tables; that campus newspapers be under full student control; and that UT not make regulations violating constitutional rights. They also demanded that UT rectify its violations of students' rights by not arming campus police (a week before the Texas Senate had passed bill 162 extending full police powers to campus security personnel), by dropping all charges against the six students, by reinstating SDS and by stating its adherence to the American Association of University Professors' Statement on Academic Freedom for Students. That afternoon, Erwin agreed to the final demand and not to arrest any more students for demonstrating.

On the following day, the newly formed UFM held another unauthorized demonstration. They protested the denial of free speech and assembly and asked for an open meeting with Chancellor Ransom.

Although an administrator gave the UTVA faculty advisor a talking-to, no official action was taken against either UTVA or UFM for holding unauthorized demonstrations. The arbitrary enforcement of the chancellor's order under the circumstance of the Vice President's presence in town and selective disciplining of those disobeying it were obvious. It is also clear that UT could not handle disciplinary proceedings against over a thousand violators of the rule, so it employed the age-old tactic of divide and conquer. The disciplinary proceedings continued.

Thiher wrote in a May 1, 1967 *Rag* article that:

The university has no rule requiring prior approval of meetings on the campus. It has always enforced unfairly what rules exist. Thus, by banning the meeting and disciplining a few of the students who were there, the University has arbitrarily abrogated the rights of students to free speech and assembly.

The reasons for restricting the rights of the sds-ers are fairly obvious. The Legislature of the state of Texas was in session at the time of the ban. Many persons attest to the fact that the legislators were extremely irate at the sds activities [during Flipped Out Week and after] on the campus.... No doubt neither the Legislature nor the President wanted Humphrey to be ill-received in Johnson's home state. The administration of any state university is under the control of the political hacks in the state capitol. In Texas this pressure is much stronger because of the one-party system and the fact that the President hails from here.

## **UFM ENJOYS BROAD SUPPORT**

On Thursday, the Catholic Student Center, which has over the years been supportive of student activists, issued a statement opposing the arming of campus police and calling for UT to exercise restraint and to publish its rules and regulations.

Also that day, the UFM held a press conference and a rally clarifying both its relationship with SDS and its demands. In response to accusations that UFM was controlled by SDS, the UFM spokesperson said that its democratically elected five person

steering committee included one SDS member. UFM issued the following nine demands: 1) that charges be dropped, 2) that SDS be reinstated, 3) adherence to the statement on academic freedom, 4) that rules be both voted on by students and printed and distributed, 5) that non-students be allowed on campus, 6) that official protest be lodged against the police brutality in the arrests of the non-students, 7) that UTPD Chief Hamilton be fired, 8) that a faculty-student review board be established to review campus police actions, and 9) that the Regents refuse to implement any portion of Senate Bill 162 (ibid.).

Conservative students held a small parallel demonstration on Thursday in support of the administration's action. Although this position did not receive much support from students, it was played up in the local dailies.

A meeting between the UFM steering committee and Erwin was set for Monday. UT conceded to form a committee to consider the academic implications of the legal procedures of the discipline committee and the status of SDS; also Chancellor Ransom made an ambiguous<sup>19</sup> statement that "there is no recommendation before the Regents to arm all campus security officers." Illegal protests drawing thousands continued on the campus and at the Capitol for the remainder of the semester despite efforts by the UT administration and the Texas Legislature to restore quiet on the campus. The students were supported by religious groups and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party among others.

## **STUDENTS OPPOSE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

On May 1, the six students were found guilty and received one year probations. In their decision, the Discipline Committee stated that "all six respondents have shown serious lack of respect for legitimate authority and are blamable for not having exhausted all avenues of recourse." In the SA elections the radical slate of candidates was defeated, receiving 20-30% of the student vote.<sup>20</sup>

While students were in the middle of final exams, the Texas House followed the Senate in passing Bill 162 granting campus security personnel "all the powers, immunities and privileges of peace officers" under 'emergency' conditions.

Charles O'Neill and Scott Pittman wrote in regard to the passage of the bill:

Frank Erwin is the Democratic National Party chair and chief of the "governing board" of the University of Texas. Judging from his past actions it can be believed, with only a slight bit of imagination that "unauthorized and undesirable" persons could be those who do not agree with the policies of the Democratic Party. In fact, any group or persons could be declared undesirable because the power to define that vague term lies with Frank Erwin and the Board of Regents. (*Rag*, May 1, 1967, p. 3).

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<sup>19</sup> Later campus security personnel or the UT Police Department (UTPD) would be armed and given full police powers. Although there may have been no recommendation before the Board at the time, Erwin did not state any reservations about the legislation permitting such empowerment of the campus police.

<sup>20</sup> The campaigns of Thiher, Embree and Reavis had been brought to a standstill as they had been embroiled in the disciplinary proceedings. A radical slate was not run for student government again until 1970 when the Yin-Yang Conspiracy would run successfully.

The article cited a state representative as asking "Would this bill allow them to break up demonstrations such as we saw out here in front of the Capitol yesterday?" Following an affirmative, the lawmaker replied, "I'm all for your bill."

Thorne Dreyer wrote of the unfolding of the student movement:

If anything can seem significant in a world where the bomb is hanging from the ceiling and the draft board is lurking in the shadows,...I would have to find it in that weird mixture of love and anger that has shaken students out of their horrendous stupor.

With the blacks and the hippies, the Student Awakening of 1966-67 is the hope for America.... The System is big and tight. But we must remember this: whispers in the academic community are shouts at IBM and the State Department. It is the university that forms the model, that feeds the organization. And as long as the university is a microcosm of that Organization, a model authoritarian structure, things will go smooth. Shall we say the water's getting rough? (*Rag*, May 15, 1967, p. 1).

The notion of student power was becoming fairly widespread. The solidarity exhibited by students during the SDS controversy illustrates this. Around this time *The Student as Nigger* by Jerry Farber was published and distributed in many underground newspapers (including the *Rag*) by Liberation News Service. The essay described students as slaves, forced to follow orders, brainwashed, segregated from the faculty, politically disenfranchised, subjected to a competitive, arbitrary grading system which divides them and often unaware of this oppression. Farber accused the more deeply brainwashed 'good students' of:

swallowing the bullshit with greedy mouths. They honest-to-God believe in grades, in busy work, in General Education requirements. They're pathetically eager to be pushed around.... These are the kids for whom every low grade is torture, who stammer and shake when they speak to a professor, who go through an emotional crisis every time they're called upon during class.

As a proscription for emancipation, Farber called on students to tap into their "immense unused power" by:

insisting on participating in their own education.... Students could discover community.... They could raze one set of walls and let life come blowing into the classroom. They could raze the other set of walls and let education flow out and flood the streets.... They could. Theoretically. They have the power. But only in a few places, have they begun to think about using it.... For students, as for black people, the hardest battle is with what Mr. Charlie has done to your mind (ibid.).

UT students continued to protest the Vietnam War in the fall, holding a large protest at the state Capitol in mid-October. By November, SDS had been reinstated.

