

CAMPUS PROTEST IN THE 1960'S AND THE
TRADITION OF STUDENT UNREST IN
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	iii
Chapter	
I. ESTABLISHING THE PARAMETERS	1
II. CAMPUS PROTEST IN THE 60'S AND THE TRADITION OF STUDENT UNREST	6
III. IDENTIFYING PATTERNS OF ACTIVITY AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE	53
NOTES	58
BIBLIOGRAPHY	62

PREFACE

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Chapter I

ESTABLISHING THE PARAMETERS

From 1960 to about 1972 the United States experienced a period of intense social and political turmoil. Many people, most under thirty and associated with the colleges and universities, were angry and frustrated over the country's inability to deal with a variety of problems ranging from civil rights and poverty to the war in Vietnam. This anger and frustration was translated into a political activist movement which was centered on the campuses, and which alternated between an emphasis on social reformism and an emphasis on revolution.

My intent here is to describe the chronological development of that political activist movement, the "student movement" of the 1960's. The interpretations offered are guided by two hypotheses; first, the campus disturbances of the 60's were not an aberration in the history of American higher education. In fact, just the opposite was true; what happened in the 60's was merely the modern manifestation of a long tradition of campus unrest at American colleges and universities. Now, this tradition has been by no means constant. The reasons for student unrest have changed significantly over the last one hundred and fifty years, and one of my objectives is to describe that change.

The second hypothesis deals with the pattern of campus unrest during the 60's and early 70's; it was clear and identifiable. This is not to argue conspiracy, at least not in the normal sense of the word. There was no small band of people sitting around a table in a smoke-filled room formalizing an alliance to promote riot and revolution. Instead, we are talking about the actions of like-minded individuals. Men and women with similar backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs who reacted to specific events in similar ways, and whose reactions strongly influenced each other.

Before discussing the subject in the main we must define violence as it is used within the context of this paper. Also, we need to clarify what is actually being referred to when we talk about the shift in the focus of student unrest from local college issues to national social and political issues. Understanding each idea separately will aid immeasurably in understanding why the eventual linking of the two ideas is significant.

Throughout this paper, the term violence is used to describe a variety of different student protest activities. All, in some way, are characterized by one or more of the following traits. There was property damage involving the vandalism, burning, or bombing of a building. There was, occasionally, loss of life and in all situations individuals were either threatened with physical violence or subjected to it. Also, protestors and law enforcement personnel clashed

violently and openly, often engaging in what amounted to full-scale battles for control of the campus.

Examples of the kinds of incidents referred to include the riots at Harvard in 1834; the faculty-student clash at Virginia in 1836; the whole series of disturbances at San Francisco State during 1966-67; the disturbances at Columbia in 1968; and the Weatherperson bombing campaign which began in the fall of 1969. Neither the authorities (federal, state, local, and university) nor the student activists had a corner on violence during the 60's; both sides were equally prone to use it given the proper set of circumstances.

As will be described in detail in the next chapter, the emphasis of campus unrest has shifted over the years from strictly local college issues, to national social and political issues, to a linkage between the two ideas. This shift in emphasis significantly altered the nature of campus unrest ultimately introducing unresolvable issues into the university-student conflict.

The problem, however, is to identify explicitly the local and national issues and to explain how and why the two notions became linked. When referring to local issues, we are talking about problems, policies, or other considerations that directly affect life on the campus. This includes such things as exam policies and quality of student housing, but always they are issues over which the university or college exerts a high degree of control. And, most importantly, when disruptions arose over local issues, the

college or university administration had the power to resolve them.

National issues, on the other hand, are issues which may have little, if any, direct bearing on life on the campus. Civil rights, when that first became a popular cause among students in the early 1960's, was in this category; poverty was another similar issue. Each generated a high degree of interest among students, and students became actively involved in voluntary service programs to alleviate both problems. Such student involvement was usually with the sanction and support of the university; however, the specific problems were outside the institution's perceived sphere of responsibility.

