

**HISTORY OF STUDENT ACTIVISM  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
(1960-1988)**

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# INTRODUCTION

*The eyes of Regents are upon you all the livelong day.*

*The eyes of Regents are upon you, you cannot get away.*

*Do not think you can escape them when you're so near the Cap'tol ground.*

*The eyes of Regents are upon you 'til Longhorn liberty is downed!*

-Song anonymously written in 1944 by UT student

American students have often been rebellious. Sometimes their rebellion has been limited to their own immediate concerns, such as the conditions of work and life on campus. But, sometimes their anger has been motivated by and linked to events off campus and little connected with the immediate processes of education.

The first recorded student rebellion, according to historian Ralph Brax, occurred in 1766 at Harvard University and concerned "the poor quality of butter served in the commons." The students' battlecry was "Behold our butter stinketh!" (Brax, 1981, p. 3).

## UT STUDENT HISTORY PRIOR TO 1960

The earliest recorded student protest at the University of Texas also concerned campus issues but, setting a pattern that would be often repeated down through the years, involved a conflict with state politicians.

The University of Texas, being a state institution, funded by the people of Texas and run by the state government, was politically controversial from its beginning. As early as the 1850's some state representatives voiced concern over the very idea of creating an institution which would produce a handful of people better educated than their numerous peers. The sons of poor men would be "scoffed and sneered at by the proud popinjays who collect there. It would build up a class of aristocrats," one roared. (Daily Texan, November 3, 1944, p. 3).

With such an anti-elitist attitude on the part of many, and with the university organized as a largely self-contained enterprise, isolated from the rest of the community, it is perhaps not surprising that most early student rebellion rarely had an ideological basis or a concern with social issues beyond the campus. Most student activists in the nineteenth century, Brax has argued, "were not interested in changing the nature of society and possessed no real political or ideological differences with their teachers and administration officials." (Brax, 1981, p. 5) As a result, their resistance to authority often involved supporting the University's administration against political attack.

The first such controversy flared up between the legislature and UT over the issue of "Yankee" professors and radicalism brewing on campus. In this case the Board of Regents mediated the state-university conflict while students, apparently, looked on. In June of 1897, a Texas House resolution demanded a probe into university affairs to discern whether or not faculty members either were in sympathy with the North or teaching "economic heresies in place of our cherished economic system" (Daily Texan, November 30, 1944, p. 3). The Board of Regents of the institution issued a long statement to the legislators in response to their concerns, explaining that only three subjects were taught which related to politics and that "the University teaches methods

of study rather than conclusions," (ibid.). The central issue was that of academic autonomy from state politics.

The second such controversy exploded in 1917 and this time the students swung into action to protect their school from outside interference. In this case the recently elected populist governor James Ferguson, complaining about the "under-education of the many and the over-education of the few," decided to make some changes at the university. "Suspender-snapping 'Farmer Jim'" as he was called, demanded that six University of Texas faculty members be fired and that social fraternities be abolished. He did not cite any reason for the purge other than his power to do so. Students went on strike and marched to the Capitol to protest the arbitrary action. They sang "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You" to the governor who responded by shaking his finger at the students and later by vetoing university appropriations. The six-month controversy ended with the impeachment of Ferguson. In this instance, student interests coincided with those of the school's administrators against those of the populist governor (Vertical File - Demonstrations, Barker Texas History Center).

The depressed economy of the 1930's and the social turmoil that boiled up in those years significantly affected students around the country. They turned outward from their insular world and became concerned with larger issues. During this decade many students opposed militarization and U.S. imperialism, studied Marxist economic thought, formed cooperatives ("co-ops") to cut living costs, and supported change in economic policy. According to a 1934 study by Theodore Brameld of students at eastern schools, a large majority agreed that future depressions would result "if capitalism continues" and indicated support for at least some nationalization of industry (Brax, 1981, notes).

This trend was also reported on the UT campus. Daily Texan editor D.B. Hardeman wrote that "the rah-rah days of the twenties are gone." The editor of the student newspaper argued that the greater use of the libraries, the increased interest of students in politics, and the de-emphasis on fraternities and athletics, show the college man is thinking more and playing less," (ibid.).

The movement reached its peak in the years 1934-6 when national Student Strikes Against War were held annually. The largest strike was held in 1936 when students reported an amazing 50% participation rate on a national level. Students at the University of Texas also participated in these student strikes to the chagrin of the administration. One dean commented that "the whole thing was started by a bunch of Russians from the East Side of New York," (ibid.).

Several national student organizations coordinated protest activities. During the mid-1930's these groups were quite militant and radical; many of the leaders were socialists. Some of the groups were the National Student League, the Young Communist League, the American Student Union and the Student League for Industrial Democracy.

Although the student movement collapsed at the end of the decade, it was significant for several reasons. First, it broke the tradition of student isolation. Second, it left a legacy which would reach through the years to influence the generation of activists in the 1960's. Many of the student protesters of the 1960's were "red-diaper babies," children of the student radicals of the 1930's. In addition the Student League for

Industrial Democracy (SLID) would turn out to be the predecessor for the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the major student organization of the late 1960's.<sup>1</sup>

In most areas of the country campuses remained relatively quiet following the beginning of World War II until 1960. However, UT students erupted on at least one occasion during the war. The entire student body went on strike in November of 1944 in protest against the heavy-handed politics of the Board of Regents, the governing body of the school. Leading up to the mass student action was a four-year conflict between the liberal UT President Homer Rainey and the regents. In 1941 Rainey had publicly opposed the conservative Board in its attempts to fire three professors for opposing them on a state labor law issue. Despite great opposition from Rainey and the faculty, the regents eventually denied tenure to the professors effectively terminating their employment.

During the controversy, the regents attacked academic freedom by banning Dos Passos' USA and by threatening to censor the Daily Texan. In 1944 the conflict culminated when the regents demanded Rainey's resignation and Rainey refused. On November 1, Rainey was fired. Two days later students closed down the campus demanding an investigation by the state. Many students called for the dismissal of the regents. Perhaps student opinion can be summed up in the following letter which appeared in the Daily Texan:

Many things have taken place on our own university campus which profoundly attack the basic principles of free democratic action. These Regents - the dictators of our University - are appointed for six-year terms [by the Governor]. At the present most of the Regents are the directors, or the attorneys of the directors, of Texas' biggest monopoly concerns. The direct purpose of these monopolies is to manipulate the educational system in such a way as to dictate the educational policies throughout the state. Thus by establishing control over the thinking of the future voters of the State of Texas they will be able to maintain control over state politics and have free reign. If the freedom and progress of education is restricted then democracy is doomed. We must not permit our educational system to be controlled ("Firing Line", Daily Texan, Oct. 5, 1944).

Three of the regents resigned in protest, allowing the governor to appoint new regents and continue to control the Board. Rainey was not reinstated despite faculty and student opposition and international press coverage of the incident. (Vertical File - Demonstration, Barker Texas History Center).

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<sup>1</sup> A major difference between the student movements of the 1930's and the 1960's was the role of students vis-a-vis societal change. During the Depression Era, students were part of a social movement for change which included most segments of society. Although they organized themselves as students, they were not in any way a vanguard or distinguished from other progressives and socialists of the period. The students of the 1960's are particularly significant for their revolt against liberalism during a period of economic well-being. Also important was their militancy and their break from traditional leftist organizations and tactics. This difference is generally characterized as a change from the Old to the New Left. The New Left is defined by George Katsiaficas as an historical global movement, with the following five characteristics:

1) Opposition to racial, political and patriarchal domination as well as to economic exploitation, 2) Concept of freedom as not only freedom from material deprivation but also freedom to create new human beings, 3) The extension of the democratic process and expansion of the rights of an individual, not their constraint, 4) Enlarged base of revolution, and 5) An emphasis on direct action, (Katsiaficas, 1987, p. 23ff.).

Following the Rainey incident the UT campus appears to have been tranquil until the spring of 1960 when students exploded into action throughout the South in opposition to racial segregation and discrimination.<sup>2</sup> It all started in February when four black freshmen at A&T College in Greensboro, North Carolina sat in at a "whites only" lunch counter at the local Woolworth's Store.

The sit-in idea spread like wildfire to students at predominantly black schools around the South (in Nashville, Atlanta, Jackson, Houston and many small towns as well). Two months later 126 student delegates from 60 centers of sit-in activities in 12 different states held a conference in Raleigh, North Carolina at Shaw University. The Raleigh conference marked the beginning of a national student movement for civil rights and a New Left organization called the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

In March of 1960 on the University of Texas campus at Austin, a group of black students picketed a meeting of the Board of Regents to protest the university's policies of racial segregation and discrimination. At the time UT refused to allow blacks in University housing, athletics, the Longhorn Band, drama productions, student employment, student teaching, the University Queen competition, among other activities.

As SNCC was getting organized, UT students were picketing segregated restaurants on Guadalupe St., a commercial street bordering the campus on the west and commonly referred to as "The Drag." The Campus Interracial Committee, which had been formed the previous year, was politically active in advocating racial equality at UT as well as in the Austin community.

## **PURPOSE AND PERSPECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT**

These activities mark the beginning of the history I am writing. Although I recognize that previous history very much effected the period after 1960, I have limited my study to this time period for the following three reasons:

- 1) The research methods for compiling the history of this period do not vary greatly whereas, a history of earlier periods would entail less precise research.
- 2) It limits the project to a workable size.
- 3) 1960 marks the beginning of the national student movement for social change.

My goal is to compile a history of student activism at UT over the years 1960-88. In addition, I intend to contextualize and analyze this history.

My own involvement as a student activist on this campus motivated me to do this project. Several mistakes in recent years could have been avoided if we had known the history of student struggle on this campus. For the most part, the administrators and the police are much more familiar than the student activists with past events. The administration's historical knowledge empowers it and gives it a distinct advantage over the students. Thus, my purpose is to contribute to future victories on the part of students by acquainting them with the successes, tactics, failures, beliefs, activities and actors of the past.

As a fervent disbeliever in objectivity, I make no pretense to write an "objective" history. As long as the university is administered like a corporation by a handful of

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<sup>2</sup> I recommend further research on student activism prior to 1960, especially during the 1950's.

wealthy individuals, there will be an "us" and a "them." As long as there is an "us" and a "them," historians will tend to write from one perspective or the other. The ones who will receive financial and institutional support in publishing their works will write from the administrative viewpoint or some "objective" variant thereof.

Furthermore, my perspective is colored by my belief that the control of this institution by a handful of wealthy business people ensures that education will favor their interests.<sup>3</sup> Divided physically from the community, students generally do not feel a duty to better society; they seek credentials for middle class status and a \$30,000+ income level. Required course work is more often drudgery than intellectually stimulating. The students are taught not to question the authority of their teachers, but to regurgitate the information and opinions being shoved down their throats by professors. Fortunately, despite the forces opposed to the development of an independent critical spirit, there have always been some students who have rebelled. It is their story I intend to tell here.

I offer no apologies for my political views or for writing this history from the perspective of students. But I do apologize for any errors or inconsistencies in this thesis. I extend my gratitude to Alan Pogue and Phil Prim for providing me with back issues of The Rag newspaper, to Akwasi Evans, Alice Embree, Jeff Jones, Gavan Duffy, Pat Cuney, Raul Valdez, Cyndi Stewart, Harold McMillan, Patricia Kruppa, Danielle Jaussaud, Scott McLemee, Isolda Ortega, Gilbert Rivera, Joe Krier, Cynthia Perez, Frank Rodriguez, Ronnie Phillips, Lori Hansel, Erik Devereux, Michael Lacey and sources who requested anonymity for their helpful information. In addition, I'd like to thank my supervising professor Harry Cleaver for his insights, ideas, and especially for his refreshing tendency to point out the gains of student struggle rather than dwelling only on failures and mistakes.

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<sup>3</sup> If they do not obtain white-collar employment, students will generally take the roles of hard-working productive employees serving the interests of the owners of society rather than the interests of themselves and the common people.

# CHAPTER 1

## STUDENT MOVEMENT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

*Under the tree...blood on the limbs and blood at the roots, black bodies swinging in the breeze...Bulging eyes and the twisted bowels and then the sudden smell of burning flesh...Here is a strange and bitter fruit.*

-Billie Holliday

### THE EARLY STUDENT SIT-INS

In the spring of 1960, black students (and some whites) around the South began a militant extra-legal struggle for racial equality and justice. Eventually the students were at the forefront of a grassroots movement of southern blacks. Although the civil rights struggle had begun earlier in the 1950's with the NAACP-led legal battles for desegregation and the mass action of the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955, the Greensboro sit-in heralded in a new era which broke dramatically from the past.

"It is hard to overestimate the electrical effect of that first sit-in in Greensboro, as the news reached the nation on television screens, over radios, in newspapers. In his Harlem apartment in New York City, Bob Moses, a former Harvard graduate student and mathematics teacher, saw a picture of the Greensboro sit-inners. 'The students in that picture had a certain look on their faces,' he later told writer Ben Bagdikian, 'sort of sullen, angry, determined. Before, the Negro in the South had always looked on the defensive, cringing. This time they were taking the initiative. They were kids my age, and I knew this had something to do with my own life....'" (Zinn, 1965, p. 17). Moses later became one of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders.

The Greensboro sit-in struck a chord among southern black students. The idea of nonviolent direct action spread quickly throughout the South, spurring thousands of students and later others to action. Nashville, Tennessee became one center of sit-in activity. Nashville students displayed a level of dedication which was to set the tone for the movement. Those arrested there refused to pay bail, choosing to remain in jail instead. By this, they denied the legitimacy of the legal system in their struggle. In February of 1961, the 'jail, no bail' strategy was adopted as SNCC policy.

Marion Barry, a Fisk University graduate student and later the first chair of SNCC, took a leading role in the Nashville sit-ins. "I came to Fisk...inquired about forming a chapter of the NAACP...but we didn't do much.... We had not at any time thought about direct action. In the meantime in Greensboro, N.C., the student movement began on February 1, 1960. So we in Nashville decided we wanted to do something about it.... I remember the first time I was arrested, about February 27.... I took a chance on losing a scholarship or not receiving my Master's degree. But to me, if I had received my scholarship and Master's degree, and still was not a free man, I was not a man at all," said Barry (ibid., p. 19). Not only did the students risk their academic careers, they braved incarceration and violent reaction to their nonviolent sit-ins. It was not long before they had to prepare themselves to sacrifice their blood and even their lives.

The sit-in movement was soon characterized by skillful organization, creative and sophisticated tactics, and highly principled and disciplined participants. The fundamental

nature of the discrimination they were attacking and the level of dedication of the sit-inners earns them the title of social revolutionaries. Though they were unarmed, they were at war with white supremacy, one of the basic tools used by American business to divide and rule the workers in this country. Impatient with the slow pace of desegregation, the legal system, concessions, and traditional black organizations like the NAACP, they turned to the use of the extraparliamentary tactic of civil disobedience and were soon quite successful in the upper South and peripheral southern states. By addressing their grievances illegally and victoriously, they posed an enormous threat to the American political system, delegitimizing it in the eyes of many of its citizens.

At the April 1960 Raleigh conference, which brought 126 student delegates together, the students decided to remain independent of adult organizations (like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Congress of Racial Equality) but to maintain friendly ties. At the conference, a keynote speaker Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. articulated the movement's rejection of the NAACP and other "old" black middle-class groups. King characterized the sit-in movement as a "revolt against those Negroes in the middle class who have indulged themselves in big cars and ranch-style homes rather than in joining a movement for freedom," (West, 1984, p. 47).

This desire for autonomy distinguishes the student movement from the 1930's movement and from their white contemporaries of SLID who didn't break from their parent organization until 1962. This mood has characterized the student movement in the U.S. ever since and forms the beginnings of the New Left movement.

In the statement of purpose adopted at the Raleigh Conference, the students declared:

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the pre-supposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the first step towards such a society.... (Cohen and Hale, 1967, Appendix).

They decided to set up an office, hire a secretary to staff it, print a newsletter called *The Student Voice*, raise funds, plan nonviolent training for the summer and coordinate the various activities in the South. Their goals were to end segregation and discrimination, assure southern blacks of the right to vote, and to seek fair employment laws among others.

For the most part, the participants in the sit-ins were "not middle class reformers who became somehow concerned about others. They come themselves from the ranks of the victims,...[in general] they are young, they are Negro, they come from the South, their families are poor and of the working class, but they have been to college. Northern middle class whites and Negroes are a minority," (Zinn, 1965, pp. 9-10).

Black students first began to confront the UT Regents around this time.<sup>4</sup> After months of discussion, on March 11, 1960 a group of students held the first civil rights protest conducted by students at UT. They demonstrated on the fringe of the campus

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<sup>4</sup> Although there had been protests during the 1950's on the UT campus, the participants in these demonstrations were members of the community demanding that the university be opened to African-American students.

calling for university integration. The following day, they wrote a letter in response to a public statement made by UT President Logan Wilson the previous day. Wilson had stated that:

In response to queries to [UT] regarding the policy of integration, it should be pointed out that there is complete integration with reference to all educational opportunities and facilities... [and] forced integration in social and extracurricular areas has not yet been established. In view of our known achievements in meeting what is everywhere a difficult situation, I am surprised that our institution should be made a target for **provocative** demonstrations (*Daily Texan*, March 13, 1960, p. 1 - emphasis added).

The group of less than 50 students picketed a regents meeting which was being held on the campus that weekend. A group of black women presented a petition to be read at the meeting. These women wrote:

Be it resolved that we, the undersigned Negro women of the University of Texas deem the designation of certain specific living units for the exclusive use of Negro women, or the restriction of Negro women to certain specified dorms a deprivation of our recognized right as University students to select the living facilities of our choice, (Duren, 1979, p. 7).

The student demonstrators also wrote a letter to UT President Logan Wilson citing housing, sports and public performance restrictions as areas which needed to be opened up to blacks. In part the letter read:

We recognize the University of Texas was one of the first universities in the South to take significant action toward integration with the admission of Negro undergraduate students in 1956. However, significant advances in this direction have ceased. Our present concern is for a resumption of this policy of leadership and for desegregation in all areas of University life, (ibid.).

Despite Wilson's earlier derogatory statement about the demonstrators, that weekend the UT administration decided to convert International House into a dormitory for black women at a cost of \$30,000 and to open other dorm space for black men. At this time the administration was only bound by the "separate, but equal" doctrine; it had no intention of desegregating further. The concession was called "only a token answer to the urgent question of 'When?'.... A satisfactory answer doesn't seem likely for quite a while. For it is probable that the public relations-conscious university will continue to move just as slowly as in the past - in spite of the protests of the Negro students who desire only to be first class students in a University of the First Class," (*Daily Texan*, March 13, 1960). The student protesters echoed these sentiments when they walked out of a meeting with UT Vice President Harry Ransom on March 15 after their demands for integration of housing, athletics and drama productions were not seriously considered (*Daily Texan*, March 15, 1960).

The March protest was the first student action since the Rainey incident and signalled the beginning of the UT student movement for civil rights. It is significant that the black enrollment at UT was very low at this time and the character of protest was different at the predominantly white university than it was in other areas of the South where much of the protest activity was led by students at black colleges. UT students were, however, quite aware of student activities around the South as some UT students

went to centers of sit-in activity throughout the early 1960's to support other activists and to learn from them.

Students from UT and Huston-Tillotson (a predominantly black college in East Austin) actively sought desegregation in the Austin business community in the late spring. They began picketing restaurants on the Drag in April and started sitting in at downtown lunch counters in May. They also sought to integrate Drag theaters, holding stand-ins and pickets.