## **COUNTER-CULTURE IN AUSTIN**

Folk, jazz and blues music became popular among students, as did sex, marijuana and LSD. The underground newspaper *The Rag* increased its circulation and popularity; it provided news coverage of student protests around the world, U.S. intervention and domestic issues, UT issues, and the counter culture. It deplored racism and imperialism

and advocated student power and revolution. The counter culture flourished. One expert described the counter culture in the following terms:

The interests of our college-age and adolescent young in the psychology of alienation, oriental mysticism, psychedelic drugs and communitarian experiments comprise a cultural constellation that radically diverges from values and assumptions that have been in the mainstream of our society at least since the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. (Roszak, 1969)

Draft counseling services were provided to students as well as birth control counseling. Such were some of the positive developments of the 'Movement' in 1968.

In April 1968, SDS held an Anti-State Fair for two days and another Gentle Thursday. They decided not to call a boycott of school despite the national strike, "because it would only be 40% effective" according to one activist. But they held protests against the war which drew an increasing number of students.

## **STUDENTS DEMAND ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND END TO WAR**

In May, students erupted again when SDS faculty adviser Larry Caroline was fired from his position in the Philosophy Department. Caroline had stirred up quite a bit of controversy after he told anti-war peace marchers in October 1967 that if they really wanted to end aggressive wars or to bring an end to racism and exploitation they would have to effect a revolution in America. "The whole bloody mess has to go," Caroline had stated. State legislators, journalists, and the regents began to look for a way to get rid of Caroline, consulting with the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility to find a way to do so without creating another free speech controversy. The college Dean John Silber and Regent Chair Frank Erwin worked on the problem (*Rag*, May 15, 1968).

Some activities which had annoyed other academics about Caroline were his successful efforts in integrating the faculty lounge (i.e. allowing graduate students in). Some of the faculty thought Caroline was rabble rousing among the graduate students, because of the structural changes he was attempting within the department, including teaching with more of an emphasis on ethics. Another point of contention was Caroline's aiding black activist Larry Jackson in getting admitted to the school; Jackson had become quickly disgusted with school and had written a letter of withdrawal to Silber in which began "Dear Master" and was extremely critical of the racism within the university. Silber became so obsessed with the private letter's contents that he urged Caroline to publicly refute it. Silber accused Caroline of academic dishonesty. Other incidents enraging Silber were Caroline's refusals to defend him when Silber was accused by activists of being a racist and to refute a *Rag* editorial which was critical of Silber (*ibid.*).

Students protested the threat to academic freedom and the procedural irregularities in the firing of Caroline. These protests over the termination of Caroline were to drag on in varying intensities throughout the year.

By the fall of 1968, anti-war activist had begun supporting enlisted men and providing them with literature about Vietnam and war resistance. A G.I. coffeehouse near Fort Hood, Texas provided a meeting place for students and soldiers critical of the war. During the Days of Rage in Chicago that year, over 20 soldiers at Fort Hood refused orders that they go to Chicago as anti-riot control. (Zinn, 1980) In October, a Solidarity with GIs march was held on the campus.

Students sought to prevent the university from providing class rankings to the Selective Service. They refused to have their academic performances pitted against those of their fellow students in decisions over who would be drafted sooner. Some professors refused to cooperate, but no institutional support was given to the students of draft age.

## **STUDENT MOVEMENT BROADENS**

Although many students were involved in protest activities, they were not all members of SDS. SDS was an important new left group, but many students were in different organizations or unaffiliated. Dr. Patricia Kruppa stated that there were vague distinctions between three groups: the SDS types, the hippies, and the co-op people. The sense of community provided through the co-ops gave students an idea of what kind of society they were fighting **for**. The cooperative labor system and collective decision-making in the co-ops, the experimental lifestyles adopted by many students and the services they provided (e.g. *The Rag* newspaper, legal aid for political arrestees, draft and abortion counseling, support for Community United Front's breakfasts for poor children program) combined to form a sub-society, often called the counter-culture. Although many of the problems of the larger society were often mirrored in the sub group, the counter culture and its spirit of love, experimentation, community and cooperation enabled the students to envision a future society based on these principles.

SDS tied many issues together in a comprehensive critique of the American government, the economic system and socialization. Groups which targeted specific problems also existed; many of them shared this systematic analysis. The activities carried out by these groups included things like saving the environment, opposing drug and sodomy laws, advocating vegetarianism, opposing the Vietnam War, and supporting striking workers. Mexican American students (and sympathizers) aided the United Farm Workers strike in California by boycotting lettuce and grapes as well as the local Chicano-led Economy Furniture strike (which lasted from 1968-71) by picketing with workers and supporting the boycott of the company's products.

## **STUDENTS ALIGN WITH WORKERS**

The majority of SDSers in 1968 believed in making links with workers and the group decided in November to sponsor a picket and boycott of dining facilities in the Student 'Onion' (they refused to call it a union because it was not student controlled). The boycott was endorsed by the Mexican American Students Organization (MASO).

The students demanded a \$2/hour minimum wage for food service employees, rotating shifts and a 5-day work week, better ventilation in work areas, benefits for employees working over 20 hours per week, and that blacks and Chicanos be hired for office jobs within the 'Onion' rather than just jobs in food service. The student-oriented demands were for student control of the 'Onion' and lower food prices.

According to a leaflet circulated by the SDS Boycott Committee, the following comments were made by workers:

- 1) "We've all got to stick together, I think it's good."
- 2) "You mean you're on our side?"
- 3) "I guess you know what you're up against - the people upstairs, they're just like a machine. If you try anything, they'll only squash you."

I'm all for what you're trying to do, but it's like trying to stop a railroad engine."

UT President Hackerman granted token concession to the student-oriented demands thereby attempting to divide the students and workers and diffuse the boycott effort. Alternative eating facilities were provided outside the Union despite attempts by the administration to prevent them. The effectiveness of the boycott was about 60% despite opposition from the *Daily Texan*, the administration, and many student government representatives. The boycott continued for about a week, during which time students and workers began an important dialogue, but little was gained.

According to a *Daily Texan* article, SDS attributed failure of the boycott to the following: 1) overestimation of student support, 2) general feeling that the student demands were trivial, 3) administration's tactics to stop the boycott, including intimidation tactics, 4) underestimated power and degree of opposition by *Texan*, 5) not enough people to maintain pickets.

Judy Smith wrote about prevalent student attitudes toward the 'Onion' workers and the boycott in the *Rag*:

Students here are afraid of being linked with workers - it threatens their proud achievement of what they consider middle class status. They don't realize that a lawyer,...a scientist,...or a professor are all selling their labor and ,therefore, are all workers....

As long as students consider themselves somehow better (more educated, etc.) and refuse to see that this system makes us, all but a few rich men, workers, there can be no constructive change (*Rag*, November 30, 1968).

Some minor changes resulted from the boycott, and those were directed toward the student-oriented demands. The question of why the workers did not strike remains unanswered, but it is probable that they feared the loss of their jobs and that there had not been sufficient communication between students and workers before the boycott effort began. The boycott, however, did serve to increase students' understanding for the predicament of university workers and to open up communication channels between students and staff. Furthermore, it increased discussion between the predominantly white group SDS and MASO, which had been very supportive of striking Chicano workers in Texas and other parts of the nation.