On occasion, national issues could affect directly what happened on the campus. Perhaps the best example was the anti-ROTC protests at the land grant schools during the 1870's and 1880's. A spin-off of the post-Civil War peace movement, these incidents were strictly internal affairs. Students were upset over the idea of being required to attend compulsory military drill on campus. They responded by attempting to force the abolition of such programs. Discontent was directed at the institution for offering the military training; there was no attempt, as there would be in later years, to hold the university morally responsible for American military policy because it offered the training program. In other words, the point of conflict remained

focused on an issue over which the university and its students had some control.

However, the Free Speech Movement disturbances at Berkeley, during the fall of 1964, changed that. Some students, and some faculty members, saw the university's attempt to enforce a ban against on-campus political activity as equivalent to the discrimination against blacks going on in the South. The result was the clear, direct linking, at least in the minds of the Free Speech Movement activists, of the two problems. Whether or not the university lifted the ban became no longer just a university question. By taking the action in the first place, the institution was seen as part of the system out to repress not only blacks but anyone else who tried to question the status quo. Consequently, during the 1960's the university itself became one of the major targets of campus unrest. Activist students and faculty sought to change not specific policies but the nature of the institution itself.

This linking of local campus issues with national social issues fundamentally altered the nature of American campus unrest. It insured that the overall focus was clearly political and brought the university and the students into conflict over problems that neither could actually resolve. And, even though most unrest remained centered on the campuses, it helped bring such activities to national attention because of their political orientation.

Chapter II

CAMPUS PROTEST IN THE 60'S AND THE TRADITION OF STUDENT UNREST

On February 1, 1960 a group of freshmen from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College at Greensboro, an all Black school, staged a sit-in at the lunch counter of a local Woolworth's Store.¹ The students were protesting the store's policy of allowing whites only at the lunch counter. Although they were eventually arrested for trespassing, this group's action marked the beginning of the student political activism that would come to characterize American higher education during the 1960's and early 1970's.

Within a month the Greensboro incident was followed by similar sit-ins at segregated facilities throughout the South. The North Carolina A&T students had, in effect, triggered a new phase of the struggle for Negro rights; and scores of other college students, both black and white, set out to emulate them. In the South, support was primarily centered on the Black college campuses and took the form of sit-ins and protest marches. On Northern college campuses, especially in the Northeast and along the West Coast, white college students also staged marches, sit-ins, and engaged in a variety of other activities designed to show support for Black rights.² Much of this early activity was ill planned

and poorly executed. However, several campus based groups quickly evolved to organize and channel student civil rights activities. Of these the most influential was the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). It was SNCC, in conjunction with the Congress on Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and other groups that sponsored the freedom rides and marches, the voter registration drives, and the community organization drives that characterized this phase of the civil rights movement.

Between the summer of 1960 and the summer of 1964 SNCC recruited White, Northern college students to work in the South in ever increasing numbers. Confronted with the harsh reality of the Southern political and social system, these students learned very early that precinct meetings, voter registration drives, community organization programs, and voting were effective forms of political activity only for those groups and individuals granted legitimacy by the power structure. Also, they learned that often the only way to counter social injustice and force action from those in power was through dramatic, direct confrontation usually stemming from extralegal, or illegal, activity.³ Such lessons, acquired in the heat of combat, made lasting impressions and fed a growing sense of frustration, disillusionment, and cynicism among the Northern recruits.

The summers of 1963 and 1964 were particularly crucial periods in shaping these feelings. During these two summers,

white students went South in large numbers, larger than in previous summers, as SNCC and the other civil rights groups geared for major political mobilization efforts aimed at making Southern blacks a force in the 1964 Presidential election. Once in the South the student volunteers encountered some hostility and much indifference, from local residents as well as from local and state authorities. The experience of the two summers strongly reinforced the previous lessons and provided some new ones. Certain of the righteousness of their cause, these students set out, in the space of a few months, to correct over two hundred years of social injustice. In doing so, they ran head long into the problems of racial prejudice and poverty reinforced by ignorance and buttressed by the highly stratified, tightly closed Southern social structure. Rather than sweeping their enemies before them, the civil rights activists found themselves locked in pitched battle, sometimes for their very lives, the just and right nature of their cause apparently of importance to no one save themselves.