That fall, a new student group was formed which reflected the spirit of SNCC. The organization was called Students for Direct Action and its concern was that "integration is practically at a standstill in the university area. Most of the students are not even aware of the segregation tactics employed by the university and by business firms in the area," according to Chandler Davidson, a leader of the group (Duren, 1979). The Students for Direct Action maintained ties with SNCC, continued with sit-ins and pressured the university for change.

During the fall semester the first violent reaction to the student movement occurred. White supremacists exploded a bomb in the stairwell of the YMCA while students involved in desegregation efforts were holding a meeting in the building. Fortunately no one was injured and two of the terrorists (who were UT students) were later charged with involvement in the incident (Duren Papers, Barker Texas History Center). The students used the University area YMCA as a place to conduct orientation sessions for black students and held their meetings there.<sup>5</sup>

The UT students who participated in the civil rights movement in 1960 were primarily motivated by self interest. As in other areas of the South, the participants were mostly black and poor; they were confronted with physical segregation both at school and in the community, as well as the reality of racial hatred. Their political rhetoric was rooted in both the American tradition of Judeo-Christian morality and an appeal to national political symbols (like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution), espousing equality and freedom.

It was this appeal to traditional moral and political beliefs which attracted the participation of white middle class students whose self-interest was not so directly effected by the civil rights movement. The participation of these white middle class students alongside the black students was crucial for the civil rights movement locally simply because of demographic differences between Texas and other areas of the South. While the populations of states like Mississippi and Alabama are around 50% black, Texas blacks compose about 12% of the state's population. Thus, the ability to mobilize white and middle class students through the appeal to traditional American beliefs was an important trait of the local movement.

Initial participants in the student movement for racial equality at UT were few in number. They were mostly black, poor and very dedicated. They were not only UT students but also Huston-Tillotson students who participated in the early sit-ins. The actions during 1960 by this relatively small group of committed activists had earned them a following of many whites in the university community by Spring of 1961.

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<sup>5</sup> The 'Y' became the center for radical student groups later in the 1960's and early 1970's.

## **GROWING MILITANCY AMONG BLACK STUDENTS**

As previously mentioned in February 1961, SNCC adopted the "jail, no bail" strategy as policy. Ten students had been arrested in Rock Hill, South Carolina and refused bail. SNCC sent four people to join the others for the purpose of dramatizing the injustice. The fourteen young people spent a month in prison. 'Jail, no bail' spread quickly, first to Atlanta where 80 students from black colleges went to jail. As public opinion increasingly swung in their favor and more desegregation victories were achieved, the students became even more militant that summer with their involvement in the bloody Freedom Rides.

The northern civil rights group CORE organized the first Freedom Ride in May of 1961 to draw attention to the southern failure to enforce a Supreme Court decision to outlaw segregation in interstate travel. The thirteen Freedom Riders (some of whom were students) began the bus ride in Washington, D.C. with New Orleans as their destination. Although they encountered some harassment and a few arrests in the upper South, their passage through the Deep South (Mississippi and Alabama) proved the greatest obstacle. In Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama the Riders braved bombs, bus-burnings and beatings by white mobs. Police protection was almost nil. They decided to fly from Birmingham to New Orleans to participate in a mass rally there on May 17.

Students from Nashville and Atlanta refused to accept this victory for white supremacy. Although the student Freedom Riders went farther and received more protection than the first convoy, they too faced violent mobs, this time in Montgomery, Alabama. While they treated their wounds, they were met by more student Riders there and continued to Jackson, Mississippi where the 27 were arrested. They refused to pay their fines and spent two months on a penal farm where many of them were beaten.

The adult organization SCLC conceded to the federal government a temporary lull in the Freedom Rides, but the Attorney General had negotiated with the wrong group. A pilgrimage of students to Jackson continued throughout the summer. By August, over 300 had been arrested. The guards at the Parchman penitentiary used electric shocks, "wristbreakers,"<sup>6</sup> and other forms of torture on the students, but were unable to break their spirits. If the students had not remained so strong in their determination, it is probable that they would not have achieved the victory of September 22, 1961 when the Interstate Commerce Commission decided to desegregate bus and train stations.

After the Freedom Riders were released from prison in August, SNCC held a meeting at Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. At the Highlander meeting, the conflict between those supporting concessions to the political establishment (i.e. to the Kennedy administration) and those supporting a continuation of the uncompromising tactics of SNCC. "In the eyes of many SNCC members, the 'Establishment' against which they were struggling began to encompass both the Democratic Party's liberals and the SCLC's black activist liberals. This slow rupture would result in some glaring defeats in the civil rights movement, most notably the Albany, Georgia Movement in December 1961, and also led to the gradual breakaway of SNCC from the techniques of nonviolence," (West,

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<sup>6</sup> The term "wristbreakers" refers to a long metal tool used by police to more easily pin a person's arm behind her/his back. They are functional in arresting or quieting an inmate, because they allow increased leverage and thus application of pain to the victim's wrist and arm. They are sometime used to aid in police interrogation.

1984, p. 48). The student factions compromised, deciding to continue the direct action strategy and also to pursue voter registration of blacks in the Deep South. The activists then headed south.

Meanwhile at UT, the controversy over segregated university facilities was heating up. In January 1961, students began picketing the segregated theaters on the Drag in increasing numbers following scuffles between hecklers and picketers. By February, the stand-in crowd had grown to over 500 students. Faculty members began to support the protesters at this time, with 260 signing an *Austin American Statesman* advertisement for theater integration (Duren, 1979).

Segregated university housing was increasingly opposed by students during the spring. In May, the regents received petitions from the Student Assembly and the Faculty in favor of integration of housing and athletics; over 7000 signed the pro-integration petition. However opposition continued; 1300 students signed a petition opposing the integration of dorm (ibid.). The majority of students did support integration by this time. A poll conducted in May 1961 indicated that roughly 60% of the students favored "equal access to all University-owned facilities," (ibid.).

The Board of Regents ignored the opinions of the faculty and students by unanimously adopting a policy opposing integration at its July meeting. They issued a statement saying:

Whether or not we agree with the decisions of the Supreme Court on racial integration, we shall in good faith proceed and have heretofore proceeded along this path with all deliberate speed.... We have a heavy responsibility to perform, and we respectfully ask you to trust our judgment. **We do not feel that any substantial changes should be made in the immediate future**, but we shall continue to move forward with due and deliberate speed as we think advisable under all the circumstances which exist from time to time (ibid. - emphasis added).

This statement reflects the paternalism, arrogance and intransigence on the part of the regents which has been a characteristic attitude of the body toward social change. The decision was a slap in the face to the university community and demonstrated the lack of democracy within the university structure.<sup>7</sup> The fact that they reached this decision during the summer months when most students were not on campus reflects their fear of opposition to this undemocratic move.

When the students returned to campus in the fall of 1961, they resumed their efforts to integrate university housing. At the time, black women were housed in Whitis Dorm and Almetris Co-op under much poorer living conditions than those enjoyed by white co-eds. The housing for black men was also inferior to that of Anglo men.

Black students were enraged when they found out about an incident at Kinsolving Dormitory. Student advisers had briefed the female residents on the rules of race relations within the dorm. They told the students that black women visiting in Kinsolving could not use water fountains or restrooms and that black men should not be inside the white women's dorm unless they were workers (Duren Papers, Barker Texas History Center).

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<sup>7</sup> In my opinion, the ambiguous language of this statement reflects a premonition on the part of the regents that opposition to segregation among the students would increase.

On October 13, three young black women tested the rules by visiting a white student. No confrontation resulted. So the women organized a larger scale violation of the dorm's rules for the following week. On October 19, approximately 55 black students (men and women) went into the dorm's parlor and held a sit-in. When dorm supervisors told them to leave, they refused. As had been predetermined, they left of their own volition after one hour. Thirty of these Kinsolving sit-inners were targeted by the UT administration for disciplinary procedures. Their "crime" was failure to obey "properly constituted authority" when asked to leave the dorm.<sup>8</sup>

More demonstrations followed. White students joined the picketing of Kinsolving. The picketers received national media attention because they pointed out that the Vice President's daughter Lynda Bird Johnson (a Kinsolving resident) was living in segregated housing (Embree interview). The General Faculty voted 308-34 against disciplining the students and in favor of integration of dorms and eating facilities. Students turned out in record numbers to vote in an election referendum favoring integration. The Students for Direct Action agreed with UT President Joseph Smiley to a cooling-off period in exchange for amnesty for the protesters. Despite all of this, the thirty black students were placed on yearlong disciplinary probation (Duren, 1979).

In addition to the unpopular disciplining, the university formalized the previously informal rules against racial interaction on November 6. The statement of rules for university-owned housing declared:

The social and dining areas of Whitis Dormitory and overnight privileges for women guests in the dormitory are available only to Negroes. The social and dining areas of other [white] women's residence halls and overnight privileges in these dormitories are not available to Negroes. Students living in these residence halls may invite other girls to their rooms as personal guests, but are expected to respect the rights of their fellow residents at all times. Students living in men's residence halls may invite other men to their rooms, but are expected to respect the rights of their fellow residents at all times.

These residence halls are not public buildings, but are reserved by contract with the occupants for their use and enjoyment subject to dormitory rules and regulations. All persons entering these dormitories are expected to observe all university rules and regulations...and to respect duly constituted authority vested in University personnel (ibid).

The students, not a little disheartened by the administration's refusal to be swayed by the mandate of the students and faculty, decided to seek recourse through the legal system. Three black students filed a federal lawsuit against the university seeking a court order to abolish dormitory segregation. To support the legal effort, student activities switched from demonstrations to fund raising.

This decision on the part of the Students for Direct Action presents an obvious contradiction to the actions of students throughout the South who opposed taking their struggle to the legal system. Obviously, black students at UT did not subscribe to this rejection of the judicial system. Why not? I conjecture that the black students, who

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<sup>8</sup> This was the first incident (which I encountered in my research) of administrative persecution of students for political protesting.

numbered less than 200 at the time, could not afford to pursue the militant "jail, no bail" strategy which had worked in desegregating other areas of the South. Had they done so, the university could have pressed criminal charges against them and kicked them out of school, defeating the entire purpose of integrating the dorms by purging the school of most of its black students.

It must also be said that although the militancy of students was increasing during this period, UT students were more conciliatory than were the majority of student civil rights activists. This can be partially explained by their absorption into the academic community. Comparatively, a large number of the SNCC militants had taken leave or dropped out of school in order to participate in the activities of the civil rights movement, especially when the emphasis of their activities shifted to the Deep South in late 1961. The UT activists, for the most part, remained in school to pursue both desegregation and their own education. By being enrolled in school during their struggle for racial equality, they were subject to the numerous rules and regulations of the school in addition to the institutionalized racism of the university. The fact of their education by white professors and the ubiquitous whiteness of all authority figures within the institution certainly played a role in mitigating their militancy.

In immediate response to the students' legal action, UT bypassed regular legal procedures by hiring three special attorneys to plead its case. Normal procedure would have been for the state attorney general to argue UT's case for segregation of housing. However, power and money enabled UT to circumvent the usual course of action.

At the end of the fall 1961 semester, a federal action occurred which had a big impact on the political situation at UT. The Peace Corps, which had planned to conduct a multi-million dollar training program at UT, decided to transfer the project to the University of Oklahoma instead, following its realization of the university's policy of segregating dormitories. This was the first act of federal intervention at UT; it served to galvanize faculty support in favor of desegregation (Duren papers, Barker Texas History Center).

In January of 1962, the lawsuit for integrated housing was threatened when the Texas Attorney General filed motions for the suit to be dropped; despite repeated delays in the case, the students continued to support it, but began to turn back to the confrontational tactics previously used. One of their targets was the Forty Acres Club, a newly opened private 'whites-only' faculty club often used for university meetings and entertaining official university visitors (Vertical File - Minority Groups UT, Barker Texas History Center). Students for Direct Action began picketing the club, much to the chagrin of the faculty members who supported integration of the students' dorms but were much less vocal about integrating their own club.

Students actions in the community received a good deal of publicity during 1962. The sit-ins and pickets of segregated businesses in the campus area continued. Students challenged racial segregation off-campus more during this period and achieved a victory in desegregating the two campus-area theaters. In the fall semester, the Students for Direct Action found out that a UT ice-skating class was to be taught at a segregated ice-skating rink. They picketed and held stand-ins at the Austin Ice Palace and were able to have the class cancelled. During the summer of 1962, a token change was made allowing blacks of the same sex visiting privileges in white dorms.

In the Fall of 1962, Rev. Martin Luther King of SCLC came to Austin. His aid was enlisted by the students in planning non-violent activities to achieve total UT integration. At the time, they listed the activities to be integrated as housing, intercollegiate athletics, faculty, student teaching, Longhorn Band, drama productions, student employment in all areas, the Brackenridge Apartments and the university Queen competition. In the form of the newly organized group Negroes for Equal Rights (NER), they also asked King for moral and financial support for the housing lawsuit (ibid.).

The Campus Interracial Committee (CIC) made a presentation at a Board of Regents meeting in late September. The CIC called for immediate and full integration of university housing, athletics and employment. (Duren, 1979). Although the regents refused to change their policy, they did approve a provisional admissions program, a plan to admit students in the summer who did not qualify for admission in the long session. The stipulation was that the students could qualify for fall admission if they did satisfactory work in certain courses over the summer. The program was not designed for minority students but enabled many to enter the university. The main reason the program did help minority students enter the school is because the cultural and social bias of the SAT and ACT tests required for admission had prevented many qualified minorities from matriculating (McMillan interview).

Later in the semester, the Student Assembly rescinded a previously passed bill calling for a referendum on integration of university housing and athletics (Duren, 1979). The student government of the university has often been characterized as an impotent body of yes-men which serves only to pad the resumé s of those who enjoy holding powerless political positions. As indicated by the two previous incidents wherein students voted for integration to no avail, the referendum likely would have made no difference to the intransigent regents.

In the spring of 1963, the NER staged numerous non-violent activities. It also focused some of the students' efforts on the Austin community. In February, the NER began pressuring the Austin City Council to pass legislation outlawing discrimination practices in restaurants, motels, hotels, and recreational facilities. When their proposal was rejected, they began picketing of segregated businesses in the downtown area with vigor. In April the students staged a parade depicting the burial of Uncle Tom in protest of segregation in the downtown area. An increasing number of whites were participating in the protests. The students in May targeted the campus area restaurants persistently holding several sit-ins and frequent pickets (Duren Papers, Barker Texas History Center).

## **THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN**

The UT civil rights movement finally tasted victory in the fall of 1963. After two days of picketing a regents meeting by the CIC for the removal of all racial bars at UT, the Board ruled on November 9 to "remove all student restrictions of every kind and character based on race or color," (Duren, 1979) permitting widespread integration in student activities at the school. Because of UT's participation in southwest regional athletics, the ruling also opened up Southwest Conference intercollegiate sports to black athletes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *De facto* desegregation of university athletics would not take place until the coaches were pressured by the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation in the late 1960's.

However, the ruling left untouched the university-owned dormitories, boarding houses and dining halls because these "are auxiliary enterprises which do not constitute part of the educational process of the university." At this time the lawsuit over university housing integration was still pending. Therefore, on December 19, 1963 the CIC held a demonstration at Kinsolving. They sang, marched and protested the segregated housing policy (*Daily Texan*, December 20, 1963).

In January, the Forty Acres Club served a black newsman working as associate press secretary to President Johnson. The club, which had practiced a strict "whites-only" policy up until this point, began systematically admitting black guests the day following this incident. The club did not allow black members however until March of 1965.

## **STUDENT VICTORY: UT-OWNED HOUSING INTEGRATED**

During the Spring of 1964, the CIC and the Students for Direct Action continued their protests against dormitory segregation. Due to these protests and the fact that UT wanted a federal agency to underwrite a construction contract for new accommodations for married students, the regents approved integration for the proposed married students' dormitory as well as for summer seminar participants at all dorms.

In May of 1964 after years of legal stalling and a lack of financial support for the plaintiffs, the students who had filed suit against UT housing integration dropped their case. In response, the regents voted 6-1 (with two abstaining) to remove all racial barriers in housing. Also the first black faculty member was hired at this time - Dr. Ervin Perry, an assistant professor in the engineering department.

Although the housing integration policy had been made known in May following the regents' meeting, its institutionalization began on June 1, 1964 when UT President Norman Hackerman sent out a memo representing both capitulation to pressures for integration and a clever move to maintain the status quo. The memo resulted from a decision of the regents to integrate student housing and activities. It read:

With respect to the admission and education of students, with respect to the employment and promotion of teaching and nonteaching personnel, with respect to student and faculty activities conducted on premises owned or occupies by the university, neither the University of Texas nor any of its component institutions shall discriminate **either in favor of or against any person on account of his or her race, creed, or color.** (Duren, 1979 - emphasis added).

This ruling signaled capitulation on the part of the regents to student and faculty demands for racial equality within the institution. The victory followed ten years of difficult struggle on the part of southern blacks and five years of student protest at the university. The factors leading up to this change of heart on the part of the regents include widespread student and faculty support for complete integration, the publicity-grabbing protest tactics of black and white UT students, the building momentum of the civil rights movement, President LBJ's humiliation over Texas' segregated university<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See *Texan* and *Rag* articles regarding scheduled Johnson speech at graduation ceremonies.

and the threat of federal intervention (as exemplified in the annulment of the Peace Corps contract).

However, the ruling effectively outlawed minority recruitment and resulted in a decrease in black enrollment in 1965 and 1966. It served to maintain the status quo by making no positive statement favoring the increase of minority enrollment. The ruling also violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (which was passed a month later), which stated that "previously discriminatory recipients must take affirmative action to overcome the effect of prior discrimination." It would be another eleven years before UT was forced to comply with Title VI.

**SIGNIFICANCE - NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT** It is significant that the university decided to integrate student activities before the Civil Rights Act was passed. Although the decision to integrate can be partially attributed to the fact that President LBJ was scheduled to speak at the May 30, 1964 commencement ceremonies and security concerns related to this presidential speaking engagement, the decision also demonstrates the effectiveness of the civil rights movement in 1963 as the previously middle class student movement was drawing in the participation of the black working class. The civil rights movement culminated in the 1963 Birmingham protests where mass nonviolent direct action led to the arrests of over 3000 people and televised newscasts aroused the sympathy of many Americans. One civil rights leader Bayard Rustin wrote about Birmingham:

It was the loss of all fear that produced the moment of truth in Birmingham: children as young as six paraded calmly when dogs, fire hoses and police billies were used against them.... Thousands of teenagers stood by at the churches through the whole country, waiting their turn to face the clubs of Bull Connor's police, who are known to be among the most brutal in the nation.... Day after day the brutality and arrests went on. And always, in the churches, hundreds of well-disciplined children awaited their turns. (Zinn, 1973, p. 207).

As the movement was broadening its demands to encompass the needs of its new participants, change occurred among the movement's leaders some of whom were willing to make concessions to the federal government. As the victory of black enfranchisement was becoming a reality, there was some hesitation on the part of the movement's middle class leaders to incorporate the demand of economic justice for the black underclass.

The March on Washington in 1963 (when King made his famous "I-have-a-dream" speech) reflected a central dilemma: "the existence and sustenance of the civil rights movement neither needed nor required white aid or allies, yet its success required liberal support in the Democratic Party, Congress and the White House.... With white liberal support, the movement would achieve limited success, but slowly lose its legitimacy in the eyes of the now more politicized black petit bourgeois students, working poor and underclass. Without white liberal support, the movement could raise more fundamental issues of concern to the black working poor and underclass, yet thereby render the movement marginal to mainstream American politics and hence risk severe repression," (West, 1984, p. 49). An example of this conflict can be seen in King and other civil rights leaders' censoring of SNCC activist John Lewis' prepared speech in the 1963 March on Washington. Lewis' original speech had lashed out at the Kennedy

administration for its slow pace of change and failure to ensure that the constitutional rights of blacks in the Deep South were upheld.