## **WOMEN STUDENTS ORGANIZE FOR THEIR RIGHTS**

In February 1969, Women's Liberation<sup>21</sup> was founded locally. They used guerilla theater and distributed information on birth control, abortion rights and child care. Women's Liberation differed from the National Organization for Women (NOW) in ideology, demands, and approach. NOW, established in 1966 with the goal of "taking action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." Although this revival of activism for women's rights was long overdue, NOW appealed primarily to white middle and upper class women who sought to reform the current system to allow women's full participation. NOW sought an end to sexual discrimination, repeal of laws restricting birth control and abortion, government-

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<sup>21</sup> The name of a radical feminist organization as well as that of the movement.

supported child care, paid maternity leaves for working women and tax reforms that recognized the value of homemaking; the organization did not intend to fundamentally change society. NOW left a vacuum because of its reformist politics. It did not attract the participation of ethnic minorities, poor women, and those seeking radical changes in the political and economic structures. This vacuum was partially filled by those espousing radical feminism or women's liberation.

Radical feminists were concerned "with the underpinnings of sex discrimination, claiming that unequal laws and customs were the effect, not the cause, of women's oppression. Underlying sex discrimination was sexism, the male assumption that woman's different biology made her inherently inferior...and perhaps most damaging, sexism governed the way women saw themselves," (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978, p. 347).

Radical feminism developed from the student movements - from SNCC, from SDS, from the counter culture. Within the groups and tendencies of the New Left women had often done the typing, the cooking and provided sexual favors while the men had enjoyed the glory of the leadership positions. Locally, some women had emerged as leaders, most notably Alice Embree and Grace Cleaver; however, they were the exception. Sexism permeated the New Left and women's efforts to alleviate the problem and discuss the issue seriously were met with scorn and resistance on the part of a majority of the new left men. Some radical feminists broke off from the New Left because of this male reaction; others remained to battle it out with the men. Many radical feminist groups sprung up, a large number of which were small consciousness raising affinity groups wherein women (men were excluded) discussed various issues and experiences of their sexual oppression. A central idea of these women was that "the personal is political"; that, for example, the radical feminist would pay for her dinner, open doors, light her own cigarettes and generally refuse gentlemanly paternalism.

"Radical feminists used the rhetoric and protest tactics of the New Left to bring consciousness raising to the public. They staged dramatic and at times deliberately provocative demonstrations, which they called zap actions, to focus attention on women's need for liberation. The first and most famous 'zap action' occurred at the 1968 Miss America beauty pageant" (ibid., p. 355) where women picketing the pageant crowned a sheep as Miss America. Their opposition to the pageant lay in its objectification of women and portrayal of women in traditional sex roles.

While white female students were questioning male hegemony both in the greater society and within the "movement," a large number continued to participate in New Left activities other than women's liberation and began to demand more leadership positions and equality. Some men tended to ignore or trivialize Women's Liberation, often accusing feminists of being bourgeois but rarely understanding the distinctions between reformist and radical feminism. The first *Rag* to be published after the founding of the group gave one page (out of 20) to coverage of women's issues.<sup>22 23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The problem of male control of progressive groups and of token, often trivializing, efforts to encompass women's liberation in the larger movement were apparent in the underground press. Women's issues rarely received front page coverage and were often assigned to one page out of many in a newspaper. Women were treated as a minority group within the larger society as well as the progressive movement although they represented slightly over 50% of the population.

## STRUGGLE AGAINST RACISM AT THE UNIVERSITY

The Afro-Americans for Black Liberation (AABL) in late February issued a detailed list of eleven demands "establishing an atmosphere to make Blacks a part of the university" to President Hackerman. In a press release, the AABL wrote:

It is the general consensus of the Black students on this campus that a certain change must be brought about immediately...to insure the fullest development of the Black student [and] to demonstrate the relevancy of his education to the Black community.... It seems obvious that any institution that concerns itself with the process of education would direct its attention toward developing the potentials of all individuals.

But this has not been the case. The university has continually excluded Black students from full participation in campus affairs, exposing them to racist attitudes and situations, and has completely ignored their essential needs.

The demands of the militant students included a black studies department, affirmative action in admissions and teaching staff, dismissal of the Board of Regents, an ethnic studies center in East Austin, the removal of racist faculty and statues, memorials for King and Malcolm X. At the time there was one black faculty member and 1% of the students were black (compared to 11% of the state population).

The *Rag* endorsed the demands:

The moment now demands a concerted educational and organizational campaign to ensure that all progressive elements on the campus close ranks behind the AABL demands.... The interests which will fight AABL's struggle for control and relevance are the same ones which have created a university in the image of a factory, spewing forth pre-fitted cogs for a destructive and barren social machine. AABL is trying to break through a wall which encloses us all. (*Rag*, March 1969, p. 6).

The Mexican American Student Organization (MASO) joined with AABL in demanding black and Chicano studies programs. The administration conceded the creation of an ethnic studies program which was implemented in the fall of 1970. Another student victory, which had not been an AABL demand but which came at this time, was the Dean of Students office agreement to fund and administer Project Info; however, UT did nothing to annul its 1964 ruling against affirmative action and this ruling was used as an excuse by the administration for being unable to implement many of the demands. AABL's other demands were not met, and AABL would continue to press these demands well into the 1970's. The issuing of the demands and the persistent support they received from many students generated much controversy and questioning of the general oppressive nature of the university; they also elicited repression: an AABL spokesperson (Larry Jackson) was arrested soon thereafter and a new rule to repress student activism was passed by the regents.

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<sup>23</sup> The underground newspaper had been published very irregularly during this period due to printer problems. The printer had refused to publish the paper after being harassed by other customers. *The Rag* fruitlessly searched Austin for a printer; so for a while the staff was forced to print the paper with a small press and to publish sporadically throughout the spring semester.

## **UT REPRESSION MOUNTS IN FACE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM**

At a March meeting, the Board decided to pass a disruptive activities bill. The anti-riot bill was added to the university rules at the time as an emergency measure, because the state anti-riot law would not be enforceable until September of that year. The regents wanted to be able to prevent large protests resulting from the demands of black and Chicano students and those which would occur during the traditional spring mobilization against the Vietnam war in April. Section 3 (17) of the UT rule included a clause allowing both criminal and disciplinary proceedings to be pursued against violators. The bill basically prohibits pickets, strikes, sit-ins, and anything the university deems "disruptive to administrative, educational or other authorized activity."

Also at the March meeting, the regents refused a request for an SDS national convention to be held in the Student Union at the end of the month; the regents announced "we are not about to let the university be used by subversives and revolutionaries." President Hackerman cited the SDS "intention of destroying the American educational system" and the lack of educational implications of the meeting as justification for the regents' decision (*Rag*, March 1969).

SDS immediately filed a lawsuit against the university for this action. The Union Curtain Club, the Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the Texas Coalition against the War, the Young Socialist Alliance, AABL, Graduate Union of Political Scientists, the New Left Education Project, Young Democrats and MASO pledged their support as co-plaintiffs. In addition, the national SDS and the Texas Union Board of Directors, the UT Government Department joined the suit. These groups held several rallies to oppose the regents' repression, demanding that the decision be reversed within one week. They denounced the intolerance and lack of academic freedom within the university community. The General Faculty called an emergency meeting and expressed its support for the SDS contract to be upheld at the Union.