In the fall of 1963 and again in the fall of 1964, most of these student civil rights workers returned to their home campuses extremely angry and embittered after their experiences in the South. Indeed, the two summers had been an education, an education in political and social awareness that most would not soon forget. For many, it had also been the final, key radicalizing experience; convinced of the moral bankruptcy of American society, they felt certain that if

their generation did not act to force the nation to change its direction, there might not be any future generations to worry about.

Basically, the Civil Rights movement of the early 60's served to stimulate the development of political awareness and eventually of political activism among college students of the period. However, as the President's Commission on Campus Unrest indicated in its 1970 report, student discontent in the United States did not start with the Greensboro sit-in.⁴ There is, in fact, a long history of violence and unrest involving American college students stretching back to the Revolutionary War. Strikes, riots, building occupations, and burnings all seemed to have taken place about as frequently as did final exams and commencement.

From the late 1770's until about the time of the Civil War, most incidents of campus disruption had followed a well defined pattern. The focus was primarily upon local issues internal to the college; these included such things as quality of food in the student cafeteria, student housing conditions, the final exam system, campus governance, and faculty authority. Almost annually, students, faculty, and sometimes boards of overseers squared off over these and other issues.

None of the early colleges were immune to student disorders, and several were especially susceptible. Harvard, for example, experienced a virtually unbroken chain of disruptions lasting from about 1790 to the early 1830's. The initial

disruptions were spurred by student dissatisfaction with the exam system. During the early 1800's, the quality of food in the cafeteria sparked a series of riots which were followed by a second series of riots protesting the expulsion of the students who led the food riots.⁵ In 1823, the President and the faculty voted to expel forty-three of the seventy members of the senior class on the day before commencement. This incident marked the culmination of three and a half years of violence and vandalism attributed primarily to the expelled students.⁶ President Josiah Quincy's harsh discipline and high standards spawned another series of disruptions which lasted from late 1827 until 1835 with the most notable outbreak coming in May of 1834, just before graduation. Failing to discover the perpetrator of some minor campus vandalism, Quincy dismissed the entire sophomore class and turned the matter over to the civil authorities. Enraged because Quincy had allowed the campus sanctuary to be violated by the local police, the Harvard student body went on a rampage that ended when Quincy closed the school for the remainder of the Spring term.⁷

During these same years, Yale, Princeton, and most of the other eastern colleges experienced problems similar to Harvard's. One of the more notable examples of campus unrest during this period took place at the University of Virginia. For several years students and faculty had been at loggerheads over the faculty's right to regulate student conduct. Things finally exploded into the open in the spring of 1836

when the students avowed their intention to resist further faculty tyranny, organized an independent militia company on campus and began stockpiling guns in the dormitory. An attempt by the faculty to expel the leaders touched off several days of rioting so serious that units of the state militia had to be called in to restore order.⁸

As noted above, these were the kinds of issues that received the most attention on the campuses until about the time of the Civil War. They were not, however, the only issues to stir the students. During both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, peace societies operated on many campuses, especially in New England and the Northeast.⁹ Abolitionist clubs were popular at many Northern colleges during the fifteen years prior to the Civil War. Some, like the one at the University of Michigan, were stations on the "underground railroad" where students helped runaway slaves escape to Canada.¹⁰ These examples mark the first real incidence of social or political issues having much impact on the American campus. The peace societies and the abolitionist clubs were tolerated by collegiate authorities as long as they did not interfere with the functioning of the college or bring the institution into discredit. If either resulted, the group was banned from the campus and the students involved expelled.¹¹

College centered interest in peace and the abolition of slavery, obviously political issues, marked the beginning of a subtle but important change in the nature of campus

disruptions. Food riots, housing riots, and the like continued but no longer occupied center stage. Students and faculty were becoming more concerned about national social and political issues. This shift in concerns was gradual and was prompted by changing expectations, both inside and outside the colleges, regarding their role in American society. Problems now attracting attention were issues such as slavery, issues which affected life on the campuses perhaps only indirectly; but, issues which nonetheless aroused interest because of their serious moral implications.