Middle class blacks were the ones who would benefit from the civil rights movement; their ability to address the economic issues which affected most of the new black working class participants<sup>11</sup> posed a threat to the American status quo. As black unity strengthened and became more radicalized, the government realized it would have to make concessions to avoid a revolution; thus the 1964 Civil Rights Act. With its passage, the first stage of the black freedom movement ended because it had achieved its liberal goals.

The student civil rights movement did not end at UT in 1964 with the integration of dormitories. Many Austin businesses remained segregated in 1964, as did some university-owned housing. However, the movement did begin to change at this time. Working class and poor black involvement in the civil rights movement necessitated a transformation. The gains of 1964 threatened to divide educated students and middle class leaders from the poor blacks involved. After 1964, blacks in the ghettos began rioting and were brutally repressed. Black power began to emerge in the mid-1960's and served to unify members of the black freedom movement who were beginning to be separated by socio-economic status. This black power movement also served to continue the demand for change in the status of blacks. To their credit, the SNCC activists continued in their dedication to the black underclass through voter registration drives and the Freedom Schools in the mid-1960's. The student struggle against racism will be discussed further in detail in Chapter 3: From Civil Rights to Black Liberation (1964-8) as well as in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>11</sup> Poor blacks, who could not afford to sit at a desegregated lunch counter or see a movie in an integrated theater, did not gain much by this social change which did not include any redress of economic inequality.

## CHAPTER 2

### BEGINNINGS OF SDS

*Come out Lyndon with your hands held high. Drop your guns, baby, and reach for the sky. I've got you surrounded and you ain't got a chance. Send you back to Texas, make you work on your ranch.*

-Country Joe and the Fish

#### NATIONAL WHITE STUDENT MOVEMENT FORMED

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) formed a chapter at UT in the early spring of 1964. From 1964-7, the UT chapter of SDS began to build the local white, radical student movement. Although they were unable to attract much support from their fellow students prior to the free speech movement of 1967, their activities during this period helped lay the groundwork for the post-1967 period.

SDS was a national organization founded in 1960, but its roots date back to 1905. Formerly the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the group had been funded and supported by its parent organization the League for Industrial Democracy (LID).<sup>12</sup> In January 1960, SLID members expressed a desire to break from its LID elders; they changed their organization's name to Students for a Democratic Society but continued to receive financial support and office space from LID (Sale).

The first SDS conference occurred at the University of Michigan in May of 1960 during the nascent southern student sit-in movement. Several civil rights activists attended, as did mid-western and northeastern students. After the conference the organization received a grant from a Detroit union which enabled the creation of a permanent staff (ibid.).

Al Haber served as the first SDS president from 1960-2. During the early 1960's, much of SDS work was in supporting the civil rights movement. Haber commented on student activity around the country during that first year:

We have spoken at last, with vigor, idealism and urgency, supporting our words with picket lines, demonstrations, money and even our own bodies.... We have taken the initiative from the adult spokesmen and leadership, setting the pace and policy as our actions evolve their own dynamic. Pessimism and cynicism have given way to direct action (ibid.).

Until 1962, SDS remained very dependent on LID and fairly disorganized. The political views of the participants evolved rapidly during this time. In 1961, SDS field secretary Tom Hayden wrote an essay called *A Letter to the New (Young) Left* in which he called for a "radicalism drawing on what remains of the adult labor, academic and political communities, not just revolting in despair against them," (Sale, 1973, p.37).

Sale cited the reasons for the resurgence of the student left as follows: 1) the social fabric of the nation was tattered (i.e. dissolution of the family, increase in drug and alcohol use, higher crime rates), 2) the artificially supported economy began to show signs of deterioration like high unemployment and inflation and the increased monopolization of industries, 3) the nation was seen as politically corrupt and the

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<sup>12</sup> See introduction for information regarding SLID. Other sources include Sale text and Brax cited in bibliography.

bureaucracy was seen as impersonal, 4) a crisis of belief in traditional politics led to the delegitimization of authority, 5) the large size of the student population during the 1960's (the first Baby-Boomers turned 18 in 1964), 6) most students were children of parents who lived through the Depression and World War II; the students had rejected their parents' concept that money buys happiness, and 7) the increased reliance of the government on universities as management training centers and providers of military and economic research enhanced the power of students.

In June of 1962, about 60 students from northern colleges and various student organizations met at an SDS convention in Port Huron, Michigan to draft a founding document. The 66-page *Port Huron Statement* established the organization SDS and its principle of participatory democracy (in which they saw politics as a public, positive and collective decision-making process). The preamble to the document read:

Students for a Democratic Society is an association of young people on the left. It seeks to create a sustained community of educational and political concern: one bringing together liberals and radicals, activists and scholars, students and faculty.

It maintains a vision of a democratic society, where at all levels the people have control of the decisions which affect them and the resources on which they are dependent. It seeks a relevance through the continual focus on realities and on the programs necessary to effect change at the most basic levels of economic, political and social organization. It feels the urgency to put forth a radical, democratic program counterposed to authoritarian movements both of communism and the domestic right. (Cohen and Hale, Appendix).

Following the conference, LID called in the two executive SDS officers for a "hearing" in which LID threatened to cut off all support for SDS because it perceived SDS to be a pro-Soviet, popular-fronting, Communist-infiltrated organization. The clash between the Old and New Left organizations continued but LID finally agreed to maintain its financial support of an autonomous SDS (Sale).

The *Port Huron Statement* was widely distributed among students that year. Over the next few years, SDSers supported the SNCC movement, began discussing university reform, and established a leftist peace and foreign policy research clearinghouse (the Peace Research and Education Project). In 1963, a large number of the predominantly white middle class students began to leave the universities and to denounce their privileged backgrounds. Some registered black voters in the Mississippi Delta while others did such things as organizing unemployed workers in the decaying inner cities. They attempted to model themselves after SNCC by leaving school to organize the poor and the unemployed. To carry this out, they founded the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) in September of 1963.

At the SDS summer 1964 conference at Pine Hill, New York several factions emerged. The strongest was the ERAP group which supported the notion that bourgeois students leave school and work for the poor. The campus-organizing group wanted more focus on radicalizing middle class students. The realignment faction supported working in electoral politics. The factions compromised with each other, deciding to continue doing as they had; SDS remained intact. At this time, it had grown to include 29 chapters, one of which was the newly formed UT chapter.

## **UT STUDENTS FOUND SDS**

Alice Embree, one of the early participants in SDS at UT, said that when she went through registration at the beginning of the Spring 1964 semester, there was an SDS information table. She conjectured that four or five people started the group (Embree interview - March 1988).

The early focus of the group was participation with black student activists in the sit-ins at downtown Austin restaurants. Also SDS worked with CIC activists on campus to get the university-approved housing to include only integrated housing. In the spring of 1965, SDSers supported the Student Interracial Committee's picket of a "whites-only" restaurant - Roy's Lounge - on the Drag (Embree interview).

## **FIRST ANTI-VIETNAM WAR PROTESTS AT UT**

In mid October 1965, SDS held a death march protesting U.S. policy toward Vietnam. This protest, which coincided with the international days of protest, was apparently the first antiwar demonstration on the campus during the 1960's.<sup>13</sup> About 70 students participated in the march and rally. A surprise speaker Dr. William Sloane Coffin, a chaplain at Yale University, spoke to the demonstrators about the economic reasons for the war. SDS had attempted to get a parade permit to march in the streets during the rally but the permit had been refused by the City Council; this spurred SDS on to file a lawsuit in the Texas Criminal Court of Appeals for the right to assemble freely. The Student Assembly narrowly deplored the City Council's permit denial to SDS by a vote of 14-13 (Vertical File - SDS, Barker Texas History Center).

The counter-cultural orientation of some of the SDSers was apparent at the protest. A *Dallas Morning News* article described the antiwar protesters as "shaggy maned" and "homegrown leftists," and referred to their "shoulder-length hair," "T-shirts, sandals, leotards and dirty jeans." The article noted that most of the UT participants in SDS were white and of upper middle class backgrounds. In the same article, SDSer Scott Pittman responded to a question about the group's funding, "armchair liberal professors get rid of their conscience steam by slipping us \$10 occasionally." He also commented that the group had trouble "scraping up professors to speak at our rallies," (*Dallas Morning News*, October 24, 1965).

Reaction to the antiwar march was quick, the Young Republicans formed a Committee to Support U.S. Policy in Vietnam to show that the SDS position was not representative of the student body. The group was able to collect 3700 signatures on its petition (ibid.). Also that month, Regent Frank Erwin threatened to abolish the editorial page of the *Daily Texan* after it printed an editorial criticizing the killing of Vietnamese children.

## **STUDENT CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS DENIED**

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<sup>13</sup> However, several campus activists earlier that year had held an antiwar demonstration at President LBJ's ranch in Texas.

In February 1966, the Texas Student Publications (TSP) Board of Directors censored a *Ranger* cover<sup>14</sup> because as Dean Jack Holland explained, its caricature of Lyndon Johnson would put the President in a "ridiculous situation." Another member of the board supported Holland saying, "after all, this is the President's University."

Following these incidents, students became increasingly concerned over their lack of over their newspaper but the *Texan* staff members were intimidated to such an extent that they did not advocate autonomy in their editorials. At one point the *Texan's* faculty censor was actually ordered by the TSP Board to stop any editorial criticism of the Board of Regents. In March of 1966, quickly sprung into and out of existence free. The Texas Student League for Responsible Sexual Freedom had formed to lobby for an amendment to Texas' sex laws. The League first obtained notoriety when it passed out a handbill outlining its goals and calling for membership (*Daily Texan*, April 30, 1967).

University rules then stipulated that the Dean of Students Office had to approve all leaflets; the Dean declared the particular leaflet in bad taste and withheld it. The League had extra copies and distributed it anyway. The following day Chancellor Harry Ransom banned the League from campus citing the League as an unofficial lobbying group and in violation of its probationary period for distributing unapproved literature (*ibid.*).

That evening an off-campus meeting of students was held. A large group of people joined the League transforming it into a free speech movement. The group questioned the universities' policies, in particular its right to review literature before distribution. The group decided to question the existence of free speech at UT and set up a panel discussion for 10 days later; they chose Ransom as one of the panelists. Three days before the forum, Ransom cancelled claiming that he had another engagement. The new free speech movement cancelled the forum and did not mention the incident again. Though a large number of people were initially attracted to this short-lived free speech movement, a lack of direction, political experience and leadership apparently led to its quick demise.<sup>15</sup>

## **STUDENTS CHALLENGE AUTHORITY**

SDS held its first fall 1966 meeting in late October. Although the group got started late in the semester, it was becoming more organized and productive. At the meeting, several committees were formed: a national student strike against the war committee, a speakers bureau, a conscientious objectors bureau, a Gentle Thursday Committee (Gentle Thursday was being planned as a day for gentleness and friendship) and a General Booth Committee (which planned to set up a booth to recruit for peace and love next to the military recruiters' booth).

At the same time, students organized an underground newspaper called *The Rag*. The paper was the sixth underground newspaper to be formed in the country; it was

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<sup>14</sup> *The Ranger* was a magazine published by students, similar to the magazine currently published - *UTMost*.

<sup>15</sup> No records indicate that SDS was or was not involved in this fiasco. However, increased activity and the founding of *The Rag* in the fall would indicate a desire on radical activists' part to be more organized in the event of a recurrence of a broad student movement.

perhaps the first to embody the new ideals of participatory democracy and a combination of culture and politics. Most of the staffers were SDSers who created the paper not only to publicize issues of importance to the movement but also in reaction to the corporate controlled mainstream media. The weekly paper was structured as a collective with no editor; it was highly imaginative, graphic and counter-cultural. Its news coverage concentrated on university issues as did its political analysis. *The Rag* would become an important medium and organizing tool as more students became involved in the student movement.

The threat of a 100% tuition hike at the beginning of the spring 1967 semester served to unite the forces of such disparate groups as the Young Republicans, the Young Democrats, the Student Religious Liberals, and SDS. The coalition sent information packets to students' parents about the tuition increases, lobbied politicians and circulated petitions. Their opposition to the tuition increase was based both on self interest and on a belief that public higher education should be affordable. Radical students declared that students shouldn't have to pay tuition at all, pointing to examples in several foreign countries.

During the fall ten SDS and *Rag* women had held a sit-in protesting the draft at the Selective Service office in Austin.<sup>16</sup> In January of 1967 several demonstrations were held against Secretary of State Dean Rusk while he was in town. The first protest was held at the Capitol where Rusk was speaking to the state legislators; one protester was arrested for bringing anti-war leaflets into the Capitol building and charged with disorderly conduct.<sup>17</sup> Over 200 came to the second protest which succeeded in cancelling Rusk's dinner at the UT Alumni Center. Thorne Dreyer wrote an article about the protest in *The Rag*:

[Rusk's] mission...was to brick up the Credibility Gap, to lay it on the line why we'uns is over there protecting freedom and the American Way. In true bureaucratic form, he spoke not to those who have to fight in his war, not to the protesting students or the confused populace, but to the glib, fat-assed yes-men of the Texas legislature and the board of regents...(*Rag*, Jan. 30, 1967: p. 1).

In another *Rag* article about the Rusk demonstration, Sara Clark called for circulating the struggle against the war into the larger Austin community. She wrote:

Perhaps we [the protesters] have been captivated by the idea of being the valiant minority, the downtrodden...Perhaps we have come to feel that we have failed unless we are opposed on every side, attacked, vilified. If this is so, if we consciously court defeat, then we are going nowhere, while the war is headed everywhere...you and I and a fistful of signs and a runic rhyme cannot end the war. We can work toward its end, but only when massive numbers of the American people disagree with the government policy will the war end... (*ibid.*, p. 10).

The vision and creativity of these early anti-war protesters is striking. Their rebellious language and willingness to experiment were characteristic of the New Left's

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<sup>16</sup> 1966 was the first year when students were drafted to make war in Vietnam.

<sup>17</sup> I believe that this was the first time criminal charges were brought against student political protesters.

open-mindedness. The honest self criticism revealed in Clark's article became a hallmark of Maoist oriented students several years later.

Criticism of the university at this time included the rumblings of the emerging student power movement. A *Rag* article orienting new students to UT warned:

Welcome to the ranks of the disenchanteds. Later on you may discover that your professors are dull, your classes too large, and the omnipresent grading system simply stupid, and far from an exciting and challenging adventure, college is mainly just a drag...[in addition is] the university's failure to instill a sense of creative purpose and community (*Rag*, Jan. 30, 1967).

The writer went on to encourage students to challenge their professors' views, to dress as they wished, to work in radical politics and to make love on the steps of the Main Building.

In March, some faculty members began to oppose the more brutal goings-on of the Vietnam War. Twenty percent of the UT faculty signed a letter to President Johnson urging an end to the bombing of North Vietnam. Although this was a clear minority, it was the first time that UT faculty members had taken a collective public stance on this issue.

## **PROTEST AND COUNTER CULTURE**

The first conflict between SDS and the university occurred later in the spring of 1967 during Flipped-Out Week. This week (April 10-16) coincided with the national Spring Mobilization against the War in Viet Nam as well as Roundup Week - a raucous Texas tradition of spring celebration sponsored by the fraternities and sororities. SDS had planned a week of activities including a speech by the prominent black student activist Stokely Carmichael, poetry reading, a picnic, an anti-war march to the Capitol, and Gentle Thursday, a day when friendship and love were encouraged along with balloons, kissing, gentleness and mellow yellow (banana peels which were smoked for a mild hallucinogenic effect).

Gentle Thursday came under fire from the administration. UT coordinator for Student Activities Edwin Price claimed that the events were too ambiguous and that the university could not condone kissing, balloons, mellow yellow and en masse love. UT's hard-line position on the innocent Gentle Thursday activities earned the administration quite a bit of ridicule. SDS' Flipped Out Week proved to be a success in combining counter-cultural activities with politics; the activities attracted several thousands and would remain a major annual campus event for the remainder of the decade. Gary Thiher wrote in a *Rag* article about the university's reaction to Gentle Thursday:

It is important to note that the administration was so frightened by the prospect of Gentle Thursday that they wanted to be able to punish sds for anything that might occur on that day.... Bureaucrats warp the supple flesh of human beings into the processable form of 'student' in order to control them. Anything outside the 'proper channels and procedures' is outside the bureaucrat's control. (*Rag*, April 24, 1967: p. 10).

A few days after Stokely Carmichael's speech, the UT administration again came down on SDS - this time for collecting money at the speech to cover the speaker's travel costs. The alleged violation was sent to a committee for consideration.

In early April, *The Rag* announced that a radical slate of candidates was running for the Student Assembly (SA); the elections were scheduled for early May. Gary Thiher was running for president, Alice Embree for Vice President, Dick Reavis for an at large position, along with three other SDS affiliates. Thiher described their ticket as "an attempt to offer a real alternative to the usual student politicians who accept the powerlessness of the SA. The student officials must be prepared to go outside administrative channels and rally the student body to unite independently of the administration in order to gain bargaining power," (*Rag*, April 15, 1967). Perhaps the administration's harassment of SDS stemmed from a fear that growing discontent on the campus would lead to the election of the radical slate of SA candidates.

## **THE FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT EMERGES**

The week after Flipped Out Week, SDS distributed flyers about a Sunday meeting on campus to plan a Monday protest against Vice President Hubert Humphrey who would be speaking at the Capitol. On Saturday, Chancellor Ransom declared that the handbills had been distributed without approval and warned SDS not to hold the protest. On Sunday, over 200 students met on the West Mall to discuss the rally the following day. On Monday, about 150 students protested at the Capitol against the war in Vietnam. Later that day, UT withdrew recognition of SDS as a campus organization for "holding a rally (the planning meeting) without authorization." Arrests and disciplinary proceedings against the leaders of the group ensued. The University Freedom Movement emerged from all this. SDS had (with the help of the administration's overreaction) finally mobilized a large number of outraged students into action.

On a national level, the counter-culture and SDS had begun to attract more support. White students had been very much effected by involvement in, or knowledge of, the black student movement led by SNCC. During the summer of 1964, over 700 white student volunteers from the North and from the West Coast had congregated throughout Mississippi for Freedom Summer, teaching freedom schools for black children, registering blacks to vote, seeking support for the Freedom Democratic Party and demonstrating for the rights of blacks. The experience was a toughening one; the white volunteers had suffered hunger, arson, bomb threats and even murder. Yale University student Bruce Payne participated in Freedom Summer. He wrote:

Police harassment is a constant factor in all Mississippi civil rights work, and I went to the state fully expecting to be arrested. Instead, I was beaten up and shot at.... The war in Mississippi is a quiet war, a war that has been fought so long that those who live it and those who observe it can no longer distinguish it from peace.... The weapons of the civil rights movement and of SNCC in particular are the weapons of peace and decency...[with which] it is possible to end the awful quiet that surrounds the war in Mississippi [and]...to call the attention of Americans to the conflict and combat,...the explosions and the screaming...(Bruce Payne, *The Quiet War: The Activist*, Vol. 4, 1964).