Three days before the conference was scheduled to begin, the lawsuit lost its bid for a temporary restraining order against UT for the conference to be held. An emergency appeal was filed in New Orleans which also failed.

SDS planned a boycott of classes to oppose the denial of the Union facilities with pickets at the five major entrances to the campus (Littlefield, West Mall, 24th and Guadalupe, 21st and Guadalupe, and 24th and Whitis). Students who chose not to attend class were offered alternative education through discussion groups on the Main Mall. The topics included: critique of the university, mass media, science, women's liberation, U.S. imperialism and Vietnam, culture and left politics.

## **THE DISSOLUTION OF SDS**

The SDS National Conference was held that weekend at the Catholic Student Center. More than 800 attended amidst both the local controversy and the factionalization within SDS which would lead to its complete dissolution during the summer. At the time there were 300-400 local chapters of SDS around the country. Membership reached its peak in late 1968 and had begun to decline due to the growing divisions between different tendencies within SDS. Some have conjectured that the conference was held in Austin in order to decrease the number of participants from the Progressive Labor tendency within the group.

A ten-point proposal for the liberation of schools was passed which called for among others: an end to the tracking system, an end to flunkouts and disciplinary expulsions, a new teaching of history in such a way as to truly expose the injustice of "this racist, capitalist society," and support for the Black Panthers. SDS was also aligned at the time with New Left student groups in Western Europe, GI resistance groups, high school unions, Third World revolutionaries (including Vietnamese, Palestinians, and Cubans), labor unions and striking workers. Despite its increased alignments, the organization was in the midst of its death throes.

At this time, many people abandoned SDS because of the lack of a good choice among the differing factions and also because of the sectarianism which threatened the unity of student activists. In addition, SDS had become too small to lead the broad-based student movement which demanded coalition politics rather than a radical vanguard. As SDS was dissolving, more and more students were becoming involved in campus activism; the number of militant student demonstrations reached amazingly new heights at this time and peaked the following year. Thus, in some ways, the dissolution of the group was not of extreme importance to the continuation of the student movement. However, the lack of a unified leftist student organization following the end of the Vietnam War contributed to the fall of the student movement as did the change in political terrain after this unifying issue died. In this lies the significance of the end of SDS.

The factions in SDS and the underlying reasons for them are very complex. Kirkpatrick Sale cited three internal problems that existed in 1968 which led to the predicament of 1969; these were infighting on the chapter level, increased pressures from PL, and ever widening distances between the national leadership and much of the membership.

### **SDS INTERNAL PROBLEM: INFIGHTING**

The first problem arose as SDSers "took their politics more seriously [and] became more intolerant; as they saw themselves capable of exercising real national power, more righteous...the consentient and tolerant spirit of the early days of SDS gradually disappeared." According to Sale, splits occurred in many of the larger chapters (Berkeley, Michigan, Columbia, Wisconsin) as well as smaller ones and

were exacerbated at many places by the second current problem, the all-out invasion of SDS by the Progressive Labor Party [who] were positively cyclotronic in their ability to split and splinter chapter organizations: if it wasn't their self-righteous positiveness it was their caucus-controlled rigidity, if not their deliberate disruptiveness it was their overt bids for control, if not their repetitious appeals for base-building it was their unrelenting Marxism. (Sale, 1973, p. 492).

### **SDS INTERNAL PROBLEM: PROGRESSIVE LABOR**

The PL, a clear minority within SDS, was a Maoist-oriented, highly disciplined party which began infiltrating SDS around 1966. It bloc-voted at SDS meetings and worked harder than other SDS members to push its beliefs and tactics; PLers would be the first to volunteer for many tasks within the organization thus controlling much of the outgoing information and the public's image of the student group. PL's uncompromising

Old Left-style politics simply did not appeal to students; its support for vanguard politics and its opposition to drugs, long hair, the youth culture, women's liberation, peace negotiations, the NLF and the North Vietnamese, Cuba, and many other things earned it the scorn of many student activists. Consequently, many students began to see SDS as an irrelevant Maoist-dominated group although PL did not have the support of the majority of SDSers; thus SDS came to be seen as just another sect and out of touch with the realities of student activists. In reaction, the National Office began devising "various schemes to stifle and possibly eliminate PL from the organization," (ibid., p. 494). It seems that the national officers began to use PL tactics to combat PL rather than an honest appeal to its members to prevent a takeover by a minority alienated from the fairly radicalized student bodies. In this way SDS veered from its previous course of somewhat anarchistic participatory democracy and alienated itself further from the many counter-cultural student activists who had little sympathy for manipulative power plays.<sup>24</sup>

### **SDS INTERNAL PROBLEM: DISTANCED LEADERS**

The third problem was brought on by this scheming on the part of national officers to quiet PL and the growing belief that a revolution was just around the corner and adoption of more confrontational tactics. An "action faction" developed which often justified its approach using Marxist phraseology; this did not appeal much to some of the more apolitical counter-cultural types nor the recent converts from liberalism.

### **OTHER INTERNAL PROBLEMS**

The defections of women from SDS also played a role, as did an inability to include people with middle class occupations (like most college alumni) within the revolutionary scheme of things. The bitter theoretical disputes also marginalized SDS - such disputes were often not based on any real experience, and led to a tendency to become more and more dogmatic. Perhaps the dogmatic approach of PL also infected other SDSers in their attempts to fight what they saw as PL encroachment on such values as democracy, honesty, love and peace.

### **EXTERNAL PROBLEMS: GOVERNMENT AND UNIVERSITY REPRESSION**

Also in 1968, SDS had faced increased governmental repression and mass media opposition and disinformation. The FBI, universities and local law enforcement contributed. The FBI employed such tactics as writing anonymous letters to deepen factional disputes within SDS, wiretaps, and 1400 investigations (just to get to the heart of the Days of Rage) by 320 full-time special agents. In a nationwide meeting of university presidents back in the fall of 1968, administrators met for a conference on how to control student dissidents.

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<sup>24</sup> One SDSer (whom I interviewed and who was involved in national SDS politics) said that PL was heavily infiltrated by police, especially in leadership positions. PL's hierarchical internal politics enabled this infiltration; whereas the more democratic New Left groups tended to be less easily dominated by police. PL's ability to pack meetings perhaps stemmed from its capacity to pay people to attend those meetings; such finances would likely have come from government support for these efforts.

Back at their desks, administrators beefed up police forces, installed electronic security systems, removed important college records to secret safes, and established new offices for police liaison, legal advice and the like.... The favorite administration tactic was to call in police and arrest demonstrators. (ibid., p. 500).

During the spring of 1968 alone, at least 1265 campus arrests were made and sometimes administrators banned SDS outright (as in the case of UT in 1967). Other tactics included withdrawal of activists' financial aid, psychiatric treatment, admissions' screening out of protesters, and naked force (ibid.). Because they were faced with violence, students understandably turned to justifying violence in self-defense. In addition, the repression led activists to begin to see violence as the only alternative remaining to effect change. The sentiment to "bring the war home" in solidarity with the people of Vietnam played a role in the turning to violence by students. In the first six months of 1969, there were at least 84 bombings, attempted bombings and arson incidents on college campuses, and twice as many in the fall. According to the American Insurance Association, total property damage in the first eight months of 1969 amounted to about \$9 million.