Activity related to these kinds of issues remained basically confined to the campuses. When conflicts and disruptions did arise, they were normally between rival groups with opposing views from within the institution. In this sense, then, the incidents of disruption remained local college problems; however student concerns were perceptibly shifting, coming to focus more on external issues, breaking away slowly from the traditional pattern.

This pattern of change continued in the years following the Civil War. During the 1870's and 1880's, mainly as a reaction to the horrors of the War, peace groups began to reappear at a number of colleges. Protests against compulsory military training on campus were common. Confined primarily to the land grant colleges, as they were required by law to offer military science, most of these incidents were relatively minor. However, the University of Wisconsin did experience almost fifteen years of continual student turbulence

over the issue; and at the University of Illinois students, unhappy over being forced to attend military drill, twice forced the resignation of the University president, once in 1879 and again in 1890.¹² On the whole, however, the post Civil War years were relatively quiet on the campuses, a sort of calm before the coming storm that would break in the 1890's and continue with varying intensity until the 1970's.

The final years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century mark a time of transition both in the nature and focus of American student concerns. By the 1890's, interest in off-campus political and social issues clearly superseded interest in local college problems. Student attention was now devoted to such issues as poverty, illiteracy, hunger, political corruption, and the other general social ills of American society. Actual on-campus unrest over these kinds of issues was very rare; but students, and faculty, were extremely active as advocates for social reform and change, engaging in settlement work with the poor, organizing factory work, conducting ghetto education programs, and engaging in a variety of other service projects.¹³

This trend was, at least in part, given added impetus by the spread of the idea of service in the 1890's. Strongly influenced by the Progressive movement, the idea of service had the institutions of higher education directly involved in political and social reform efforts. Progressivism, with its social reform orientation, was the philosophical basis for much of what happened on the campuses during these years.¹⁴

At the same time there was also a growth of interest in socialism, especially among students.

By the turn of the century many colleges and universities had one or more student socialist clubs. These groups sponsored presentations and debates on current issues, and were often active in off-campus reform programs. Of these the most important was the Intercollegiate Socialist Society organized in 1905, the first major political organization, radical or otherwise, formed by American college students. At the height of its popularity ISS carried a greater percentage of the contemporary student population on its membership roles than would Students for a Democratic Society during the late 1960's.¹⁵

The importance of this period, from about 1880 to the beginning of World War I, cannot be understated. Even though there would be instances of regression in the future, American college students were, by 1913-1914, only minimally concerned with the old traditional issues. Political organization and involvement in social reform had taken root on the campuses; and, at least among students, it was given a form of legitimacy by the institutions' own involvement in such activities. However, and this is also extremely important, the university or college was not viewed as responsible for off-campus problems. Poverty, exploitation of factory workers or farmers, and the like were the fault of businessmen and capitalists; the institution of higher education was opposed to all that--it was still a friend, a place to find shelter.

World War I and the Red scare that followed combined to curtail briefly campus unrest and the off-campus social reformism described above. By the early 1920's, however, activist trends were again emerging on the campuses. Immediately after the war, there was a marked increase in anti-war sentiment among students. Demonstrations against the presence of Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) units were common on many campuses; and pacifist groups, including the Student League for Industrial Democracy (the forerunner of SDS), worked actively at many institutions to promote disarmament. American foreign policy, perceived as imperialistic, also aroused collegiate dissent. Additionally, the pre-war interest in Socialism continued strong; and, by the mid-20's, it had become the basis of a growing, campus-centered, intellectual sub-culture which condemned American society and attacked the universities as too big, too bureaucratic, and prone to alienate students.¹⁶