In the fall of 1964, students at the University of California at Berkeley had become outraged over the school's limits on student political activity. The students, who were veterans of civil rights sit-ins, soon formed the Free Speech Movement (FSM). Thousands participated, and over 800 were arrested in December during an occupation of

the administration building. At this time the teaching assistants went on strike, paralyzing the university. The administration finally conceded to the FSM demands. The Berkeley students saw themselves in a battle with the liberal university administration. Mario Savio, one of the leaders of the FSM, likened the Berkeley struggle to the Mississippi struggle, "the same rights are at stake in both places - the right to participate as citizens in democratic society and to struggle against the same enemy." Savio identified the problem as a depersonalized, unresponsive bureaucracy. He wrote:

This free speech fight points out that students are permitted to talk all they want so long as their speech has no consequences... Society provides no challenge... it is simply no longer exciting. The most exciting thing going on in America today are movements to change America.... an important minority of men and women coming to the front today have shown that they will die rather than be standardized, replaceable and irrelevant, (Savio, "An End to History," *Humanity* December 1964).

In April 1965, SDS organized the first sizeable anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C. About 25,000 participated. Later that year, at the November March on Washington, Carl Oglesby of SDS made a speech to the marchers linking the bloody ghetto riots, the U.S. intervention in the throughout the Third World, the repression of civil rights demonstrators and the large American military budget. Oglesby defined the problem as corporate liberalism and the answer as humanism and revolution (Cohen and Hale).

The white middle class students formed the core of the draft resistance movement. "As early as June 1965, Richard Steinke, a West Point graduate refused to board an aircraft taking him to a remote Vietnamese village. 'The Vietnamese war,' he said, 'is not worth a single American life. Steinke was court-martialed and dismissed from the service," (Zinn, 1973, p. 227). Others followed suit. Students began burning their draft cards on some campuses in the fall of 1965. By mid-1968, the government had prosecuted 3308 draft resisters; and by 1970, perhaps half of the draftees did not respond when they were called to serve in Viet Nam (ibid.).

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO BLACK LIBERATION**

### **(1964-8)**

*Say it loud, I'm Black, and I'm proud.*

-James Brown

*One of the most disturbing things about almost all white supporters of the movement has been that they are afraid to go into their own communities - which is where the racism exists - and work to get rid of it. They admonish blacks to be nonviolent; let them preach nonviolence in the white community. They come to teach me Negro history; let them go to the suburbs and open up freedom schools for whites. Let them work to stop America's racist foreign policy. Let them press this government to cease supporting the economy of South Africa.*

-Stokely Carmichael

### **NATIONAL BLACK POWER MOVEMENT AND SNCC**

Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, civil rights activists were facing increased violence. This contradiction led to disillusionment with the federal government and with the doctrine of nonviolence. Then came the mass uprisings of blacks in urban ghettos from 1964-8; over 100 major riots occurred during this period, resulting in 142 reported casualties and over 20,000 arrests. Black youth were a major force in the uprisings. Black power was articulated by spokespersons such as Malcolm X as an assertion of black pride and a reaction against the entire system of racism; blacks denounced white culture, institutions, behavior, and liberal racists.

Blacks asserted that "black is beautiful," that they could be proud of their appearance and their culture. Part of black consciousness was the predominant belief that power would not be given to blacks, but that it must be taken by a powerful, organized black community. Thus, an emphasis on self-determination for black communities. Blacks began to fight back "by any means necessary," as Malcolm X preached.

In late 1964, Malcolm X told a group of black students in Mississippi:

You'll get freedom by letting your enemy know that you'll do anything to get your freedom; then you'll get it. It's the only way you'll get it. When you get that kind of attitude, they'll label you as...a 'crazy nigger.' Or they'll call you an extremist or a subversive, or seditious, or a red or a radical. But when you stay radical long enough and get enough people to be like you, you'll get your freedom. (Zinn, 1973, p.210).

The students in SNCC became disillusioned with King and SCLC following the Selma campaign in 1965. SNCC had been organizing in Selma, Alabama for two years when King decided that a march would help speed passage of the Voting Rights Act. SNCC opposed the idea because of King's lack of knowledge of the people there and because the people of Selma were not participating in decision-making; they felt that King was a leader too far removed from the people. Although SNCC went along with the

march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, the group privately began to distance itself from King and the SCLC, especially after hearing that King was cutting deals with President Johnson.

SNCC began to turn away from nonviolence at this time. It continued its activities in the South and became interested in transforming the energy of the black slums into organized political power. SNCC denounced the war in Vietnam in 1965, recognizing that blacks disproportionately represented among the soldiers sent to fight white corporate America's wars.

In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, chair of SNCC, wrote the Vine City Project Paper in which he defined the role of whites in the movement against racism:

It must be offered that white people who desire change in this country should go where that problem (of racism) is most manifest. That problem is not in the Black community. The white people should go into white communities where the whites have created power for the express purpose of denying Blacks human dignity and self-determination.... This is not to say that whites have not had an important role in the Movement... It is meaningless to talk about a coalition if there is no one to align ourselves with, because of the lack of organization in the white communities.... There is in fact no group at present with whom to form a coalition in which blacks will no be absorbed and betrayed...(Cohen and Hale, 1967).

Carmichael went on to discuss the past and future direction of SNCC. He wrote that the problem was much deeper than the right to sit at a lunch counter or to vote and that blacks could not relate to SNCC because of its unrealistic, nonracial atmosphere:

We cannot be expected any longer to march and have our heads broken in order to say to whites: Come on, you're nice guys. For you are not nice guys. We have found you out.... Integration today means the man who 'makes it,' leaving his black brothers behind in the ghetto as fast as his new sports car will take him.... Any program to end racism must address itself to the two problems that Black Americans face: that they are poor and that they are black.... The creation of a national "black panther party" must come about. There must be reallocation of land, of money.... We hope to see, eventually, a coalition among poor blacks and poor whites.... The society we seek to build among black people, then, is not a capitalistic one.... We are just going to work, in the way *we* see fit, and on goals *we* define, not for civil rights but for all human rights (ibid.).<sup>18</sup>

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was founded that year in Oakland, California. It would be two years before the BPP would be able to focus the energies of the black ghetto rioters. SNCC and the BPP formed alliances with the SDS activists despite efforts by the FBI (Operation COINTELPRO) to break up their communication and mutual

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<sup>18</sup> SNCC had decided to work with whites only in coalition. The problem sprung from an inability on the part of white students to conquer their own racism. Sad though the division was between black and white students, it was necessary and has remained so to the present day. Blacks and other minorities are denied self-determination when they become part of a larger, multi-racial group. The mirroring within the leftist organization of the racism of American society prevents a merger and necessitates a separate struggle on the part of blacks. Ideally, the groups can form alliances thereby retaining self-determination on the part of the ethnic group and maximizing the power of opposition to the status quo.

support. The black power focus and these alliances did not develop immediately but over a period of several years. The period of 1964-8 was a period of transformation from civil rights to black power on a national as well as a local level.

## **STUDENT STRUGGLE AGAINST SEGREGATION CONTINUED**

Integration occurred slowly in Austin. Roy's Lounge on the Drag had become the scene of civil rights picketing in the spring of 1965. The lounge maintained a policy of segregation against blacks as well as known members of the Student Interracial Committee (SIC). Hundreds of students picketed the lounge. In May of 1965, the SIC steering committee decided to work on other symbols of segregation such as UT's policy of maintaining segregated university-approved housing. The SIC held a rally against this policy in early May despite objections by Dean Holland. Also the SIC presented a resolution to the Faculty Council later that month.

In an October 1965 *Daily Texan* editorial, black students on campus gave some definition to black power as "being together to secure power for people," "to instill 'somebodiness' into the Negro community," "a racial consciousness," and "much like Hook 'Em Horns for other groups." In 1966, the Negro Association for Progress (NAP) was formed. They brought Rev. F.O. Kirkpatrick to campus to speak in February. Kirkpatrick, the Texas coordinator for SNCC, said: "this is our black power hope - that we can rise from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of equality for all," (Duren, 1979). The following year, Stokely Carmichael came to campus to speak. He was greeted by a demonstration by NAP. Carmichael spoke about the black power movement and criticized the "white racist press" for its unfair reporting.

During the spring of 1967, NAP focused on the lack of black participation in university athletics. Members converged on the office of the athletic director and the head football coach Darrell Royal to find out why UT was not accepting or recruiting black athletes. Coach Royal responded that blacks did not have the talent, nor the grades, nor the desire to attend UT.

During the fall semester, 40 black NAP members marched into the end zone seats of Memorial Stadium while the Longhorns were playing football. They displayed cards saying, "Bevo needs Soul," and "Orange and White (school colors) Lack Black." One demonstrator recalled, "we waited until halftime and got the cards up about two times - we were plenty bold." The UT police asked them to leave and eventually they did (Duren Papers).

The increasing militancy of NAP was apparent in October when NAP held an illegal demonstration for black student rights. No one was arrested, although the administration discussed levying disciplinary punishments against those involved. In November, NAP successfully urged the Student Assembly to pass a resolution for "the Department of History to initiate a course in Negro history" and another to withhold blanket tax monies from Texas Student Publications should it not reinstate its nondiscriminatory advertising policy statement for the *Daily Texan*. The administration ignored the students' resolutions.

In the spring of 1968, NAP was replaced by the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation (AABL). The transformation from civil rights advocacy to black consciousness among black UT activists was completed.

In 1968, the university denied funding to a provisional admissions program - the Program for Educational Opportunity (PEO) for undergraduates and CLEO, a similar program for law students - which had brought in many minority students who did not meet all the school's admission requirements. Black students were outraged by this action. During 1968, the program was financed through grants from the Hogg Foundation and the federal Office of Educational Opportunity. The students who succeeded in the program were not given any financial aid from the school (Duren Papers, Barker Texas History Center).

Many students voted to donate 20% of their University Co-op (bookstore) rebates so that PEO might continue, but the regents interpreted that gifts as well as appropriated funds and revenue from other funds could not be accepted under the 1964 non-discrimination rule.

Ernie Haywood, a black vice president of student government, then founded Project Info. The program's purpose was to disseminate information to minorities on UT, but it was forbidden by the 1964 rule to conduct recruiting efforts. The program was funded by donations from Co-op rebate money and administered by student government.

## **KING ASSASSINATION SPARKS INCREASED PROTEST**

In April 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King, students, both black and white, participated in a march to the Capitol and in a campus memorial service sponsored by the Austin Council of Churches. Two weeks later, in an increasing display of black awareness, the AABL sponsored a Black Arts Festival in the East Austin black community as a memorial to King.

Following an increased mobilization of black and white students on campus for civil rights, the Austin City Council finally passed a resolution banning segregation in the Austin business community and a fair housing ordinance which outlawed racial discrimination in the selling, renting, or financing of housing.

In May, an incident of racial violence led to picketing by SNCC, AABL and others. The owner of a Conoco station - Don Weedon - had attacked a black musician; he had been brought to court on a misdemeanor charge of "simple assault," convicted and fined a mere \$20. Larry Jackson of Austin SNCC and Grace Cleaver, chair of AABL, called on all persons opposed to racism to picket Weedon's station on May 3 and to boycott it in the future. In a leaflet they circulated, they stated:

We can no longer afford to see black people mistreated by honkies without retaliation (*Rag*, May 1968).

Jackson requested that SDS participate in the action and the group agreed. The students held several sit-ins at the gas station. City police arrested about 50 in the demonstrations charging them with various misdemeanor offenses. The charges were dropped against all but four of the protesters who were eventually convicted and given varying sentences of fines and probation. That fall AABL won two new academic programs in Afro-American Studies. One course dealt with Afro-American culture while the other was a 10-part lecture series on Afro-American history taught by different guest experts from around the country.

In October, a SNCC activist from Houston spoke at an SDS meeting mentioning "by any means necessary" when asked what tactics should be adopted by Texans. The

crowd consisted of blacks and whites who discussed the black freedom movement and revolutionary movements within the U.S.

Black students, militant and proud of their heritage and culture, continued to make demands on the racist UT administration. Soon Mexican-American students would also develop a similar racial pride which would lead to their own demands for change. Further developments in the fight against racism will be discussed in the following chapters.

## **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 (Katsiaficas, 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.

## CHAPTER 5

### IN FOR THE LONG HAUL (1970-5)

*So this is Christmas, what have you done? War is over now and so - happy Christmas for black and for white, for the yellow and red ones that struggle and fight. Another year over and a new one just begun. Let's hope it's a good one, without any tears.*

-John Lennon

Over the summer of 1970, the regents established a rule prohibiting non-students from participating in student organizational meetings. The coalition of students involved in the May activities successfully demanded the revocation of the ruling as unconstitutional.

Also that summer, the Community United Front<sup>27</sup> rented a billboard on 19th Street facing I-35 which was clearly visible to football fans heading to Memorial Stadium. It read:

Welcome to East Austin. You are now leaving the American dream. Be aware of rats, roaches and people with the lack of food, clothing, jobs and the American dream. Support the Community United Front.

During the fall of 1970, Regent Chair Frank Erwin fired several top level administrators, one of whom was Dean John Silber. Student president Jeff Jones said:

I went to see Silber who had fired me and several others [TAs in the English Department] the year before for being in SDS; of course, I was ushered in as the emissary for the students who was going to show all this support. I said, 'well, Mr. Silber since you didn't support my academic rights and freedoms, I'm not going to support yours.' I walked out and he was like screaming at the top of his lungs. (interview, Jeff Jones).

About 1000 students mobilized to oppose Erwin's action. Many top-knotch professors resigned in protest of the quasi-fascist atmosphere at UT.

Also during the fall, the SA held a referendum with over 80 items. Students opposed the abolition of the SA and supported moving the Breakfasts for Children program onto the campus. Rather than waiting for the referendum results to be overruled by the regents, Larry Jackson and Jeff Jones brought in a busload of poor kids the next morning to eat breakfast in the Union. The referendum results, on this item at least, were immediately institutionalized with appropriate and complete disregard for the opinion of the administration. The audaciousness and wisdom of this action illustrated new energy and power of the students.

On Halloween 1970, thousands of students marched to the Capitol against the Vietnam War. Students from the Student Mobilization Committee, Gay Liberation, Women's Liberation, and many other groups attended. Afterwards, there were parties in the streets of the campus area, described by John Stickney in *Street Raps* as a celebration

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<sup>27</sup> The Community United Front (CUF) was an organization founded by Afro-Americans in the East Austin community. It provided services for poor blacks and helped people help themselves. Larry Jackson was one of the founders of the organization.

of peace. Later that night, police tear gassed the predominantly student and hippie crowd.

## **RADICAL STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

Throughout the spring semester SA President Jones worked with others out of his SA office to coordinate the southwest colleges' participation in the 1971 anti-war march in Washington. Pat Cuney was also involved in this; she said that "we planned the march." Jones said that he considered this a much more important task than going to committee meetings over issues like grade point averages. One student referendum which attracted many votes was that calling for Erwin to resign. It was passed by both the students and the faculty; Another activity of student government was a massive attempt to get students to vote in the City Council elections, spearheaded by Jim Arnold and Peck Young of the SA. Students supported Jeff Friedman (whose politics have changed tremendously since). With the recent victory of the franchise extension to 18-year olds, the student vote became more important to politicians. *The Rag* began to include city politics in its news coverage, and turned more of a focus on the larger Austin community during the early 1970's. A student-backed ticket would capture four of the city Council seats in the April election. The students' increased awareness of local politics was made evident in this unprecedented turnout when 15,000 students voted in the City Council elections.

An Independent Coalition (IC) slate was run for student government in the spring. The radical slate's campaign promises included rebuilding the food co-op, investigating the possibility of setting up a clothing co-op, and maintaining the gas co-op. The IC platform stated:

Students have been disappointed that radical student government didn't accomplish what it was expected to...The candidates this year are talking about tuition hikes, the war and minority programs, none of which the Student Association has any control over....

The IC is basing its activity on the assumption that the SA can work for the student if it is funded and controlled by the students. This means financing the Association independently of the University administration...The cooperative idea is the theme of the IC activity...The idea is that the SA can be our community government, establishing political and economic programs to benefit its members. (*Rag*, March 15, 1971, p. 5).

It is interesting to note how the terms of the debate had changed in one short year under the Yin-Yang Conspiracy. No longer were students appealing to traditional values or to conservatives; the pervasive radicalism of the student constituency necessitated this transition.

## **STUDENT PROTESTS**

In March of 1971, the Economy Furniture strike ended after a three year campaign for the right to form a union. The strikers went back to work. The Students for Strikers Committee had supported the workers since the strike began in 1968. On March 8, the increasingly feminist students held a celebration of International Women's Day.

In the middle of the month a rally and march of 3000 was held in opposition to Erwin's university financed dinner to honor Erwin among elite guests and the multi-million dollar project to build Bauer House for the Chancellor. A march to the Bauer House was led by the Welfare Mothers through wealthy West Austin. Speaker Larry Jackson pointed out that he could have fed all the children of the Community United Front for five and a half years for the amount of money (\$23,000) spent on Erwin's party. Several were arrested for protesting at the Bauer House what they saw as a corrupt misuse of university funds.

At the end of the month, Austin Gay Liberation held a national conference for gay people; the group formed "in response to the feeling that gay people cannot adequately deal with the vital questions effecting their lives in brief caucuses associated with other conventions - especially when these conventions are planned by and for straight people" (*Rag*, 3/15/71, p. 13).

Throughout March and April, there were student efforts to stop the Student Union and area stores from using non-union lettuce rather than that picked by the United Farm Workers. "We shut the Union down over the lettuce boycott campaign," said Jeff Jones. The Union lost an estimated \$1000 per day of the union boycott, but refused to stop buying non-union lettuce. (*Rag*, Nov, 11, 1971, p. 5).

Also in April, the group Direct Action held several activities. They had a "call-in" at Bergstrom; they telephoned and leafletted at Bergstrom to tell people about the GI-Civilian Solidarity march. They also held a demonstration at Southwestern Bell, urging people not to pay their telephone taxes, but to donate the tax to the Free Clinic. About 50 participated in this demonstration.

## **MAY 1971 ANTI-WAR STRIKE**

During the first week of May in Austin, student activists leafletted in the community to inform people about the People's Peace Treaty and got signatures on a petition requesting an Austin referendum to endorse the treaty. The treaty called for immediate withdrawal from Indochina, the establishment of \$6500 as a minimum yearly income for all American families and the immediate release of all political prisoners. They also held roving guerilla theater actions at shopping centers. On May 5, they had planned a "No business as usual" day They asked all businesses and schools to close down and held a gathering at the Capitol.

Meanwhile, in the nation's capital, over 15,000 demonstrators were arrested in the most militant anti-war protest to date. Around a million people demonstrated, lobbied, and petitioned the government to end the Vietnam War. One participant Jacob Holdt, a Dane who has vagabonded around and photographed America, wrote about the demonstration:

There were one million demonstrators and a solidarity and atmosphere which made a deep impression on me. I saw hundreds of Vietnam veterans, many of them crippled, throwing their military medals up against Congress. (Holdt, *American Pictures*, p. ).

On May 1, nearly 50,000 regionally coordinated people attempted to bring morning traffic in Washington to a halt. Their message, "If the government doesn't stop the war, we'll stop the government," illustrates the urgency of the issue. They were successful for a while, but the Department of Justice illegally arrested more than 15,000

over the period of three days. (Katsiaficas, 1987, p. 154). Over 800 were arrested on the grounds of "unlawful entry" when they attempted to present a peace treaty to Congress during the May Day activities.

Never since have so many been arrested in an American protest. The thousands of protesters would later receive financial compensation for having been arrested falsely.