## **SDS SPLIT INTO FACTIONS**

At any rate, SDS folded at its summer 1969 meeting in Chicago. About 2000 attended and bitter disputes broke out. According to Gavan Duffy, one of the participants, all the factions believed that students were not a revolutionary force. The Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) faction and the PL faction wanted to organize the working class youth while the Weatherman faction (part of the RYM faction, and later known as RYM-1) did not believe the American workers were a revolutionary force. Other factions in attendance were the anarchists (composed of Yippies, Motherfuckers and others) who, as might be expected, were poorly organized and somewhat inconsequential in the factional disputes. Duffy observed that PL constituted a plurality due to the divisions within RYM and the anarchists. In the midst of much confusion, RYM walked out of the conference to form a new organization; however, the Weathermen (or RYM-1) broke off from the less adventurist RYM-2. SDS had ended in factional disarray. But its critical role as a galvanizer of the national student movement has earned it an important section in the history of American social change.

## **EFFECTS OF SDS DISSOLUTION AT UT**

According to Duffy, UT activists were not as bitterly divided over such sectarian disputes as were students in many other areas of the country. Although there were those involved in or sympathetic to the factions, Austin activists remained united, but critical of each other.

A flyer circulated by the Austin PL supporters soon after the convention charged that the PL faction constituted a majority and was therefore the real SDS while RYM was a splinter group. In part the flyer stated:

We believe that Austin SDS must continue to function as a broad-based, anti-imperialist, anti-racist organization. We believe that for Austin SDS to remain such an organization, it must remain affiliated with SDS in Boston [i.e. PL]. Undoubtedly, if the splinter group issues New Left

Notes, and continues to present itself as SDS many people will be confused. And many people will contend that Austin SDS needs to decide between the two. But there is only one SDS [PL] (Vertical File - SDS, Barker Texas History Center).

Given that PL had neither a majority nor a plurality in Austin, it seems that the local PLers did not desire a vote on the issue of who was SDS. Clearly, however, they wanted to continue under the well-known banner of SDS. Soon, the PL faction nationally and locally would resign itself to being PL; thereafter it would never command much of a following from the UT student body.

The Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), which was run by the Young Socialist Alliance (the youth section of the Old Left Socialist Workers Party), largely coordinated the student anti-war movement in Austin. The SMC pursued a single-issue concentration on ending the Vietnam War, believing this would attract the most broad-based support. As is generally the case, the single-issue focus would lead to chaotic problems once that issue was no longer existent (i.e. when the war ended). However, for the short term, this approach was rather successful.

## **UT STUDENT MOVEMENT INCLUDES THOUSANDS**

The traditional fall mobilization march against the war in Vietnam was held in mid-October 1969, attracting over 10,000 participants.

It began with pickets at the entrances to the campus, followed by teach-in discussion groups spotted throughout the grounds. By noon a monstrous crowd had assembled in front of the tower.... The largest march in Austin history proceeded down Congress Avenue to the rear entrance of the Capitol building. (*Rag*, Oct. 21, 1969, p.8).

During this Moratorium Day protest, students boycotted classes and there was guerilla theater and many speeches. Speakers talked about atrocities in Vietnam, the history of the war, the economic roots of the war in capitalism and UT's support for the war machine. Larry Jackson of SNCC received a standing ovation for his speech urging people to get out into the community and organize people around their real needs.

The Moratorium was a success in bringing out huge numbers of people to oppose the war. It was a good kick-off for the Fall Offensive Against the War, and raises hopes that lots of people will participate in the coming demonstrations against CIA recruitment and in the November 15 March on Washington.... We have all got to get out and work to build a movement that will show Nixon and the rest of the world that the people of this country are sick and tired of the war.... Let's get it on! (*ibid.*).

The success of this anti-war march, combined with increased student militancy during the fall semester, led to much heavier repression. The growth of counter-cultural programs contributed to the increasing success of the movement; in addition to those already listed were a food co-op, a program to feed poor black children, alternative schools and university classes at the Y, tutorial services for the poor, a shelter for people on bad acid trips, more legal services, a gay liberation group, more services for women, and support groups for striking workers among others.

Also in October, the Students for Strikers demonstrated several times with the Economy Furniture strikers after an unprovoked incident wherein the police maced the

picketing workers. In solidarity with the workers the students went to the protest "armed with equipment resembling Mace preparations: hair-drier hoses, scuba masks, handkerchiefs over the face and signs saying 'All power to the workers, No more Mace in the face,'" (ibid., p. 10).

## **WALLER CREEK PROTEST**

The following week, Erwin ordered that about 40 very old and beautiful trees by Waller Creek be cut down in order to expand the football stadium to add 15,000 more seats. Ironically, this occurred on Earth Day, a day of awareness of the need to preserve the environment. Students climbed up into the trees targeted for removal so Erwin sought and won a temporary restraining order which legitimized his goals, thus criminalizing the protests of the students. Erwin returned to Waller Creek with the restraining order in his hand; he sent forth the bulldozers and ordered police to use billyclubs to get the students out of the trees (*Rag*, October 23, 1969)

Erwin clapped his hands each time a tree fell and commented, "I'm disturbed that a bunch of dirty nothings can disrupt the workings of a great university in the name of academic freedom," (ibid.). Twenty seven students were arrested on county charges of violating the new disruptive activities law. The arrests, the police brutality and Erwin's disdain for the students combined with an increased awareness of the need to preserve the environment led students to protest and to plant new trees and grass in the plundered area. A group of 800-1000 dragged tree limbs to the Main Mall, piling them up on the steps and demonstrating. Jon Lebkowsky, one of the demonstrators, said

Waller Creek was a bit of green in our lives. A fine place to sit for a while (if you ignored the pollution from various companies upstream). And it was bulldozed with the same disregard that leads to over 400,000 tons of DDT per year being sprayed over the fields in the U.S. As long as ecology and environment are considered unimportant, man will continue unchecked to destroy his own future (ibid.).

The demonstrators were very critical of Joe Krier, then president of the Students' Association (SA), who had participated in negotiations with the president. Their criticism stemmed from his willingness to accept anything offered by the president and from a perception that he was a lackey to the administration.

Originally students of landscape architecture and environmental activists had raised the issue and joined together for the protests. The fairly conservative groups the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans held an Axe Erwin rally in response. More student and faculty protest ensued. However, as the trees had already been cleared, it made little difference other than generating more debate on the issues of preserving the environment and of Erwin's power hunger and disdain for students.

Further conflict with the administration was generated by the regents' refusal to continue funding the Program for Educational Opportunity (PEO). As previously mentioned the PEO was a provisional admissions program which helped many minorities qualify for admissions despite low test scores on such culturally and class biased tests as the SAT and the ACH.