The 1930's and the onset of the Depression heralded still further student discontent. Anti-war activity remained a dominant theme in campus unrest and the political shift to the left continued. Marxist affiliated groups were formed at many institutions and interest in socialism heightened. That discontent among college students ran deep during these years is evidenced by the results of a poll taken in the mid-1930's. Twenty-five per cent of the students considered themselves to be sympathetic to socialism, and forty per cent declared that they would refuse to fight in a war.¹⁷

By 1939 and 1940, protest and unrest had once again begun to fade from the campuses; with the United States' entry into World War II, it ceased altogether. The developing climate of national consensus labeled all dissent and protest as treason--it was unAmerican to contend that America might be flawed. This attitude intensified with the onset of the Cold War, and during the early 1950's Senator Joseph McCarthy's attacks on the intellectual left further helped to discourage dissent.

With the lessening of Cold War tensions in the mid-1950's that consensus and the accompanying pressure for conformity also lessened. Slowly, the American campuses again became centers for protest and dissent. The major focus in the late 50's and early 60's was still social reformism; and the primary area of involvement was the growing civil rights movement. For reasons explained at the beginning of this chapter, involvement in the civil rights movement proved to be a radicalizing experience, especially for Northern white students. Confused and embittered by what they had seen and experienced while working in the South, many of these students began to link issues on their home campuses with issues in the movement. They saw the same types of discrimination, the same lack of interest in human welfare, the same societal intransigence in places such as Berkeley, California and Madison, Wisconsin that they had seen in Selma, Alabama and Meridian, Mississippi.

By the late summer of 1964, it was only a question of when and on which campus these feelings would explode first. In September of that year, the administration of the University of California at Berkeley unwittingly provided the spark by deciding to enforce a long-ignored university regulation which prohibited on-campus political activity by off-campus groups. Though technically illegal, such activity was commonplace at Berkeley. For some years, the administration had allowed off-campus groups to solicit funds, recruit members, and pass out literature in a well defined area along the edge of the campus referred to as the "Berkeley Strip."¹⁸ The administration's action intended to close the "strip."

In response to the administration's decision, the groups and organizations accustomed to using the area banded together and formally requested that it be kept open. They offered to police the area to ensure that university regulations were not violated, and they agreed not to solicit funds nor to impede pedestrian traffic flow. All attempts at compromise were rejected by the Berkeley administration, thus setting the stage for a major confrontation.¹⁹

During the last two weeks in September, there was a series of peaceful demonstrations protesting the decisions. Some groups continued to use the strip in violation of the ban, and towards the end of the month eight students were indefinitely suspended as a result. These activities marked the beginnings of the Free Speech Movement (FSM).

In early October, a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) representative was arrested for soliciting funds on the campus. When the Berkeley police attempted to remove him, students gathered around the police car and staged a sit-in which kept the car and its occupants immobilized for a day and a half. During that time, students gave speeches decrying the use of police on campus and the denial of their right to freedom of speech by the university's ban on political activity. The demonstration broke up when the university agreed not to press charges against the CORE worker. Of course, nothing had been settled.

The question of what types of political activity would be permitted on campus was still open; so, too, was the question of university disciplinary action against students involved in the protests. Demonstrations continued during October and November as the university tried to decide what to do. The situation quieted briefly over Thanksgiving, but flared again in early December when FSM sponsored a sit-in and occupation of the university administration building, Sproul Hall. After two days, California Governor Edmund Brown ordered police to clear the building. The result was chaos, mass arrests, and political polarization of the Berkeley student body. Prior to Brown's use of the police, the FSM had been supported by a distinct minority of the faculty and students. However, the mass arrests at Sproul Hall rallied large numbers of previously uncommitted students, and some faculty members, behind FSM. This did not represent a real

shift in political sympathies so much as it did a reaction to the administration's, and the Governor's, handling of the Sproul Hall sit-in. The end result was a marked expansion of the Free Speech Movement's power base. Now in a position to exert more influence over events, FSM, in late December, called a joint faculty-student strike which brought activity on the Berkeley campus to a halt.