One Austin activist who had participated in the May Day action, Tom Flower, wrote of the march:

Important lessons were learned in Washington. Traditional pacifists saw the need for translating nonviolence into relevant militant action, always emphasizing the human, but not shying away from being "not nice" and confrontation. Those whose image of nonviolence has been tarnished by "pacifists" hiding behind its shield to avoid acting saw the power of nonviolence work. We all learned to minimize our differences, and move ahead with one accord, truly brothers and sisters in the struggle. (*Rag*, May 31, 1971, p. 5).

## **STUDENTS PROTEST WAR AT LBJ LIBRARY DEDICATION**

National dignitaries arrived at UT in May for the dedication of the LBJ library. A crowd of about 3000 gathered at 'Peace Fountain' on the East Mall; the anti-war demonstrators consisted primarily of students, including a large turnout by MAYO, CUF, Vietnam veterans and Austin Gay Liberation. Although the SMC had planned a legal rally on the Drag, most activists gravitated toward the more confrontational approach.

Police barricades had been set up on a two block perimeter around the library, guarded by 500 DPS, 40 Texas Rangers and 250 Austin police (including the Austin Tactical Squad), most of them in riot gear.

As Nixon arrived and the UT Longhorn Band started playing *Hail to the Chief*, members of Direct Action released about 800 black balloons. Although groups had earlier planned to cross the barricades nonviolently, they chose to try to go around the barricades by going north on San Jacinto, climbing the hill behind the Art Building and ended up getting bottled in at the Texas Memorial Museum. Seven members of the radical feminist group WITCH, were arrested. Vietnam veterans threw back their medals as the crowd cheered. One group split off, moving to 26th and Red River where a barbecue was being held for the guests. There people made a lot of noise - chanting, honking horns, beating on garbage cans and clapping; some rocks, bottles and water balloons were tossed at the police on the barricades (*Rag*, May 31, 1971).

When the barbecue ended the protesters attempted to reach the 'warmakers,' successfully confronting a few of them. Then some of them held an action at Hardin House, where most of the political figures had gone; they slashed tires and charged the police. The police charged back, swinging clubs and arresting whoever was slow enough to get caught. Twenty nine were arrested during the day of festivities, three on felony charges (destruction of private property) and the rest on misdemeanor charges ranging from abusive language to disorderly conduct. At least half of those arrested were bystanders; several of them sued for false arrest. Most of the charges were later dropped. (*Rag*, May 31, 1971 and *Texas Observer*, June 4, 1971).

## **GOVERNMENT REACTION TO ANTI-WAR PROTESTS**

On June 24, 1971 the Senate voted 81-10 to rescind the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, the only piece of congressional legislation supporting the "police action" in Southeast Asia. In addition in June, Daniel Ellsberg turned over a history of the war effort compiled by Pentagon officials to several mainstream newspapers. *The Pentagon Papers* revealed years of deceit on the part of the government to promote its plans in Vietnam. Nixon, however, was not yet convinced; counter intelligence operations against the black liberation and student movements continued. Illegal repression of the New Left was intensified through several channels, including the FBI's COINTELPRO and the CIA's CHAOS program, using tactics of infiltration, tapping phones, and break-ins.

The regents clearly intended to curtail student power. It became clear in the summer of 1971 that the regents wanted more control over the *Daily Texan*. The Texas Student Publications' (the controlling board of all student publications) charter was scheduled to expire in July of 1971 and Chancellor LeMaistre came up with a new charter. Le Maistre's charter would limit student membership on the Board of Directors to journalism majors and make the editor of the *Texan* be appointed by the board of directors rather than elected by the student body. The regents had indicated at a meeting in April that they intended to place the newspaper staff under the journalism faculty, supposedly to improve training. Students staffing the various publications were opposed to the measures; in conjunction with other students, they were able to prevent some of these changes. The restriction of student TSP Board members to journalism majors, however, did become law.

## **VIETNAMIZATION LEADS TO BRANCHING OUT**

In the fall of 1971, a new organization - The Blacks - was formed. Its first organizational meeting was held in September. The major purposes of The Blacks were:

- 1) to engage in and promote black student unity through black identity and communications,
- 2) to promote the general mental well-being of black students,
- 3) to develop potential of black people by promoting blackness and, where necessary, modifications and changes within the community, and
- 4) to promote social economic and political awareness.

Noah Richardson, chair of the group, identified the problems concerning blacks at the university as:

unity first among blacks, self-awareness coupled with the will to work (towards bettering our condition on this campus, i.e. economically, politically, administratively and socially) and to increase the enrollment of blacks at the university. These problems will continue to plague us until we get together and make demands on the university.

In September the Austin Plan was devised by university community members in opposition to the "plague of smack, speed, and barbiturates which had come down on their community, threatening it with destruction," (The Austin Plan: *A Tentative Position Paper*, September 23, 1971). The problems presented by these drugs had been combatted by Middle Earth, a place in the university community where people on bad trips could crash. The organization was soon taken over by the more establishment-oriented sectors of the Austin community who did not seek to extend programs and information to the more impoverished areas of town where the use of these drugs was reportedly much

higher. Despite these drawbacks of the plan, it was a victory on the part of Middle Earth and other members of the university community who had first seen and raised the issue of the destructive nature of speed and heroin. The victory lay in the program's institutionalization, although structurally it did not conform to its initiators' vision of a cooperative group with far-reaching efforts.

During the fall semester, the Ethnic Studies Program offered 14 courses in Mexican-American Studies and 15 in Afro-American Studies as a result of demands by MAYO and the AABL. Students worked on the pro-UFM boycott of wine, grapes, and lettuce. Opposition to police brutality was voiced by students as well. Women's Liberation continued to draw support. A SMC anti-war demonstration in October drew a mere 50 people; showing a lack of enthusiasm for both the SMC and the anti-war effort. The Vietnamization process had already begun and many felt that, since the war was winding down, there were more important issues to deal with.

An environmentalist group of students and members of the community, Ecology Action, became more active. Ecology Action's main activity in the fall was establishing centers for recycling aluminum, tin cans, glass, motor oil, and newspaper. The group announced in a November 1, 1971 *Rag*:

The battle for survival is going on now! If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the pollution. More than concern is needed; action and education are required.

In the Spring of 1972, Direct Action organized demonstrations against recruiters from corporations supplying the war effort. One of the demonstrations was held against Dow Chemical (makers of napalm) when they attempted to recruit on the campus. Community Switchboard opened to offer the "freak community and people passing through rides, a mailroom, referrals and lodging. A spring Wing-Ding was held on campus in April; it was similar to the Gentle Thursday held in the late 1960's. A radical slate ran for student government again as well.

In January, an administrative "error" led to the temporary closing of Mexican-American Studies. Although the alleged error was soon corrected, the program's director Americo Paredes resigned in protest and Mexican American students demonstrated and issued a list of demands to President Spurr. The demands included: 1) the establishment of a degree program in both Mexican American and Afro-American Studies, 2) that the new director of the program be appointed with the approval of Chicano students and faculty, 3) that the university reinstate PEO and CLEO (provisional admissions programs which had helped many minorities enter UT) and 4) that more Mexican-American professors be hired.

In February, students and the American Civil Liberties Union initiated a lawsuit against the university to challenge its 1964 non-discrimination ruling as a violation of Title VI (on affirmative action) of the Civil Rights Act.

Also during the Spring the Department of Health, Education and Welfare came to campus for a National Congress of Black Professionals. The Congress called on UT and other predominantly white universities to demonstrate a commitment to the educational needs of black students. In addition, the Congress pointed out that the areas needing the most attention were: black faculty and administrators, a change in admissions policies to increase black enrollment, a student population racially representative of the state population, ethnic programs, supportive services and financial aid. In response, an Ethnic

Student Services Office was created and scheduled to open in the fall as part of the Office of the Dean of Students. Rather than appropriating finances for minority scholarships, the regents authorized the president to solicit money for a minority student aid program; the project barely got off the ground because there was no institutional financial support for it.

## **SPRING 1972 PROTESTS AGAINST CONTINUATION OF WAR**

In April, students began to respond to the escalated air war in Vietnam and the mining of Haiphong. Columbia and several other universities closed down. At Kent State, 152 students were arrested for blocking traffic at a nearby Air Force Base. There were large demonstrations on a few days' notice in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. Fights broke out over ROTC and other war-related targets at Berkeley, Madison, Ann Arbor, and Cambridge; University of Maryland students blockaded a highway for three nights and battled with the National Guard.

In Austin, the first anti-war protest following the mining of Haiphong attracted about 40 people who demonstrated at Texas Instruments. A week and a day later, 3000 were marching and protesting all over campus.

Between these protests, meetings, a rally in conjunction with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and an energized march of 200 on Thursday to the Federal Building were held. Bill Meacham described the Thursday activities:

Years of talking, years of marching, years of rallying, years of fatigue. Turning away. Emotional passivity. Last Thursday a new breath, new voices and talent. New songs. Art in the service of the revolution. Song, poetry and [guerilla] theater.

Downtown. The small mob following the Viet Nam veterans seemed almost surprised they were still intact...What do you do upon liberating that big, usually empty mall north of the federal building? Women jumping, running, dancing. We form a big ring, circling, filling the plaza....

Five people busted on minor charges, spirits raised, enthusiasm generated for [Friday's] strike. (Rag, April 24, 1972, p. 8).

That night a City Council meeting was held on campus; two students did some guerilla theater ridiculing the Council's plans to build a convention center downtown. They proposed that the city shelter anti-war protesters in route to the Democratic Convention that summer, saying that in exchange the protesters could tear down 15 block area for the convention center. They played music on guitar and harmonica and got most of the audience to laugh at the proposed center. Creative tactics like this were often effective (ibid.).

On Friday, pickets were set up on campus, but not many people showed up for the teach-ins held for striking students. Guerilla theater on the main mall began to attract a larger number of people. As the growing crowd cheered, Direct Action members smeared blood on the flagpole and planted a flower on the main mall. About 1500 took off from the mall on a march which took them past the ROTC building and onto the Drag. They held a short sit-in in front of the co-op and continued south on the Drag, headed for the Capitol. However, a large force of riot police awaited them ahead, blocking off 19th and 20th Streets. The police fired tear gas and arrested one protester

who they beat severely. A few hundred of the marchers regrouped on the main mall, and decided to return that evening. Leaders of the march were criticized for not informing followers of the police presence (ibid.).

Another protest was organized by Women's Action. About 700 women students attempted to take over KUT, the university radio station. After shattering several windows and breaking through a door, the women demanded an hour of air time. A compromise was reached with the station and a six woman delegation was granted 45 minutes on the air. The main speaker, Victoria Foe, talked about the media and misinformation on the Vietnam war as well as about the oppression of women (Daily Texan, April 23, 1972).

Later that evening, about 3000 gathered on the main mall, many prepared with wet cloths, paper filter gas masks and heavy boots. A speaker told demonstrators how to wash off tear gas, people sang, did guerilla theater, and watched a short slide show which Direct Action projected onto the Main Building. The crowd took off, first going to the ROTC Building where police in riot gear were already stationed. Most of the buildings on campus were closed and guarded at this point (*Rag*, April 24, 1972).

Soon, the demonstration moved to the LBJ Library where police and demonstrators talked. After the police drove away, five or six windows in Sid Rich Hall were broken as the protesters meandered back to the main mall. About 80 decided to hold a peaceful sit-in the Main Building, but the police arrived quickly, using tear gas, mace and nightsticks to end the sit-in. One protester was severely beaten after being thrown down some stairs. The police chased the demonstrators back onto the mall as the National Guard sprayed tear gas from helicopters. When Austin police approached from the north and south, the students escaped, heading east to Guadalupe the police again used tear gas and arrested nine people. The forces of law and order continued to spray tear gas and chase after people for several hours on the Drag; then they headed through the residential area west of campus, harrasing and beating people. At no other time has the campus been so literally transformed into a battlefield.

The following day (Saturday), the police were again mobilized. However, the students had abandoned the strategy of the previous day and held a peaceful discussion on the union patio to decide whether or not to continue the strike.

Many people blamed a defeat on the protesters, ignoring the heavy use of police power. One writer criticized:

the great bulk of last week's activities represents nothing more than wasted energy, spent in an unthinking reaction, which only served to isolate us from the enormous numbers of people in Amerika who are against the war, who want it over with now.... These problems of irresponsibility and self-isolation are going to have to be dealt with sooner or later, and the sooner the better. There is no "correct line" to follow in dealing with these problems, only working them out together. Whatever the answer, we should remember that frustration should not serve as an excuse for stupidity. (*Rag*, April 24, 1972., p. 9).

While others did not engage in self-criticism and pointed to the success of the revitalization of the movement. One viewpoint expressed :

It was a week of indecisive, poorly-organized, anarchic demonstrations. No clear-cut leaders emerged - people got their things together almost

spontaneously. Nevertheless, these were the strongest, most militant actions since the anti-Cambodia/Kent State strike two years ago. No outside agitators, no underground cells, just people arising in anger at the latest atrocities in Vietnam. The ruling class must have gotten the message that people in this country won't stand for their criminal actions. More importantly, the brave people of Vietnam will know that they are not alone in their struggle to liberate their country. (*Rag*, April 24, 1972, p. 8).

## **WAR WINDS DOWN AND PROTEST WANES**

For the next few years, there would be no more massive student uprisings at UT; the feeling that revolution was just around the corner became dated. Activists were beginning to realize that they were going to have to make more long-term plans to be successful. The student struggle for desegregation had taken over four years; the campaign to end the war in Vietnam lasted about ten years. Both of these student movements were successful both in gaining popular support and in being institutionalized. Victory was sweet, but it required years of creative thought, hard work and sacrifices.

Many activists became involved in electoral politics, particularly McGovern's campaign for president. Nixon rather cynically planned his post-electoral bombing of Hanoi to coincide with the Christmas vacation when students would be scattered. The war began to wind down and was no longer a focal point of student protest. In 1973 Watergate gave many the impression that the corrupt government could reform itself. But actually it was a reaction to the government's repression of members of the establishment; Congress had never voiced opposition when Nixon used similar tactics to squelch student protest and the Black Panther Party. The system remained intact after Watergate; Nixon was the fall guy and even he was later pardoned.

During the two years of 1972-4, Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, The Blacks, MAYO, Ecology Action, and *The Rag* continued to be active; counter-cultural activities and services were maintained. A Women's Studies program was started at UT. *The Rag* began to focus more on community events; "there was no longer the aura of immediate revolution which surrounded the 1960's" but a turning toward "more limited goals, but our goal of revolutionary transformation remains unchanged." (*Rag*, October 1976) One sign of change was that student government was returned to the more conservative elements of the student population and lost its activist orientation.

In March of 1974, several thousand students protested the regents' decision to make funding for the *Daily Texan* and student government voluntary. Erwin stated that neither was truly representative of the students.

In October of 1974, over 4000 gathered on the main mall to protest the firing of UT President Spurr. The rally, sponsored by the Radical Student Union, was an angry response to the regents' unilateral, unanimous decision. Government professor David Edwards spoke at the demonstration, identifying the real problem as the governing of the university "by two unresponsive segments of the state of Texas. One is the gigantic bureaucracy located downtown in three buildings known as the [University of Texas] System administration and the other segment is the regents" who are appointed by the governor.

Also speaking at the demonstration was Ronnie Dugger who recalled the firing of President Homer Rainey in the 1940's. Dugger stated:

Then, as now, the Board of Regents was composed in the main of an unrepresentative collection of conservative business people who did not have a good idea of the deeper purposes and traditions of university life.

The faculty called for Chancellor LeMaitre's resignation for "his failure to consult with the faculty and students in dismissing Spurr." Although they were unsuccessful in achieving LeMaistre's resignation, they did receive that of Frank Erwin on November 7, 1974. The conflict of the students and faculty versus the administration over the need for more democratic control of the institution did not end with the resignation of powerlord Frank Erwin. The structure of regental hegemony remained intact, much in the same way as Nixon's removal from office after Watergate allowed the corrupt federal political system to continue.

In November, students held a rally to celebrate the recognition of Palestinians by the United Nations. Several deans prevented a pro-Israel student from speaking. Participants on both sides of the issue protested the violations of free speech posed by the deans.

In January 1975, about 200 protested U.S. violations of the Paris peace accords and continued American involvement in Vietnam. The protest was sponsored by the New American Movement (a Democratic Socialist affiliate), War Resisters League, the Radical Student Union (RSU), and the Indochina Peace Campaign among others.

Another protest was held against a four day closed Inter-American forum on engineering. About 30 students protested the use of university money on a closed forum and the participation of Chilean representatives.

In February, the Iranian Students Association protested U.S. support for the shah. The RSU and MAYO gave their support. In March, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) commemorated the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.

## **STUDENTS AGAINST RACISM OCCUPY PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

Both MAYO and The Blacks had been in contact with HEW over violations of the Civil Rights Act at UT. HEW responded with an investigation of the university wherein it found UT in violation of the Civil Rights Act on nine different points. Members of MAYO, The Blacks, and the RSU combined to form the United Students Against Racism at Texas (USARAT), a group which issued a list of 12 demands to correct institutional racism, called for a demonstration on and took over UT President Lorene Rogers' office. The demands of USARAT were as follows:

1) standardized tests be eliminated for minority admissions, 2) more financial aid for minorities, 3) teaching assistantships represent minority population of the state, 4) a fulltime minority recruitment program, 5) more black and chicano faculty, 6) restructuring of Ethnic Student Services, 7) funds for minority newspapers, 8) more money for culture centers, 9) minority grievance committee be established, 10) one black and one chicano doctor at the Student Health Center, 11) departmental status for the Mexican-American Studies and the Afro-American Studies Centers, 12) a new education building be named after black and chicano educators.

They presented the demands to interim President Lorene Rogers, wrote a guest editorial airing their demands and calling for a demonstration on March 13 around noon.

About a thousand gathered on the main mall calling for immediate reform of the university's racist policies.

During the rally, ten students took over the presidential suite on the fourth floor of the Main Building. The militants used the furniture in the office to block the door to the outside; then they secured the inner office of the suite and retreated into that area for maximum protection. Meanwhile, police had arrived in riot gear and equipped with tear gas; they sealed off the entire floor. The students hung a banner on the balcony and addressed the crowd from there. The outside demonstrators officially claimed that they had no connection with the occupation of the office probably to avoid disciplining. The outside protesters sent messages, cigarettes and other necessities to the fourth floor via a basket tied to a rope. They remained on the main mall throughout the eight-hour ordeal. In fact one of the students occupying the office, Joe Krier, said that the large size of the crowd was a major factor in the administrative decision not to use force to end the occupation.

The occupants requested that a specific group of state representatives, faculty and university officials enter the office as mediators shortly after 5 p.m. This group included Mickey Leland, Gonzalo Barrientos, John Warfield (then director of Afro-American Studies), Americo Paredes, Doug Kellner (philosophy professor), and Dennis Brutus (visiting English professor and well-known South African poet). A three hour period of negotiations ensued. The protesters then agreed to abandon the office after being promised a slot on the agenda of the regents' meeting the following day, a meeting the following week with University officials, and amnesty. Although the meetings did not achieve much, change was forthcoming. That summer, the regents changed the 1964 non-discrimination rule changing the phrase "either in favor of or against" to "against any person on account of his race, creed, color or sex." At long last UT complied with the Civil Rights Act; however, it is noteworthy that UT's efforts toward minority recruitment have been somewhat half-hearted with a student body that is racially imbalanced to this day.