## **THE CHUCKWAGON PROTESTS**

The lack of student control over the affairs of the 'Student Union,' despite its being financed completely by students, led to a militant protest the following month. On a Friday in November, the Union Board decided to prohibit non-students from using the Chuckwagon cafe in the building following the District Attorney's declaration that the Chuckwagon was a "public nuisance." The cafe was frequented by student activists and was often the site of their meetings and political discussions.

Earlier that day, city police had entered the Chuckwagon to apprehend a runaway child. As they dragged off the girl, Sunshine, the police set off a near riot. A crowd of about 150 outraged students encircled the police car demanding to know the identity of the officers. One of the police waved a revolver at the students, remarking "this is all the identification I need." This arrogant and wanton act by the police incited the crowd to slash the tires and kick in the sides of the police car; as the car drove down the Drag, students followed throwing rocks and bottles (*Rag*, November 8, 1969).

Later that afternoon, four students were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct when they went to the police station to file a complaint on the officer brandishing the gun. The students posted bond and were released hours later.

On Saturday morning Paul Spencer, a recent UT graduate, went to the Chuckwagon for coffee. He walked past the newly installed ID-checker; when asked to leave, Spencer declared "I'm here and I'm staying, because the students and the faculty and other people who use this place had nothing to do with making this policy. It came from a small segment of the administration." The administration called the police and Spencer was charged with disorderly conduct and aggravated assault on a police officer (*ibid.*).

On Monday, about 500 gathered at a rally where demonstrators discussed the issue and talked about reclaiming the Chuckwagon. A guy named Duke, who had never been seen before and has not been seen since the incident, called for people to liberate the restaurant (*interview*).

"We marched into the Union, up to the Chuckwagon doors and through, no one showing the sacred ID," according to Bill Meacham. They were soon asked to leave by Steve Van, the head of the Union Board and refused; police quickly arrived at the scene. The crowd was growing. The Union conceded to hold a meeting then and there to discuss the problem. Van agreed to holding a student referendum that Friday to decide on the issue and told the demonstrators that they had less than an hour to leave. They stayed and debated what to do; when the time came, hundreds filed out into the corridor, about a thousand people were blocking the doors to the Chuckwagon to prevent the police from entering. SA President Krier urged the demonstrators to avoid the inevitable confrontation and leave, putting their energy into the referendum. Krier was ignored (*Rag*, November 15, 1969).

Twenty five police in riot gear stormed the Union. Thirty minutes of chaotic violence ensued during which time the state and city police used mace, tear gas and nightsticks to disperse the crowd both outside and inside the Chuckwagon. Some members of the National Guard stood by to observe and learn. Most people ran but a few were arrested and taken to the paddy wagons waiting on the Drag. The crowd swarmed out to the street, slashing the tires of the police vehicles, throwing rocks, and blocking arrests. When police tried to arrest a demonstrator several people would pull the person away from the officers. Because of this, the number of arrestees (8) remained relatively

small. The next day, a rally was held which drew several thousand. Issues raised were the demand for clemency for those arrested, an end to the use of outside police on the campus, the question of whether the incident (which many called a police riot) had been started by an *agent provocateur*, the possibility of calling a student strike, and that of boycotting area merchants to sensitize them to student issues (ibid.).

On Wednesday, students picketed some businesses on the Drag, leafletted and held a meeting at the YMCA. The *Texan* and student government people came out in support of closing union facilities to non-students. Student government also delayed one of the items for the Friday referendum; the item calling for Erwin's resignation was postponed "to allow for a cooling off period."

The students voted 7397-4643 to close the Chuckwagon to non-students and 6389-5666 to keep non-students out of the whole Union. Protesters cited some of the reasons for the referendum failure as Joe Krier's tricky wording of the items, the failure of activists to seriously organize and publicize reasons to oppose the measure, the fact that many activists were out of town at the anti-war march in Washington, and the support for the item from the administration and the student government and newspaper (ibid.).

Some viewed the incident as generated by a police infiltrator, others saw it as a naive but militant stance, while others felt that it was a successful action because the protesters had won the referendum. Even if "Duke" was an *agent provocateur*, the anger of the Chuckwagon protesters seems to have been a result of the mounting repression against them and against others throughout the country (local examples include police brutality during the Waller Creek protest, the police hassling the *Rag* and the SNCC Breakfasts for Children program, recent arrests of anti-war protesters and of Axe Erwin demonstrators and the most notable national examples were the Chicago Conspiracy trial and the murders of several of the Black Panther Party's leaders).

## **NATIONAL ANTI-WAR PROTEST**

During the same week over a million demonstrated in Washington, D.C against the Vietnam War. The peace protest was the largest that had been held up to that point; violence broke out when some people threw rocks and bottles. The police used tear gas to disperse the rioting crowd.

A sentiment that a revolution was just around the corner was pervasive both locally and nationally. The mounting repression only added to this belief. Many students called themselves guerillas and revolutionaries; they began to read and teach each other about protection against tear gas, how to commit various acts of sabotage, and protect each other from arrests. After the Chuckwagon riot, such information was even published in the movement newspaper.

## **CHICANO VICTORY IN AUSTIN**

A victory for protesters also occurred. Chicanos organized by the Brown Berets, Raza Unida and Mexican-American students held a parade in support of the striking Economy Furniture workers, but they did so without being granted a parade permit by the City Council. Despite police surveillance and presence, none of the approximate 1400 protesters were arrested. The City Council had systematically refused parade permits to

radical demonstrators, forcing them to march on the sidewalks to remain within the law. The Chicano Power march was a victory in that it was illegal but resulted in no arrests.

## **CHUCKWAGON FELONY INDICTMENTS**

In December, a grand jury handed down indictments on 22 Chuckwagon protesters who had been previously arrested or identified from police photographs. They were charged with inciting to riot and malicious destruction of over \$50 worth of public property (the three slashed tires); these felonies carried a penalty of 2-20 years in prison. Under conspiracy laws, it was unnecessary to show that an individual committed the acts only that they were part of a crowd which did so. Warrants were served on most of those indicted; bond was set at \$2500 each. Some were beaten while in jail. A legal defense committee and team were established. A *Rag* article declared:

We must realize that the Chuckwagon incident affects us all; not just those arrested, not just "the Movement." An attempt to destroy dissent, to pull us all in like cannot be ignored.

The whole community must stand together and demand amnesty for those arrested. We must insist on our rights to speak in public when we want, to hold rallies, to make our views known without fear of reprisal. There is no excuse for bringing outside police on campus, when there is no violence, no destruction. Police only provoke confrontation [sic]. (*Rag*, Dec. 7, 1969, p. 2).

Outrage multiplied when an apolitical riot after a UT football game was watched, and in some cases participated in, by police. No arrests were made. Student activists were justifiably righteous in their anger and truthful in their accusations that the felony charges against the Chuckwagon 22 were politically motivated.

Students refused to be intimidated by the repression and continued to involve themselves in protests. Several demonstrations against the war occurred in December, and some over the Chuckwagon indictments and the Chicago Conspiracy trial. This pattern of frequent protest and increased repression continued throughout the spring semester of 1970, culminating in the mass student uprisings in May.