USARAT continued to agitate for changing the institutionalized racism at the university. In April 1975 hundreds marched to the Capitol and posted a list of demands on the Governor's door; a statewide rally against racism was also held at the Capitol that month. In May, five were arrested for protesting McGeorge Bundy's presence at commencement; although there were many people protesting, authorities only arrested long-time activists and leaders. The protesters - Frank Rodriguez, Cynthia Perez, Lee Morrison, Bonny Callaway and Roger Manne - were each arrested twice and both times released on bond. The first charge against them was that of disorderly conduct which was dropped due to unconstitutionality. Then UT System lawyer Musselwhite attempted to file misdemeanor charges for disruption, but failed.

## **LARGE STUDENT POWER MOVEMENT EMERGES**

In September a new student group - the Students Helping Academic Freedom at Texas (SHAFT) - formed to call for UT interim President Lorene Rogers' resignation and the appointment of a president who would: 1) institute immediate compliance with recommendations of the HEW report, 2) restore program development funds for minority students, 3) educate and mobilize students and faculty to assume control over the educational process which they comprise, 4) end reprisals against politically active

faculty members, and 5) end attacks on student organizations such as the Texan and student government and end interference with student elections.

The Student Senate voted 14-12 to support SHAFT. A few days later, on Wednesday, September 17, students boycotted classes and met on the main mall to protest Rogers' appointment. The crowd of about 10,000 included more students than had voted in the last SA elections. In a mass vote, they chose to continue the student strike until their demands were met.

One of the speakers State Rep. Wilhemina Delco said that she did not care whether Rogers resigned because "it doesn't matter if Jesus Christ or Chairman Mao is sitting in the President's office as long as the regents have all the power." Gonzalo Barrientos and Professor Tom Philpott also spoke.

Despite the large size of the crowd, one inept leader - the president of the SA Carol Crabtree - agreed to the administration's demand that the rally not continue past a certain time. She later claimed that the administration told her to avoid a confrontation over the sound truck at the end of the rally. The minority student and faculty leaders who had been scheduled to speak at the end were therefore cut off the program. It is imperative to understand that in such a situation, the administration was not in any position to make demands on the students. The large crowd demonstrated the majority belief that Rogers should be ousted; a crowd of that size should have been able to demonstrate for however long they wished and to prevent any police sent by the university from coming close to the sound truck. The SA President was able to undermine the energy of the students because she did not involve them in decision-making.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, Crabtree was never chosen by the demonstrators as a leader; in fact she had been elected by a much smaller segment of the student population than that composing the SHAFT movement. Her actions served to divide the students, reducing their power and effectiveness. Actions such as this by Joe Krier in 1969 had led activists to take over student government from 1970-1972. The danger of the unrepresentative student government is great, because its leaders are called in to negotiate even when they do not represent a student movement.<sup>29</sup>

## **RACISM DIVIDES SHAFT**

On Friday, MAYO withdrew from SHAFT. David Riojas of MAYO made a formal statement at a rally announcing the following reasons for MAYO's withdrawal:

1) tokenistic use of MAYO,

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<sup>28</sup> In such a situation, the student leader can be easily circumvented if other students exert leadership and call for a vote. Democracy rules in mass meetings; but when leaders are removed from their constituency, they are able to uncourageously kowtow to the administration, serving their individual interests rather than those of the students. The constituency must demand public negotiations and responsibility from its representatives to prevent such a situation.

<sup>29</sup> The ability of the administration to manipulate and divide students through such unrepresentative bodies is great. To avoid this activists must either take over student government, abolish student government, or completely circumvent it by insisting on mass voting to decide who the representatives will be and what demands and concessions they will make.

- 2) prohibition of democratic participation,
- 3) racist attitudes within SHAFT,
- 4) exclusion of MAYO from decision-making process,
- 5) the cutting off of minority speakers at the Wednesday rally,
- 6) support for authoritarian processes,
- 7) original goals of SHAFT reduced to merely removing Rogers from office rather than truly transforming the university.

The Radical Student Union, USARAT and The Blacks all agreed with MAYO, but remained in the coalition. It seems that several mistakes were made. First, MAYO should have discussed the problem with these sympathetic groups before announcing its withdrawal. By joining all the groups together into a Third World Caucus within SHAFT, they would have been in a position to make demands on SHAFT for change, and if their demands were not met, they could have all withdrawn from SHAFT together. The MAYO withdrawal resulted from manipulation by the administration, Crabtree's action, racism within the movement, and the failure on the part of minorities to form a caucus within the coalition to protect their interests. At a predominantly white university like UT, any large student movement will be predominantly white as well. To combat the racism which will be endemic to such an organization, minorities (and perhaps white sympathizers) must unite against the internal problem. The goal should be to maintain student unity; but the caucus must be prepared to withdraw from the group when the larger group is unwilling to make concessions. In a similar vein, other groups (e.g. women, the disabled, gay and lesbians) should be prepared to form caucuses within a coalition movement. In addition, the movement should oppose the formation of oppressor caucuses (e.g. men, whites, heterosexuals, etc.), because the very purpose of the caucus is to increase the organization and power of an oppressed group to maintain the unity of the movement. The enemy (the administration in this case) will always attempt to disrupt and divide students, so the students must emphasize their common interests, avoid letting the administration see their weak points, and promote the formation of such caucuses to preserve the power of the students.

## **SHAFT CONTINUES PROTEST ACTIVITIES**

At a meeting the following Monday, SHAFT voted to march to the houses of the president and Chancellor that Friday and to support the resignation of Rogers, a new presidential appointment to meet the SHAFT statement of purpose, and education and mobilization of students and faculty to assume control over the educational process. SHAFT objected to the appointment of Rogers on the grounds that the presidential selection process ignored student and faculty input and that Rogers was unresponsive to the needs of students and faculty.

That week, thousands of students marched two and one half miles in support of the SHAFT demands. They first went to the residence of Regent Chair Shivers, then to the official UT President's residence, and then to Bauer House (Chancellor LeMaistre's home).

The teaching assistants (TA) and Graduate Student Caucus held a teachout the following week. John Yearwood, an English TA, said that "the history of the university show that they [the administration] have a low regard for the human values of the democratic process," (Texan, Oct. 2, 1975). The caucus called for an Evacuation Day

that Friday when TAs and graduate students would hold their classes off campus, call in sick or postpone their class. About 250 TAs participated even though the deans had sent out memos discouraging it. Although the administration claimed that the day was not successful, it enjoyed a participation rate of 50% in some departments.

Agitation against racism and Rogers continued throughout the semester. Though the students' demands were never met, they drew attention to the problem of a regent-controlled university. Their demands for student and faculty control over the educational process would, of course, never have been met by the regents without a more forceful display of student power. This conflict over the desire for a democratic institution was the most radical demand of the SHAFT movement. Their ability to mobilize a large number of students and to get support from the faculty and some state legislators demonstrated that there was a good deal of opposition to the management of the university as a corporation. Although the movement failed in its goals, the conflict it represented will continue as long as the undemocratic structure of the university is maintained. It is dubious, however, whether a university could be run democratically within the present society. The liberation of the university without the liberation of other social and political institutions (e.g. the Legislature) would mean a lack of financial support from the elite-controlled institutions and likely a good deal of harassment from federal agencies and law enforcement. I cannot presume to answer this question of the possibility of liberation within a vacuum; I think it is a noble goal and worth the effort of the students but that the students must have a vision that transcends merely liberating their school from authoritarianism and control of big business. And, if that vision includes both putting the university into the service of the members of the society and recognizing the need for a liberation of other social institutions, success will be forthcoming.

## CHAPTER 6

### WINTER IN AMERICA (1976-1986)

*The Constitution, a noble piece of paper, with free society struggled but it died in vain, and now democracy is ragtime on the corner, hoping for some rain. Just like the peace sign that vanished in our dreams, never had a chance to grow. The people know that it's winter in America. And there ain't nobody fighting 'cause nobody knows what to say.*

-Gil Scott-Heron

By the year of the Bicentennial, not much of a student movement remained. The challenges presented by students to the academic structure in the fall of 1975 were not followed up on any significant level. Although students continued to have little power within the university structure, they have not seriously opposed it in a systematic way. Nonetheless, some of the alternative institutions remained after 1975, particularly in the cultural realm (e.g. progressive bookstores, art, music, and some academic groupings). *The Rag* newspaper folded in the middle of 1977 after publishing for over ten years; there was only one other underground paper which published longer than that - *Fifth Estate* in Detroit. The awareness of a state of conflict between students and administrators began to erode in the late 1970's and early 1980's but witnessed a resurgence during and after the anti-apartheid movement of 1986.

After the legalization of abortion and the easing of traditional sex roles, women's rights advocates on the campuses turned to working within electoral politics to advance the Equal Rights Amendment. The analysis of patriarchal society did not figure into the electoral strategy; gone was the radical feminist systematic critique of male-dominated society.

The effects of the global economic crisis of 1974 began to be felt by students. According to Michael Lacey, a student of the rhetoric of student activism as seen through the *Daily Texan* editorial pages since 1965, students became much more concerned with themselves and petty or economic problems during the late 1970's. They wrote about parking tickets and library fines; they generally failed to formulate theories explaining or linking their problems.

Lacey wrote that the students tended to attack each other and were characterized by divisiveness partially because they concerned themselves more with individualistic problems and failed to take note that their fellow students suffered similar ills. He attributes this to the worsening state of the economy and the mindset of the 'Me Generation.' He further noted that student divisiveness manifested itself in a resurgence of xenophobia, homophobia, racism and sexism. Opposition to affirmative action as 'reverse discrimination,' challenges to the ERA and blaming problems on foreign students became increasingly common during the late 1970's and became more prominent with the ascendance of the Reagan administration in 1981. Economic troubles would worsen in the 1980's due to the negative effect of Reaganomics on the middle class and the heavy cuts in student financial aid. But the roots of the trend can be found in the economic downturn which began in 1968 and became the Great Recession of 1974-5. Although Reagan's policies certainly exacerbated the problem, it did not begin in the 1980's.

During 1976, the Union of Graduate Student Workers (UGSW) formed to raise the following issues: 1) a fair TA workload with adequate compensation, 2) fair and

equitable hiring practices, 3) clearly defined, systematic TA rights, 4) reasonable class sizes, 5) relief from forced participation in the Teacher Retirement System and waiving of tuition and building use fees for TAs, and 6) a meaningful voice in educational planning whereby opinions and involvement of TAs are actively sought and respected. (*Rag*, January 25, 1976, p. 10).

UGSW had gotten its start as a Teaching Assistant - Graduate Student Caucus within SHAFT during the protests against Lorene Rogers. When it became obvious that SHAFT would not be successful, the members of the caucus decided that organizing a union would be a more effective means to directly demand the rights of TAs. According to Danielle Jaussaud, a former member of the UGSW:

We gained one thing; every TA had to pay money into Teacher Retirement, about \$20/month. We asked to get out; and the administration told us that was illegal. We got legal help. This went on for several months, about six. And after that, we got the administration to agree to get us out of Teacher Retirement. And by the next year there was not much left of the union. (interview 4/30/88).

Around this time, graduate students in the Department of Economics began organizing within their department to revise the program. They circulated petitions and conducted surveys of students to determine the interest in alternative or Marxist economics. This led to the formation of a student-faculty committee which revised the program and decided to hire a Marxist economics professor. According to Ronnie Phillips, an economics graduate student at the time, "we were a vocal minority in the department, but the graduate students formed a close social group so we received the support of the others." Phillips said that the significance of the organizing efforts lay in the students' ability "to maintain and further the long tradition in the department of opposition to mainstream economics. The results of our work were restructuring of the department and the hiring of professor Harry Cleaver, a Marxist economist."

Later in 1976, a protest over U.S. foreign policy occurred. In mid-November, two students from the Revolutionary Student Brigade ran on stage with a banner denouncing the 1973 CIA-sponsored coup in Chile as CIA administrator William Colby and former Chilean Cabinet member Jacques Chonchol debated. Members of the audience clapped and shouted encouragement. Nine people were arrested for disruptive activity. Lori Hansel, one of the women carrying the banner onstage, was a seasoned activist who had been involved in the 1970 student uprising.

MAYO continued to lend support to Texas farmworkers and their right to unionize. The group also advocated a boycott of non-union agricultural products.

A year later, about 50 people held a rally and march to American Bank to protest their sale of krugerrands. It was sponsored by the South African Liberation Action Committee (SALAC), a group which began the drive to educate students on the issue of U.S. support for South Africa and apartheid. This and several subsequent anti-apartheid groups were led by and composed of Afro-American students; white students did not become involved on any significant level until the mid-1980's.

About 300 were attracted to the largest UT protest in two years that September. They were protesting the building of a gym over the site of the Kent State murders. The Summer Student Senate and the SA passed resolutions in support of the protesters opposing construction of the gym. The rally was sponsored by the Revolutionary Student

Brigade on the main mall. The fact that the protest was endorsed by student government probably accounts for a good part of the crowd.

In 1978 a Latino student was elected president of the SA. The regents moved to abolish student government. A referendum on the abolition of the SA was held; students supported the measure. The SA's functions were handed over to the administration. According to Raul Valdez, the abolition was motivated by both the regents' and the students' racism and the students' realization that the SA was impotent.

In January 1979, a rally for foreign students' rights was called in response to Carter's intentions to take action against foreign students involved in the January 2 riot at the home of the shah's mother in Beverly Hills, California. In addition they protested UT's investigation of foreign students through the International Office. The New American Movement, MAYO, and Chilean and Nicaraguan support groups endorsed the rally.

In April 1979, MAYO held a rally in support of the Texas Farmworkers Union and declared the recent onion strike a success. At issue was the right of farmworkers to form unions. The protesters went to the Capitol as a hearing on a bill concerning the issue was scheduled for that afternoon.

In November, 70 students attended a protest against the INS investigation of Iranian students. The INS had been investigating the 222 Iranian students at UT. The demonstration was sponsored by the newly formed Coalition against Racism and Intervention.

## **THE 1980's: REAGANITES AND RADICALS**

The impact of the 'Reagan Revolution' on students can be seen in a polarization: an increased level of student activism (quantitatively and qualitatively) and a propensity of many students to buy into the conservative tide. The extreme conservatism of students in the early 1980's manifested itself in student support for Ronald Reagan and sometimes violent reaction against left-leaning student groups. The right-wing student group - the Young Conservatives of Texas (YCT) - became delegitimized in the eyes of students following a series of scandals beginning in 1986. Furthermore, since the crisis of belief in the government brought about by the Iran/Contra scandal and the delegitimization of the extreme right as seen in the many exposés of fundamentalist televangelists, students have increasingly swung toward the left of center (in beliefs and lifestyle if not action).

A salient feature of activism during this period is the students' concern over economic issues, particularly since higher education financial aid programs have been cut. The effects of these cuts can be seen in the composition of the student body, the worsening quality of student life and education, and the decreased salary and future quality of life expectations of students. The B.A. currently guarantees little more than a managerial role at a fast food restaurant and a masters degree does not guarantee much more unless it is in a technical or business-related field. This problem has only worsened since the Texas economy was devastated by oil price plummets in 1985 and most recently by the stock market crash of fall 1987.

Another important characteristic of this period is the conservative backlash (particularly after 1980) against the earlier gains of young people, ethnic minorities, women, and homosexuals. The influence of the extreme right has been phenomenal during this period as affirmative action has been called 'reverse discrimination,' abortion

rights have been seriously curtailed, a judicial victory for sodomy laws and the failure to take AIDS seriously have hurt the gay community, the reinstatement of draft registration and an increase (to 21) in the legal age for consumption of alcohol have effected youth, and the curtailing of social programs have added to the misery of the underclass. During most of this period, the student movement has been largely defensive, merely trying to maintain the reforms won in earlier years. Activist student groups in the early 1980's served as both a training ground and an alternative to those students who did not buy into the Reagan doctrine during the height of its popularity. However, since 1986 students have gone on the offensive.

In 1980 at UT, students protested draft registration, the closing of the Afro-American and Chicano Culture Rooms at the Union, and a speech by the pro-shah former Iranian ambassador to the UN Fereydoun Hoveyda. A coalition of students (CAIO) against intervention and oppression developed which opposed imperialism and brought together supporters of nationalist revolutions in the Middle East, Africa and Central America and advocates of rights for blacks, Chicanos and Native Americans.

## **DRAFT OPPOSITION**

The reinstatement of the draft in 1980 provoked immediate reaction on college campuses around the country. The Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) announced:

A renewed and dangerous spirit of militarism is sweeping Washington. The U.S. government's war-like rhetoric is being translated into concrete action, with an increasingly large military budget, a new generation of nuclear weaponry and the initiation of military draft registration. (CARD brochure).

Anti-draft activism gathered momentum on a national level in the spring of 1980 when 30,000 draft opponents marched in Washington. During the summer of 1980, CARD reported that hundreds of thousands resisted the draft by either refusing to register or by doing so under protest. They held a national conference in February of 1981 to bring together students opposing the draft around the country. The famous "Vietnam Syndrome" was alive and well.

Opposition to draft registration never reached a high level on the UT campus, but attracted sustained protest throughout the year. Libertarian students were at the forefront of the anti-draft campaign; they formed a new group - the Students Against the Draft - to do educational work on the draft and militarism and to sponsor rallies. Several rallies were held in February and October, but they never attracted a large number of student participants during this period of patriotic fervor. The students at UT were aligned with the national anti-draft organization CARD.

## **HOVEYDA CRISIS**

During the Iranian hostage crisis, on January 31, 1980 Fereydoun Hoveyda spoke at the Texas Union. Since no opposing viewpoint was presented at the podium, angry Iranian and Arab students and their supporters voiced loud opposition to Hoveyda's pro-shah views. The UT police selectively arrested 27 persons of Middle Eastern appearance (out of dozens of protesters), pressing criminal and administrative charges for disruptive activity. Although they were initially released, the students received a letter from the UT administration instructing them to appear in the office of Associate Dean of Students

David McLintock on February 14. As they were walking to the office, they were picked up by police and taken to Travis County Jail. The students refused the offer of personal recognizance bond, choosing to remain in jail to dramatize the injustice and announced that they were going on a hunger strike; they were demanding that the charges be dropped. Their trial was set for February 28.

The student inmates were treated to unusually harsh conditions at the jail. The jail authorities attempted to separate them by taking some of the Hoveyda protesters to another jail in Del Valle, Texas. They were denied telephone privileges, given irregular bathing and visiting privileges. Some of them were incarcerated in a maintenance room with a broken window, others were put in solitary confinement. The incident gained national media coverage in the midst of top level negotiations between the U.S. and the Iranians. In fact, an official of the State Department telephoned the jail authorities to tell them that their repression of the Hoveyda protesters was interfering with these negotiations. The protesters were soon released from jail pending trial.

On the campus a Defense Committee formed; the group held daily demonstrations at UT over the several week period. Professor Tom Philpott introduced a resolution to the University Council opposing the repression of the Hoveyda protesters; the Council defeated the motion. In fact, the protesters did not gain much sympathy from the student body whose anger toward Iranians involved in the hostage crisis in Tehran was significant at this time. Nevertheless, by April, 1200 had signed a petition urging the charges be dropped. It was not until September that the protesters were convicted of the Class B misdemeanor; their sentence was a \$200 fine in addition to the nine days they had served in the county jail. They consequently filed a class action suit, challenging the disruptive activity statute as unconstitutional; the suit has not yet been resolved.

## **STUDENT WORKERS ORGANIZE**

In the summer of 1980, graduate students in the Economics Department conducted a study of financial needs of teaching assistants, comparing wages with those of other departments and schools, and showing how their real wages had dropped 40% in five years. They presented their findings to the department, which supported their demands for a wage increase in a letter to the dean. They were later given a raise. The media publicized the fact that TAs in only one department had been given a raise; the stories of university officials did not match up with each other. The Economics TAs went to various departments telling other graduate students to do the same thing. About 100 TAs joined the UT Employees Union (UTEU) during the fall semester. Danielle Jaussaud, one of the leaders of the TAs, said that the union leadership, which was aligned with the AFL-CIO, realized that the TAs were taking over the union and in December told the TAs to form their own union. By January, another union - the University Employees Union - formed and asked the TAs to join, but the TAs had become disillusioned with the unions and most did not join.

On February 1, the state legislature approved a 5.1% emergency pay increase for all state employees, but students at the University of Houston (UH) did not receive the increase.

On February 4, 1981, an article appeared in the *Daily Texan* reporting that TAs at the UH were on strike (systematically calling in sick) and demanding pay raises, a waiver

of tuition and fees, administrative support for academic freedom and health benefits. A teaching assistant in the UH English Department and an organizer of the sick-out Cynthia Santos said, "Our salaries are so low it has become impossible to survive," (*American Statesman*, February 11, 1980).

The TAs at UT who had been involved in the UTEU sent a telegram to the UH students expressing support and agreeing with the demands of the tuition waivers and the \$850/month minimum TA income level. After a three day sick-out, the TAs at UH agreed to go back to work when negotiations began.

The TAs at UH and UT formed the Houston-Austin Solidarity Coalition (HASC). On February 18, they held solidarity demonstrations on both campuses at exactly the same time. Over 500 TAs attended the demonstration in Austin; they began to threaten a strike if they were not given liveable wages. THE HASC targeted legislators for lobbying efforts and signed petitions. When UH officials refused to grant a pay increase, the TAs again went on strike in March.

In April, the HASC group at UT issued a position paper calling for negotiations on the points within the paper. In it they stated:

If this institution is truly committed to pursuing excellence in education, it must grant to those responsible for teaching students the rights and dignities which are commensurate with their responsibilities, (Preface to HASC Position Paper, April 6, 1981).

The demands articulated in the paper included: academic freedom, minimum monthly salary of \$850, full medical and dental benefits, tuition and fee waivers, no increase in workload, and maintenance of class sizes. That month, a negotiating committee of five graduate students met with the administration to begin discussing the demands. At the beginning of the negotiations, one administrator told the students that they had already been given their withdrawal from the Teacher Retirement System. Danielle Jaussaud informed him that the students had fought for that and that she had been involved in the demands of the UGSW (Jaussaud interview). Apparently the administration did not expect the students to know their history.

In June, the UT administration offered a 14% pay increase, but the HASC pressed for more and continued to threaten to strike if their demands were not met. In July, the administration conceded a 20% pay increase to TAs and AIs and in September, dental insurance coverage was conceded. Following the victory, the only remaining organization of the militant TAs was the Council of Graduate Students which remained active in calling for the rights of graduate student teachers for another year.

## **NEW ORGANIZATIONS, MORE PROTESTS**

Also during 1981, the Black Student Alliance (BSA) formed on the campus. The BSA supported more minority recruitment programs, opposed UT expansion into the 'Blacklands,' the predominantly black inhabited area east of the school which UT was beginning to buy out, and worked against racism on the campus.

In April 1982, Bread not Bombs held a march to the Capitol which attracted about 5000 people. The march was composed of both students and members of the Austin community. It was sponsored by the Austin Peace and Justice Coalition, an umbrella group of progressive organization. The university affiliate of the coalition was the University Peace and Justice Coalition (UPJC) which printed a calendar and attempted to maintain communication between the various single-issue groups of student activists.

In September 1982, about 250 students marched from the campus to the Capitol to protest the American and Israeli presence in Lebanon. There had recently been a series of explosions in Lebanon and assassinations of PLO representatives around the world. The march was sponsored by the General Union of Palestinian Students and was endorsed by SALAC, the Anti-Klan Committee, and the Leonard Peltier Support Group.

The Anti-Klan Committee on the campus held a demonstration in February protesting the upcoming KKK demonstration at the Capitol. About 500 participated in this demonstration. Many of the students participated in an anti-Klan march with community members on February 19; about 1500 marched early in the day and some participated in a violent confrontation later that afternoon between demonstrators and the Klan (who had police protection).

## **STUDENTS PROTEST TENURE DECISION**

Liberal Arts Dean King in conjunction with Government Department Chair Canute began to purge that department of its left-leaning faculty and its assistant instructors around 1980. One of the casualties was Professor Al Watkins who was denied tenure in 1981. Watkins remained at the university for several years following the tenure denial. When his contract was not renewed in 1983, hundreds of students protested.

On April 19, students occupied the Liberal Arts Office building lobby to protest the denial of tenure to Watkins. Although the UT brought in tear gas to use against the 40 students occupying the building, they were unable to use it when a large crowd surrounded their police cars parked behind the building. Police and students negotiated; the police promised that they would not harm or be harsh in disciplining the students. The UT police arrested 14 students and the administration reneged on its promise, giving the students one-year probation.

The history of a radical departure from the Government Department faculty during the early 1980's pre-dated this student protest. According to some members of the faculty at the time who requested anonymity, choosing Canute for Department Chair was a terrible mistake on the part of the department. One said that Canute was defensive and paranoid, distrusting practically everyone in the department. In addition he ignored decisions made by the Executive Committee which led to the abolition of this decision-making body within the department. Another source said that "there was a radical purge, I'm convinced of it! About five or six left the department."<sup>30</sup>

## **LEFTIST GROUPS FORMED ON CAMPUS**

The Steve Biko Committee (SBC) formed in 1983. Named after the South African black consciousness leader, the anti-apartheid committee worked to pressure the university to withdraw its financial holdings from companies doing business in South Africa. SBC began educational work, contacted the Board of Regents about the issue,

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<sup>30</sup> Sources report that the Executive Committee was reinstated in 1986 and the department has been healing ever since. Presently the department is attracting some left-leaning professors and graduate students; it appears that if there was a design to purge radicals, it was ultimately unsuccessful. One of the sources questioned whether or not there was a plan to purge the Marxists, saying that there is an institutional bias against such professors in tenure decisions because they often concentrate more efforts on teaching rather than publishing scholarly works - a major criterion for tenure decisions.

circulated petitions, presented alternative portfolios to the regents, and held demonstrations.

During the spring of 1984, a leftist student group formed on the campus; its initiators had begun the group at Austin Community College and moved it to UT. The Alliance of College Students for a Unified Left (AXLE) adopted a constitution, by laws, and a statement of principles. AXLE worked with other student groups to oppose sexism, racism, U.S. foreign intervention and to support workers. AXLE declared its intention to put humans before corporate profits and had a Marxist analysis of capitalism and imperialism.

## **KISSINGER DEMONSTRATION**

Another group formed on campus advocating peace in Central America. The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) did mostly educational work around the issue of U.S. intervention in Central America. When CISPES found out that Henry Kissinger was scheduled to speak at the LBJ School of Public Affairs in March of 1984, the group called for a demonstration to be held outside the building. When UT denied authorization to CISPES to distribute literature outside the building, CISPES filed a lawsuit against the university. Malcolm Greenstein, CISPES attorney, argued that the right of non-students to pass out literature was upheld by the constitution. U.S. District Court Judge ruled that UT must drop any rules prohibiting non-students from passing out literature and requiring literature to be filed with the Dean of Students office in advance of distribution, (*American Statesman*, June 29, 1984).

On March 22 about 300 students participated in a demonstration at the LBJ School against Kissinger and his interventionist foreign policy endeavors. Fifty three were arrested on criminal charges. The Kissinger 53 for Non-intervention Support Group was formed to support those arrested. By June, charges had been dropped against all but three of the participants - Lori Hansel, Susan Putter, and Stephen Kartor. There was divisiveness within the group over the actions of these three who had yelled at Kissinger from within the room. Apparently at issue with some of those involved was the former participation of these activists in the Anti-Klan march in 1983. The failure of the group to support these three contributed partially to their conviction of the misdemeanor charges.

In August, the SBC and the BSA held a demonstration at Ashbell Smith Hall (the office building of the UT System and the regents) downtown after Richard Heller, the Assistant Dean of Students, told them that they could only send a seven-member delegation to the regents meeting due to space constraints in the Board Room. This delegation made a presentation to the regents on the issue of divesting UT's \$600 million from companies doing business in or with South Africa. Regent Chair Jon Newton stated that the Chancellor was studying the matter. Randy Bowman, chair of BSA, announced that the group would return to the October meeting of the regents in Dallas.

Also during this meeting, the regents approved a SA constitutional amendment banning a minimum voter turnout in elections. The control of student government by conservatives and the right-leaning politics of a majority of students at the time probably contributed to the regental decision. On two occasions, students had voted for a resolution mandating a 20% voter turnout in campus elections to validate the results. The SA continued its push to scrap the minimum voter turnout by continuing to hold votes on the issue, finally achieving a victory for the measure in a spring 1984 election (in which 14%

of the students had cast votes). Student government itself had been revived in 1982 by a student vote in which 6% of the students voted. Rodney Schlosser, SA president told the regents, "my concern is that this Board not piddle with the decisions of students." It was not very difficult to get the regents to comply with that request. Coupled with the unbinding nature of SA decisions, the manipulative, self-serving politics of the SA leaders, as exemplified by this anecdote, exemplifies the very reason why students do not vote in elections.

The Biko Committee continued to agitate for divestment and UT withdrawal from the Blacklands. The BSA worked for minority recruitment and retention programs. AXLE held forums almost monthly on issues such as the politics of art, police brutality and the politics of food; due to sexism within AXLE, a women's caucus formed to challenge the inferior position of women within the leftist organization.

The women's caucus of AXLE sponsored an International Women's Day forum on March 8, 1985; they brought together women from various areas of the world to discuss politics and culture. Despite the success of this forum and others sponsored by AXLE, structural problems began to mar the effectiveness of the group. Isolda Ortega, a former leader of the group, said that they ran the organization through a steering committee which became increasingly bureaucratic, hierarchical, overcentralized and removed from the membership (50-100) of the organization. The group abolished the steering committee and formed action-oriented teams to replace it. Besides the hierarchy which developed in the group, another problem which began to destroy the group at this time was the sexism of the mostly male leadership. The women who formed the women's caucus felt that they were relegated worker status, while the men functioned as theoreticians. In addition, the failure of the leadership to respond to the votes of the membership exacerbated the problem. AXLE was able to continue for another year, however, despite these internal problems.

## **LARGE PROTEST AGAINST TUITION HIKE**

In early April of 1985, a tuition hike of over 200% was announced which financially affected out-of-state and foreign students tremendously. It resulted from the worsening state of the Texas economy and subsequent legislative concern over the financing of education. However, it threatened to cut into the budgets of the many students who had already been hurt by the cuts in higher education financial aid under the Reagan administration. A group called Taxpayers for Fiscal Responsibility in Education (TFPE) formed; the group collected 5300 signatures on a petition opposing the tuition hike and scheduled a protest for April 3. TFPE was supported by a majority of the political groups on campus - from AXLE to the SA. Over 2000 students marched from the campus to the Capitol demanding a reasonable, gradual rise in tuition rather than the plan then before the legislature. At the Capitol, students confronted Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby on the issue and a scuffle with police resulted as students attempted to enter the Senate chambers where Hobby was headed. (*Daily Texan*, April 4, 1985) Despite the militancy of the protests, little was gained other than a display of student power. According to participant Scott McLemee, the tuition hike still went into effect.

## **BLACKS AND GAYS - VICTIMS OF CONSERVATIVE VIOLENCE**

Also during the spring of 1985, Randy Bowman, the chair of the BSA, was the victim of a violent racial/political attack which left him unconscious and bleeding. Black

students mobilized and demanded an FBI investigation of the incident. A large group of blacks marched to Abel's (a fraternity hangout west of campus) after the incident to show that they knew where the root of the problem lay and that they were not intimidated by the racist attack. The manager of the bar bought them all drinks.

This incident marked the beginning of a national trend of violent racist attacks which resulted in the increased organization of black students, culminating in their militant offensive against racism currently underway.

Another violent incident occurred during the spring. During the traditional Round-Up Parade in which most participants are fraternity and sorority members, the Gay and Lesbian Students' Association (GLSA) made a float and joined the parade. As they passed down the Drag underneath the Goodall-Wooten Dormitory (which houses young fraternity men), they were bombarded by bottles and other objects.

Increased level of activism during the years 1984-6 served as a transition phase. The reactionary conservatism of students became increasingly violent and desperate as the student movement began to attract more adherents. Although many students had supported the Reagan candidacy and conservative politics in both 1980 and 1984, the persistence of activists and the increased disillusionment with conservative beliefs began to take hold in 1986. The work of the BSA, the Steve Biko Committee and AXLE during these years laid the groundwork for the student unrest exemplified in the 1986 anti-apartheid movement at UT; by 1986 SBC and BSA had made several presentations to the regents on the issue of divestment and had done much educational work on the subject.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THE STUDENT MOVEMENT BUILDS AGAIN**

*Relocation to phoney homelands, separation of families - I can't understand. Twenty three million can't vote because they're black. We're stabbing our brothers and sisters in the back. I ain't gonna play Sun City.*

-Little Steven

On a national level, student activism had reached new heights during this period in addition to locally. Many universities were forced to divest their financial holdings from companies doing business in and with South Africa. The student movement for divestment was also successful in getting many corporations to disinvest from (or pull out of) South Africa and the U.S. Congress to approve limited sanctions against South Africa in September of 1986.

#### **THE STUDENT ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT**

Anti-apartheid activists have placed moral concerns above the economic self-interest of the university. Their appeal to a higher morality and universal values of democracy and self-determination have been significant in their ability to attract participants. The idealism of the divestment supporters presents a qualitative change in the state of students activism since the global economic crisis of 1974; in addition, the university administration was seen by students as the enemy in a clearcut way. This realization, coupled with economic problems, would lead students to become increasingly critical of the administration. However, the vanguard nature of the movement along with the administration's repressive tactics and the emergence of mainstream liberal leadership at a critical point led to a quick destruction of what had been just as quickly built. Additional factors contributing to this decline resulted from internal weaknesses of the student movement. In the period following the 1986 rise and fall of the student movement, there have been signs of regeneration.

#### **SPRING 1986 PROTESTS**

The spring 1986 semester at UT was ushered in with a feminist demonstration celebrating the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision supporting a woman's right to control her body through abortion. Under the Reagan administration, this right had come under increased assault due to the influence of the religious right on the government. The demonstration, which was organized by University NOW, was successful; around 200 people participated. The presence of anti-abortion religious fundamentalists who were counter-demonstrating served to attract increased support.

Many progressive single issue groups existed on campus; most of their work was focused on education and lobbying, but all the groups held public demonstrations and protest activities. The Central America Peace Initiative (CAPI) advocated an end to U.S. intervention in that region. The Steve Biko Committee continued its divestment campaign. United Campuses to Prevent Nuclear War (UCAM) worked to educate students about the participation of UT in research and development of nuclear weapons. University NOW worked on educating students about child care, date rape, abortion and

birth control. The BSA publicized the need for minority retention and recruitment and the reality of institutionalized racism at UT. The November 29 Committee for Palestine worked to increase awareness of the Palestinian issue and to oppose Zionism. AXLE attempted to help the various organizations communicate with one another.

## **DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST RACISM**

February was Black History Month when issues of institutional racism and the history of Afro-Americans were aired.

In March, the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity held a 'porter party.' Publicity for the party depicted blacks in servile roles. A contingent of about 50 students met in the Student Union, made signs and marched to the party - lining up on the opposite side of the street. The police and the press arrived immediately. The fraternity members became violent, hurling beer cans across the street at the protesters first and then crossing the street to taunt. The fraternity partiers tore up demonstrators' signs and even assaulted one demonstrator who filed a criminal complaint. The police chased down the assailant and arrested him. The violent reaction of the fraternity members was all captured on that evening's news. The fraternity promised not to have a party again around a racist theme.

## **STUDENTS BUILD SHANTIES, HOLD MILITANT PROTESTS**

At the end of March, the American Committee On Africa (ACOA) called for a national student week of protest activities against apartheid. The BSA and Biko got permission from the university to erect a shanty on the campus to symbolize the oppression of South Africa's black inhabitants. While BSA and Biko held several demonstrations calling for university divestment, the SA held a student referendum in which the students voted to support the divestment resolution. The faculty and the staff passed similar resolutions. The regents argued that they would lose too much money if they divested.

As this controversy simmered, news reached UT students about other anti-apartheid protests around the country, most notably at Columbia University and the University of California at Berkeley. At Berkeley, thousands of students had stayed awake all night guarding their shanty as the university administration had threatened to tear it down. When the police arrived, a violent confrontation ensued initiated by the police arresting people and firing tear gas cannisters at the crowd. The students responded by throwing bottles, rocks, and trash at the police. They took to the streets to prevent the police from taking those arrested off to jail. The effect of learning about this demonstration and the many others throughout the country in late March was tremendous on activists at UT. Their turn to direct action was easy following this news and the recent success of the demonstration against the racist fraternity.

A member of AXLE, Greg Milner, was busy talking to the administration about keeping the BSA shanty up after the anti-apartheid week of activities. Despite numerous attempts, the university refused, claiming that it would not be timely. Miller argued that UT kept its investments in South Africa year-round and that apartheid existed all the time. The administration refused to back down.

AXLE organized a roundtable discussion in which the various activist groups participated. The discussion centered on whether or not to commit civil disobedience to keep the shanty up. It was decided by a narrow vote to do so and subsequent meetings

were held to plan the demonstration and to construct another shanty; six people committed to remain on the West Mall with the shanty after the free speech hour (noon-1 p.m.) ended.

On Friday, April 4, seven people took the shanty onto campus and began a demonstration on the West Mall. The students made speeches, worked on the shanty, sang, chanted, and held placards. They issued two demands: that UT withdraw all its finances from companies in South Africa and that UT end restrictions on exercising free speech. The UT police stood by for hours watching and hoping that the demonstrators would go home. The administration was probably hesitant to make arrests since it was Round-up weekend when many alumni and parents were in town.

More students joined the protest; the administration decided to make arrests as the demonstration was growing larger. A total of 42 were arrested for violating the university rules. As they were being arrested they announced that they would be back the following Friday. They were taken to Belmont Hall and released once the protest ended.

In the middle of the week, the U.S. bombed Libya. Another protest was held illegally. The three leaders were arrested. Throughout the week, the campus was buzzing with the news of the demonstration. The organizers met and worked to prepare for the next action. Most of the people working on the plans were seasoned activists who had been involved in student activism in the past several years. However, none of them had ever experienced anything on the scale of the second demonstration.

On April 11, the 42 arrested the previous week marched up to the area of the West Mall in front of the Student Union carrying a banner (which denounced apartheid) and sporting gags to symbolize the denial of free speech. As people began to gather, the previous arrestees were gradually replaced by 42 more demonstrators who were thereby expressing their willingness to commit civil disobedience. There were over a thousand people participating by the time the protesters marched to the West Mall stairs. This time, there were three demands: that UT divest, for free speech on the campus, and that all charges be dropped against the 42.

When the demonstrators reached the West Mall stairs, the crowd filled up the mall. They held up the banner, spoke, and yelled for UT to get out of South Africa. Two lines of Austin police and UT police lined up to the north of the mall; the fear of a violent confrontation was pervasive. The police began to arrest the speakers and leaders. As they were arrested, more people would take their places. This continued until 182 people had been arrested.