## **RADICALS CAPTURE STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

In April 1970, the Yin-Yang Conspiracy radical slate ran for student government, after becoming disgusted with the tendency of the officers and representatives of the SA to squelch protest activities and to cooperate with the UT administration. Jeff Jones, the presidential candidate, ran with about ten others on a four-issue platform. The Yin-Yang Conspiracy called for the following: 1) that UT withdraw all support for the war effort (i.e. ROTC, war-related research, and military recruitment, 2) that there be both an end to racism and efforts to make the racial balance of the student population represent that of the state's taxpayers, 3) that birth control and abortion be provided at the Student Health Center, and 4) that the academic system be reformed (e.g. establishment of a pass-fail system and the abolition of impotent student government).<sup>25</sup>

The justifications for running for office were enunciated by an article in the *Rag*:

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<sup>25</sup> Source - Jeff Jones interview.

The left has always said that student government is a pseudo-institution, sponsored and created by the administration for its own manipulative purposes. We're saying it again. As long as the administration is able to keep the students divided through the device of an unresponsive, cowering and self-serving student government, the status quo will be maintained. Obviously this will be the case as long as certain individuals can use campus politics to insure their future political careers. (*The Rag*, March 9, 1970, p. 15).

The students conducted a creative and untraditional two-week campaign period, during which time the students on the slate and their supporters conducted publicity drives endorsing all the candidates and issues on the platform. This collective effort and the popularity of the platform formed a successful combination for several of the candidates, and most notably for Jones. The election brought in the largest voter turnout in UT history (8-9,000) and resulted in a landslide victory for Jones and the Yin-Yang.

During April, students held a march against the war. Thirteen demonstrators were arrested when they stepped off the sidewalks into the street to protest the City's refusal to allow legal parades. At the time dozens of parade permits had been denied by the City Council.

## **NATIONAL ANTI-WAR STUDENT STRIKE**

On April 30, before Jones had been sworn into office, the Nixon administration announced its invasion of Cambodia. On Sunday, Tom Hayden (one of the Chicago 8) and students at Yale called for a nation-wide student strike starting Tuesday. The demands of the national strike issued by the Yale students were:

- 1) that the United States government cease its escalation of the Vietnam War into Laos and Cambodia; that it unilaterally and immediately withdraw all forces from Southeast Asia.
- 2) that the United States government end its systematic oppression of political dissidents and release all political prisoners, particularly Bobby Seale and other members of the Black Panther Party.
- 3) that the universities end their complicity with the United States war machine by the immediate end to defense research, the ROTC, counterinsurgency research, and all other such programs.

George Katsiaficas characterized the significance of the students' demands:

The universal nature of the strike's demands was one indication that students were not confined in their goals to the problems of one part of society - students and youth - but were consciously identifying in thought and deed with those at the bottom of the world's social and economic hierarchy. It was the international solidarity of Vietnamese and American, the active negation of the oppressor/ oppressed duality, which was the essential meaning of the student strike, (Katsiaficas, 1987, pp. 126-7).

## **MAY 1970 STUDENT STRIKE AT UT**

Over the weekend, 20-30 of the Austin anti-war leaders met at the Y to make plans. They decided to do something that they had never dared before: to march in the streets. Because the City Council had always refused parade permits, student demonstrators had previously marched on the sidewalks to avoid arrests and repression.

They planned a march route around the campus to end at the West Mall for a rally. Then they began to publicize the event; of course, there was no mention of the plan to march in the streets as that would have alarmed the police.

On Sunday, students gathered on the Union patio to burn Nixon in effigy. On Monday, four students at Kent State University in Ohio were killed by the National Guard. That night some students from the SMC, the Radical Alliance and the *Rag* made a list of four purposes for the march. These were: 1) to demand an end to university complicity in the war machine, 2) to protest the recent invasion of Cambodia by the U.S. armed forces, 3) to protest the attempt to murder Bobby Seale and seven other Black Panthers by the U.S. government and 4) to oppose the growing aura of repression in Austin in particular against the Community United Front.

On Tuesday, March 5 (appropriately the birthday of Karl Marx) pickets went up on campus. At a noon rally on the main mall 8000 gathered and endorsed the demands. The march began to take its course around the inner-campus drive, passing the dormitories and class buildings. The marchers were in the streets, running and yelling; many people joined. On the north side of campus, it went off its pre-determined course. The front line went north of campus and then onto the Drag. By this time about 5000 people were militantly marching down the Drag. At 24th street, there was one police officer who got out of the way as the crowd approached. As they passed the Rag office (in the 2300 block), the marchers applauded and saluted in response to the Black Power salute given by some Black Panthers from a window in the building. They passed by the West Mall; it was obvious that people were headed downtown.

At 19th Street, about 10 police stood in the road. As a diversionary tactic, the front line of the demonstrators headed straight toward the police while the mass of followers veered off and went around the corner. This tactic was used again successfully when the students reached 15th street, where they passed a cordon of about 20 police. SA President elect Jeff Jones was one of the leaders of the march; he remembered:

By this point, the planners of the march were no longer in control. We had never left campus like that before; we all knew that we wanted to go downtown. When we got to the Capitol, most of us went around. There were probably 30 armed police in riot gear and holding tear gas cannisters awaiting us at 11th Street. The police were blocking us from downtown. I had been gassed before, so I knew to tell people to take off their shirts and wet them in the sprinklers on the lawn. Some of the more militant people headed straight at the police. Fist fights broke out between police and students; some rocks were thrown. Four people were arrested. Then the police began firing tear gas. They went absolutely nuts, even shooting off tear gas inside the Capitol as the students retreated toward campus. The state workers who got gassed were outraged. A lot of people were blinded, being led by those who could still see. We were very inexperienced....

The students retreated to the campus; that evening about 10,000 gathered and discussed building an effective strike for the next day. Jones was elected chair and microphones and a sound system were set up. People began discussing a march for Friday. Groups went to the dorms to talk to students about Kent State and the strike (*Rag*, May 15, 1970).

On Wednesday, an all-day rally brought about 10,000 to demand that the university be shut down Thursday and Friday and in support of the other demands. As helicopters circled overhead, there were speeches on race consciousness and poetry readings. Students discussed storming the Federal Building but decided against it. Protesters had come prepared for violence and more tear gas, wearing long pants in the May heat, and carrying wet rags or gas masks. Jones said:

The word came from the administration that they wanted to negotiate. Hackerman [UT President] knew he had to negotiate, that he had no alternatives; we were going to shut the university down. I refused to negotiate unless they broadcast the negotiations to the crowd on the mall. The University would offer concessions or make proposals and I would take a vote - 'all those in favor' and there'd be nothing, 'all those opposed' and the [administration] building would shake. This happened again and again, I'd say 'let the students decide.' We wanted to close the university down; it was practically unanimous. That night was an incredible party, people brought sleeping bags and slept out on the mall, local musicians played, Mickey Leland read poetry, even the fraternity people were out there.

The FBI was on top of the Tower and snipers were on top of buildings between the campus and downtown; that night about 200 riot-equipped police lined up along 21st Street. Demonstrators shouted 'Pigs Off Campus' and pushed the police back to 19th Street. According to Jeff Friedman, who accompanied police patrols on Wednesday and Thursday nights:

I was told they were under orders to shoot and kill anybody who came off campus. I believed it then and I believe it now.... The word was 'You stop these people. They do not get on the Austin streets period.' (*Third Coast*, April 1985, p. 72).

On Thursday morning striking students went into classrooms asking for strike votes. Pickets were set up all around the campus. Teach-ins were held. The class boycott was very effective that day. The faculty called an emergency meeting, and after two hours of discussion voted 573-243 to shut down the school and asked the City Council to grant the students a parade permit. Efforts to get the permit from the City Council for Friday failed. Students gathered again for meetings and discussed primarily whether or not to march illegally in the streets or on the sidewalks.

[Governor] Preston Smith called out the National Guard. I was facing the crowd and also the National Guard, I had a certain uneasiness. During the whole week, I thought I was going to die either by the hands of the police or of the rednecks who were cruising the Drag with their shotguns. Students and many professors decided to shut the university down. By Friday, nobody was going to class (interview with Jeff Jones).

The students decided (in a mass vote) that on Friday morning they would strike and picket, then march on the sidewalks with strict non-violence and, in the afternoon, leaflet the community to seek its support.

In fact, support from others sectors of society for the anti-war movement in 1970, constituted a majority. In a late 1970 Gallup poll, 65% responded that "Yes, the United States should withdraw all troops from Vietnam by the end of next year," (Zinn, 1980, p.

482); another sign that the American people supported the anti-war effort was the reluctance of juries and local judges to convict demonstrators and the lighter sentences for those convicted after 1971. Soldiers and veterans of the Vietnam War were organizing against the war effort. The Vietnam Veterans Against the War was involved in bitter protests, often throwing back their medals in Washington, D.C.. Howard Zinn, a noted historian, wrote:

The evidence from the *Pentagon Papers* is clear - that Johnson's decision in the spring of 1968 to turn down Westmoreland's request, to slow down for the first time the escalation of the war, to diminish the bombing, to go to the conference table, was influenced to a great extent by the actions Americans had taken in demonstrating their opposition to the war.... The frenzy of Nixon's actions against dissidents - plans for burglaries, wiretapping, mail openings - suggests the importance of the antiwar movement in the minds of national leaders, (ibid., p. 491).

Support from UT students for the Friday march was stupendous. Over 25,000 took to the streets in a legal march through downtown in protest of the Cambodian invasion and the Kent State murders. Students voted down demands to free Bobby Seale and to end the war machine on campus. Before the march, there had been rumors that the National Guard was told to use necessary force and that the police officer's guns were loaded with bird shot. According to a May 9 *Houston Chronicle* article, the majority of the marchers had voted not to pit themselves against such force and to march on the sidewalks. Law students stayed up all night working on legal briefs to sue the City of Austin for the right to peaceful assembly. They won their case just after the march began and spread the word that the march would be legal as the front of the march reached 16th Street.

The march was led by a girl dressed in black, flags and coffins were carried. It was about 13 blocks long and lasted over three hours (*Daily Texan*, May 9, 1970). The Friday march was the largest student protest activity to occur in Austin history, and has yet to be rivaled. The march turned into a huge love-in which lasted into the twilight. That evening a memorial service for the four who were killed at Kent State was held on the main mall.<sup>26</sup>

## **NATIONAL IMPACT OF STUDENT STRIKE**

Thirty percent of the nation's universities had been shut down, with students striking at about 400 colleges and universities (Zinn, 1980, p. 481). California Governor Ronald Reagan shut the entire University of California System down. Students occupied buildings, blocked traffic, firebombed and burned campus buildings (especially ROTC) and sought worker support. Nationally it was loosely coordinated and led by students at Yale and Brandeis, the National Students' Association and the Black Panther Party - the only remaining revolutionary national organization (Hansel interview, Katsiaficas).

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<sup>26</sup> An undercover law officer at the protest said that the Mobe [SMC] was more moderate than SDS and had maintained control; the officer also claimed that the hard-core hippie types were smoking marijuana and having sex in public and that they were violent, some dropping out of the march when violent tactics and "radical causes unrelated to the central issues" were dropped, (*Dallas Morning News*, May 24, 1970).

The impact of the May 1970 student strike on the government was great. On May 8, at the height of the strike, officials in the State Department, the Agency for International Development and the Cabinet vocalized their opposition to the escalation of the war, some of them resigning in protest (Katsiaticas, 1987, p. 152). In September 1970, the President's Commission on Campus Unrest reported:

The crisis on American campuses has no parallel in the history of the nation. This crisis has roots in divisions of American society as deep as any since the Civil War. The divisions are reflected in violent acts and harsh rhetoric, and in the enmity of those Americans who see themselves as occupying opposing camps. Campus unrest reflects and increases a more profound crisis in the nation as a whole...If this trend continues, if this crisis of understanding endures, the very survival of the nation will be threatened. (Garth Buchanan and Joan Brackett, *Summary Results of the Survey for the President's Commission on Campus Unrest*, Urban Institute, Sept. 1970, pp. 9-10).

This impact would lead to Vietnamization of, and eventually an end to, the war. An article in a business publication remarked:

If the events of the past two weeks have done nothing else, they should have convinced the U.S. that the student protest movement has to be taken seriously...The invasion of Cambodia and the senseless shooting of four students at Kent State...have consolidated the academic community against the war, against business, and against government. This is a dangerous situation. It threatens the whole economic and social structure of the nation (*Business Week*, May 16, 1970).

The May 1970 strike was the most forceful display of student power of the New Left student movement. Combined with the years of student activism during the 1960's and early 1970's, it led to both positive and negative reforms within the universities as well as the larger society. Administrators and law enforcement learned some lessons on how to control or squelch dissent, and the student demonstrators won some changes in academia, new rights for ethnic minorities and women, and soon the vote (18-year olds received the franchise in 1973).

The UT administration and the Texas legislature had passed several laws restricting the students' rights to peaceful assembly and free expression since 1967. Anti-riot landscaping and engineering were adopted in the early 1970's, breaking up the large, open space both on the West Mall and inside the Student Union. A wall was built along Guadalupe; new buildings were designed with many doors and lots of glass (to hinder the success of occupations). Free speech areas and hours were established, in gross violation of the U.S. Constitution. UT police were armed and given original jurisdiction in the campus area, as well as full police powers. The Austin "Red Squad" was formed (see Rag, March 9, 1970, p. 3), later an elite forces unit was created in the Austin Police Department; it was put on alert during in 1986 when students occupied campus buildings in opposition to university financial support for apartheid (*State of Texas vs. Catherine Arnold, et. al.* court transcript, second voir dire section).

Some of the gains of the UT student protest movement during the 1960's and early 1970's were the establishment of counter cultural institutions and services, integration, an easing of *in loco parentis* restrictions, an increase in student-faculty

committees, the right to protest in the Austin streets, the establishment of an Ethnic Studies Program, and the right to sell newspapers on the campus (*Rag vs. UT* Supreme Court case). The number of institutionalized gains was limited. Further protest activities during the 1970-75 period would lead to such victories as affirmative action, the establishment of a pass-fail option, and the further liberalization of course offerings with the creation of a Women's Studies Program and more interdisciplinary studies.