Two students - David Blacker and Tim Reilly - organized the Anti-Apartheid Defense Fund (AADF) and a benefit for the Sunday night after the second protest. The benefit was a huge success with speakers from the BSA and Biko and music from various popular bands. The AADF raised thousands of dollars for legal defense and offense. A lawsuit was filed by members of the National Lawyers Guild against UT for denying free speech to its students.

Massive meetings were held that week with legal counsel and plans were laid for yet another Friday demonstration which proved to mobilize an even greater number of people. That Friday, students held a teach-in on the Union Patio discussing the various elements of apartheid. As they marched to the West Mall, the police did nothing but videotape and take photographs of the demonstration. The anti-apartheid protesters then moved to the Main Mall, which was not a free speech area. Again, no arrests were made.

The protest continued for about an hour and was declared a victory for the freedom of speech.

As the end of the semester neared, a funeral march around campus in the rain was held. Students began to study for finals. Another protest was held during the graduation ceremony; four people were arrested the night before for pasting anti-apartheid flyers up around the campus and for dyeing the fountains red.

As a result of the lawsuit, the publicity and the large number of arrestees, the university dropped its charges against all 227 arrestees and that summer held hearings on the issue of the free speech restrictions. The free speech time period was extended to last two and one half hours. Also during the summer, the University of California System divested as a result of the Berkeley demonstrations.

## **STUDENT RADICALS FORM NEWSPAPER**

At UT, several students involved in the anti-apartheid movement decided to found an alternative newspaper. Throughout the summer they held meetings and made the necessary plans. The first issue of *The Spark* was published in September; the structure of the paper was collective.<sup>31</sup> It focused on international politics, UT, the counter culture, the music scene and provided a forum for alternative viewpoints.

## **DIRECT ACTION, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CATCH ON**

Other events of the summer included picketing businesses involved in South Africa, protesting with the farmworkers from south Texas whose union was busted by UT, and another direct action incident at McDonalds in June. The McClock action resulted from working conditions at McDonalds around town. McDonalds promised that customers' orders would be ready in one minute and placed timers at the cash registers. Five direct action teams of three persons each headed to the targeted McDonalds. Leaving a driver in the car, the two others on the team ran into the restaurant declared that:

We are acting in solidarity with the fast-food workers of Austin; right now McClocks are being smashed all over town.

They ripped the cardboard clocks to shreds and left behind leaflets which read:

Tired of working by the minute? The recent McDictator's campaign forcing you to work 2 or 3 times faster without doubling or tripling your inadequate wage is an insult both to you and to the customer - who is invited to profit by your humiliation... Workers of the World, Unite !  
(*Spark*, September 5, 1986, p. 7).

The following day, McDonalds decided to end its McClock promotional campaign. This was another victory for the students and the workers. The students began to believe in the effectiveness of direct action.

This belief spread to other members of the student body. When library hours were reduced in early September, about 800 students began to hold a study-in at the PCL library in protest. Liberal Arts Council President Michael Whellan was able to take control, however. The *Spark* reported:

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<sup>31</sup> By a collective, I mean that decisions were made democratically - there was no editor or hierarchy.

What tameness, after the lobby of the PCL library was absolutely packed with students on September 10. Between 60-70% of them wanted, in the word of one Republican electrical engineering major, 'to stay here until they drag me out.'

With that kind of broad-based support, it would have been easy to occupy the library for days, not just five minutes past closing. Instead, Whellan gave the first and only speech inside the library, and exhorted the students to leave, they marched out singing "The Eyes of Texas."

Another demonstration was held later that month. A few hundred students marched to the Capitol to protest higher education cuts. The student government types were the leaders; their indecisiveness about whether to hold the march accounted for the turnout of only about 200 people. The SA elements' ability to exert leadership over the burgeoning student movement accounts partially for the setbacks of the fall semester.

The failure of the more experienced and militant activists to initiate and lead the Fall movement must also be considered. At the time, AXLE had folded and a new organization Democracy In Academia (DIA) formed. The more disciplined activists had joined the newspaper or returned to single-issue political campaigns. In addition, some of the activists were out of touch with the students at the beginning of the semester.

## **ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID**

Immediately following the flopped march to the Capitol in late September, several veterans of the direct action on the eve of the graduation ceremony and that of the McClock busters made an attempt to re-assert the militancy which was beginning to die as a result of the SA leadership of the two previous protest. They died the UT fountains bright red and issued a communique to the *Daily Texan* stating that the fountains had turned red as a result of the blood streaming forth from the university because of its support for apartheid.

Some anti-apartheid activists began calling for a sit-in to demand divestment. The issue had begun to die for three reasons: as a result of the state of emergency imposed in South Africa, the lack of media coverage of the uprisings there, and the very success of the single-issue movement in winning the divestment of the UC System, a Congressional bill (and many municipal ones as well) in September 1986 imposing some sanctions on South Africa, and the disinvestment of many large companies from South Africa. The activists felt that immediate action was necessary to pressure the university to divest. And on October 20, 1986 sixteen students took over the president's office demanding that UT divest from South Africa.

The occupation of the president's office was both poorly planned and reasoned. It was inherently a vanguard action, because it was planned in secrecy by people who knew and trusted each other without the support of large numbers. Involving outside people, many of them felt, would have meant risking a complete failure. The people who planned the action met several times before October 20. Most of them were members of DIA; some had been heavily involved in the spring protests. The romanticized vision which most of them had of the action prevented them from carefully planning strategy and from thinking through the possible consequences.

At any rate, no one expected the administration to overreact as it did. The sixteen entered the building at different times and from different entrances; at 7:45 a.m., they

came up the stairs and the elevators to the fourth floor. As they arrived, one member of the group announced to the secretaries in the office that the group was occupying the office to demand divestment and that if they chose to remain in the office that would signal their support for the demands. Neither the secretaries nor Vice President Ed Sharpe chose to leave. After waiting several minutes, the militants secured the doors with bicycle locks and chains and began piling desks up against the doors. Others ran out onto the balcony and hung a banner which read "Apartheid Kills, UT Divest Now." Others were busy telephoning potential negotiators and the press.

Meanwhile, one of the secretaries activated the alarm (apparently installed after the 1975 takeover) and the police arrived minutes later. They stood out in the foyer, staring through the glass doors as the demonstrators sat down in a circle to discuss their feelings. They had been inside the office for about 25 minutes when they heard the sound of breaking glass in the east wing of the suite. The police broke through glass windows in the library, injuring themselves and destroying a painting.

The students retreated into the inner-most office, securing two of the three doors. The police soon broke in through the door which was not yet secured. What ensued was violent pandemonium. The demonstrators all sat down peacefully on the floor and locked arms. The police went berserk, knocking over plants and computers. They began beating several of the students on the side of the room closest to them. Blood splattered. The students pleaded for peace; finally the chief of the operation told the others to take it easier. All sixteen were arrested and taken to the UT police station in Belmont Hall where they remained for four hours until being taken to Travis County Jail. Administrative and criminal charges were filed against the UT-16 under the 1969 anti-riot law and rule. The administration attempted to file several felony complaints against the sixteen, but County Attorney Ken Oden refused to accept the charges.

While the UT-16 were in custody, hundreds of protesters on the main mall began to dip their hands in red paint and make handprints on the Main Building to symbolize the blood on the hands of members of the university community due to UT's investments in apartheid. A roving band of demonstrators sat-in at several buildings on campus. In the early afternoon they dispersed. Through the use of videotapes, the police chose three of the protesters for arrest, because they perceived these people to be the leaders. The university filed both criminal and administrative charges against these three as well.

The unfavorable media coverage, the repression and the lies of the UT administration served to demoralize the students thoroughly. The students did not rally to their cause. The vanguard had misjudged its following in the premature, somewhat desperate action. The majority of students were not prepared for such an action and had not been in any way involved in its inception. In addition most students' commitment to fighting for UT divestment was shallow, because it did not clearly effect their self-interest. The strategic mistakes were: carrying out the action too early in the morning when the possibility of a large support protest was not feasible, the occupation of a large area with many glass windows which left them vulnerable to the police, and a failure to study the history of protest to acquaint themselves with the 1975 occupation and the ingredients of its success.

On an administrative level, the penalty was assessed to be a one-year suspension (equivalent to three semesters); on a criminal level most of the students were sentenced to jail time, ranging from three to six months. The participants who chose to plea bargain

received probation while those who pled not guilty and went through a jury trial were sentenced to jail time. The police brutality, the severity of the punishment, and the lack of support from the students was unexpected. Most students abandoned protest; several of the long-time activists became extremely demoralized.

A UT-16 member referred to the action and the divestment campaign in a *Spark* article:

The Regents have proven, over years, that they will not divest because students petition with logically and fiscally responsible arguments. Only continued student protests and the ensuing embarrassment will force a board as reactionary as the Regents to divest. The structure of the Board of Regents lies at the heart of the problem. These individuals all just happen to be white and are appointed by the governor as a political favor. They do not even pretend to represent students. (*Spark*, November 1986, p. 11).

## **WOMEN ORGANIZE**

In the aftermath of the UT-16 Tower takeover, a radical feminist organization began - Women Inside Sexist Hell (WISH). It sprung from disillusionment with male leadership and sexism within progressive groups, and served as a discussion group where women could discuss feminism and sexism within the student movement. The group planned a small International Women's Day celebration for March 1988. Some problems developed, mainly distrust and an age and experience gap which left many of the women out in the cold. The group did serve as a place where women could challenge each other to assert more leadership within the student movement, and helped some develop a feminist analysis of society.

## **STUDENTS UNDERTAKE DIRECT ACTION AGAINST CONTRA LEADER**

Nevertheless, in February 1987, direct action was again used. Activists called for a protest at the Hyatt Regency Hotel when Mario Calero - chief procurement officer for the Nicaraguan contras - was scheduled to speak at a YCT convention. About 100 showed up to protest Calero's presence in town. Fountains were dyed red, flyers were strewn (from the 25th floor) around the hotel. Eleven conservatively dressed demonstrators infiltrated the convention. When Calero began to speak, they loudly denounced him, unfurled a FSLN flag and attempted to conduct a citizens' arrest of Calero on the grounds that he had violated both national and international law. Calero's bodyguards quickly seized the protester with the handcuffs, the Sandinista flag, and several of the women's winter coats. The protesters were escorted out of the hotel. Although many members of the media were denied entry into the hotel throughout the action, they did not report on this act of censorship. However, the story was carried internationally.

*Spark* reporter Marc Salomon was kicked out of the room because the YCT had identified him from their files as a subversive. Soon the scandal broke that the YCT had taken grade reports from the UT computer system. The group was delegitimized thoroughly following this and the political changes resulting from the Iran-Contra Scandal and the ensuing distrust of government.

## **SOME MOVEMENT SETBACKS**

As the movement seemed to be building itself up again, several attacks were made on the shanty. The shanty had been destroyed numerous times and the perpetrators had never been apprehended. Two activists requested a gun permit to guard the shanty, without submitting the idea to a group decision. The resulting negative media coverage was damaging again to the movement. A large group of activists held a meeting the next week to discuss what had happened. This was perhaps the first meeting since the office takeover at which activists began to analyze the state of the movement and the effects of certain activities on the size of the movement.

In a *Spark* article of April 1987, the following analysis was presented:

If we are trying to bring about a truly democratic, non-racist, non-sexist, egalitarian society, we must reflect such values in our interaction with each other and in our organizing work.

It is hard not to feel powerless against the weight of an international economic system whose ideology is supported, legitimized and perpetuated by a mass media and educational system that grind out complacent acceptance.

This alienation (and often boredom) can lead us to radical action for its own sake and to self-aggrandizement. (*The Spark*, April 1987, p. 16).

The article suggested that activists attempt to get more in touch with students, end their cliquish social behavior, get involved in grassroots movements in the community, build up organizations as the basis of a resurgence of the student movement, and address issues which effect the self-interest of students.

## **1988: PROTEST INCREASING**

Campaigns against CIA recruitment on campuses followed the anti-apartheid movement in 1987 with a legal victory at U.Mass.-Amherst (the so-called Abbie Hoffman-Amy Carter Trial) and many victories in preventing CIA recruitment efforts. During the spring semester of 1988 this trend of increased student militancy has continued, as evidenced by the increasing number of sit-ins and building occupations carried out by groups of Third World students in various parts of the country and by deaf students at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Students are beginning to fight back and to win, notably at U. Mass-Amherst and Gallaudet.

Progressive students are also attempting to build a national organization. In February 1988 over 700 student delegates met to establish such an organization but failed largely due to differences between white progressives and Third World students which developed during the anti-apartheid movement on a national level.

In 1988, over 2000 students marched to commemorate Martin Luther King. Black students on the campus have continually challenged the university's failure to recruit minorities.

In March 1988, a forum on the CIA was held in the Texas Union. One of the speakers was a CIA administrator who spoke of the agency's program to recruit students and to enhance its image among intellectuals (also to contract with professors to provide research). Two students were arrested for distributing literature at the door; they had violated a university rule which had not been enforced for years. Incidentally they

opposed the CIA's presence on campus. Although the university tried to press criminal charges against one of the protesters for failure to identify himself, these charges were not accepted at the time however. At the same forum two nights later, several activists distributed literature and were not arrested.

Since then, it has become obvious that the university no longer intends to enforce its rules which deny students their constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. This point is exemplified in the failure of the school to arrest students at meetings and protests on the main mall (which is not a legal free speech area). A protest against the CIA's recruitment efforts on campus was held there in April; around 200 marched to Jester Center where the CIA was conducting interviews. They succeeded in closing down the interviews and in protecting one of the protesters from arrest.

UT police had seized Robert Ovetz for hitting a recruit with a placard and taken him into a women's bathroom. The crowd remained outside the bathroom refusing to allow the police to take Ovetz out to the paddy wagon. When the police realized that the crowd was not going to disperse, they attempted to take Ovetz out of the building. A scuffle resulted between students and police, Ovetz was freed. The militancy and solidarity exhibited by students at the anti-CIA protest led to a victory, though a small one.

Also during April, disabled students held a dramatic protest at one of the shuttle bus stops to demonstrate how inaccessible the student transportation services are for disabled people. As they publicly encountered mishaps and falls trying to board the buses, the point was graphically driven home to many.

At the end of April it seemed that the administration was trying to undermine some of the gains made by graduate students back in 1981. Despite Austin's glutted housing market, the university raised rent prices at its Married Student Housing facility. This outraged married students (most of whom are in graduate school) because of the already low wages they receive and because they know that property value and rents are decreasing everywhere else in town.

On April 25, teaching assistants, assistant instructors and research assistants were told that the state would no longer pay their insurance premiums, amounting to a 14-17% pay cut in their already low wages. They held several meetings (illegal according to the UT rules) on the main mall to discuss retaliatory action. Although they discussed going on strike and refusing to grade final exams, they decided that such an action would lead to their being fired according to Texas law. Instead they chose to pursue a lawsuit and to threaten to inflate their students' grades until they received their insurance premiums, and no cost of living adjustments in their wages to compensate for the insurance loss.

UT President Cunningham told the graduate students that he would get back to them on the problem in ten days; it was no coincidence that in ten days classes would end and the student newspaper would no longer be published. Most of the students were not duped and demanded more immediate action. At a mass meeting, the students insisted on collective decision-making; several shouted that COGS had never done anything beneficial for the graduate students. They refused to accept student government leadership and direction, because of its wimpiness and its ties to the administration. The chair of the Faculty Senate made a public announcement of the faculty's support for the graduate students. The Wednesday meeting was characterized by a lack of both

organization and unity but on Thursday, the graduate students met on a departmental level and elected representatives.

At their meeting that afternoon (April 27), administration officials were planted throughout the audience. Cunningham's vice president - Livingston - attempted to tie up the meeting by speaking for over half an hour without offering any concessions. The students voted the administration official off the podium and out of the room and then began discussing their intentions for action. They held a demonstration on Friday where they issued their demand that the administration reinstate their health insurance benefits at the same level by May 6. The administration offered a settlement on May 5 that the premium amount would be added to the TAs and AIs salaries but that they would no longer be eligible for the premium-sharing plan. As I write this, the situation has not yet been resolved and graduate students plan to continue pressing their legal concerns and organizing over the summer.

## CONCLUSION

Through knowledge of the history of student activism on the UT campus, one can identify cycles of protest activity followed by those of student apathy toward the politics of the university and of the larger society. Examination of such patterns facilitates the development of an understanding and conclusions about past student political struggles.

During the period covered in this history, student activism took many forms. It encompassed activities ranging from discussions of student concerns with the regents or other administrators to boycotting classes in demand of change, from circulating or signing petitions to occupying the university president's office, from filing lawsuits against the university for the abrogation of constitutional and civil rights to sabotaging and destroying university property. The fact that students have sometimes resorted to such drastic measures must be understood within the context of student disenfranchisement from the decision-making processes of the university.

During the early 1960's, a small group of predominantly black students was able to expose the university's racist segregation policies through public statements and pickets. Through persistence, these and subsequent civil rights activists gained the support of their fellow students as evidenced by the poll and student votes cited in Chapter 1. It took four long years before the demands first raised in March of 1960 were institutionalized and another eleven years until the university was forced to comply with the Civil Rights Act. In the late 1960's and the early 1970's, UT student activism peaked. The gains of this period of activism became apparent in the early and mid 1970's when students won new academic programs (e.g. Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies) and when national student protests led to such victories as an end to the Vietnam War and the establishment of the right to vote for 18-year olds. The student body in the late 1970's and early 1980's was comparatively apathetic. However, student activism resurged on the UT campus during the mid-1980's with the free speech and anti-apartheid movement, the protests against tuition hikes and legislative cuts in higher education appropriations, and the teaching assistants' demands for reinstatement of health benefits.

The issues and demands which students have raised in their protests have tended to be reactive. The larger student demonstrations at UT responded to such crises as UT's violations of students' rights to free speech and assembly, the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, the state legislature's decision to raise tuition fees, repression of fellow students by the university or the criminal justice system, and the university's failure to take affirmative action to compensate for past (or present) racial discrimination. In a majority of these situations, the interests of at least some students were threatened. Although student activists have made conscious decisions to oppose what they have seen as immoral, unjust, or repressive, they have not often set the agenda for their protests which tend to seek the negation of an evil or injustice. However, there are some examples of student attempts to create a positive or a community of their own, for instance the draft counseling services provided during the Vietnam War, the establishment of food and housing cooperatives, the publication of underground or alternative newspapers (e.g. *The Rag* and *The Spark*), and counter cultural spring celebrations such as Gentle Thursdays in the late 1960's.

The pattern of administrative opposition to and repression of radical student groups has been characteristic of the entire period covered in this thesis. Administrative tactics in dealing with protesters have become more sophisticated as the university has gathered more experience in controlling student protest. For example, in 1967 the Chair of the Board of Regents addressed an illegal student demonstration and pled for a restoration of campus tranquility. Nowadays, the regents are distanced from the student body; they utilize their administrative subordinates to repress student activism on the campus.

Just as the university administration has learned from its mistakes in dealing with student protest, student activists must acquaint themselves with the history of student struggle on the campus to avoid making mistakes of the past and to realize that persistent and determined efforts to change the university have, at times, been effective.

The history which I have written in these pages will hopefully serve as an overview of the past 28 years of student struggle. I recommend further research into the following: structural oppression of students within the university, the connections of the regents to the business community, and past efforts to establish an alternative student community or a counter-culture.

As the student anti-apartheid activists have frequently encouraged each other - *Aluta Continua!* or *The Struggle Continues!*

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