The effects of the strike and the other events of the fall are difficult to assess. Certainly, the Free Speech Movement was never able to bring the Berkeley administration crashing down. Yet, over the short term, the FSM was able to achieve most of its goals. When school resumed in January, 1965, the "strip" was reopened, the rules governing political activity on campus liberalized, and the University agreed to take no disciplinary action against the dissidents. Also, the chancellor was gone on an extended leave of absence and would eventually resign. Some faculty members would ultimately follow his lead. Over the long term, though, things changed very little. During the spring and summer, tensions on campus eased greatly; and by the fall of 1965 life at U.C.-Berkeley was back to normal.

The events at Berkeley reflected a major change in the basic nature of American student unrest. For the first time, local campus issues were directly linked to major national social and political issues. Many believed that the closing of the "Berkeley strip" was a concerted attempt to drive the civil rights groups off campus, thus putting the University

in the same league as the Southern power establishment. Mario Savio, an organizer of the Free Speech Movement and a SNCC veteran, expressed this idea best: "Last summer," he said, "I went to Mississippi to join the struggle for Civil Rights. This fall I am engaged in another phase of that struggle, this time in Berkeley. The two battlefields may seem quite different to some observers, but this is not the case. The same rights are at stake in both places--the right to participate as citizens in a democratic society and the right to due process of law."²⁰ In other words, the university was now the enemy and was viewed, by the students, as at least partly responsible for the widespread racism in American society. Never before, especially on such serious moral issues, had the institutions of higher education actually been the enemy. The students and the colleges had stood in opposition. But the differences had been reconcilable and short-term; now they were neither.

This resulted in a situation which the University had trouble handling. Charged with responsibility for problems over which it had, at best, only partial control, the administration, no matter what its actions, could never adequately deal with all the underlying causes of student discontent.²¹ This tactic of confronting the University with issues totally or partly beyond its control became a characteristic feature of campus unrest during the 1960's. It represented a significant break with more traditional patterns of campus protest and was brought on by a growing political awareness and

sense of commitment among students. The effect was to thrust the universities and their constituent student bodies more directly into the quest for social and political change.

The years between 1965 and 1968 were characterized by the spread of student unrest, the growth of campus centered activism, and ultimately the radicalization of a sizable portion of the collegiate population. There were a number of reasons why this happened; one was the influence of the news media. Campus demonstrations, especially ones related to issues of major national importance, usually involved dramatic conflict and controversy. As such, they were news in a traditional sense, thus attracting reporters and television cameras. The effect was to open the campus confrontation process to close public scrutiny; caught under the pervasive eye of the media, dissidents and university officials alike came to play more directly to the press, and through it to their potential audiences away from the campus, rather than to each other. Local incidents of disruption now took on national significance as the media popularized the dynamics of protest and confrontation on a given campus and transmitted it to virtually every other campus in the country.²²

A second reason was that the prevailing climate of opinion at many colleges and universities was favorable to the spread of discontent. Following the Berkeley example, student and faculty interest in off-campus social and political problems increased. During these years, two issues, the lack of progress towards racial equality and

the developing war in Southeast Asia, absorbed much of that interest.

By 1965-66, the original non-violent, reform-oriented civil rights movement appeared to be dying. Many participants, both black and white, were of the opinion that this approach had accomplished very little. Their analysis seemed to be supported by the outbreak of urban violence in Watts and Harlem during 1965. The inner city riots drew attention to the continued existence of racial injustice in American society and highlighted the failure of the social reform effort. They also widened the already growing rift between moderates and militants in the movement and marked the rise to dominance of the latter. 1966 was the real turning point, though; that was the year when Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party, and the SNCC Black/White moderate coalition broke apart as Stokely Carmichael turned that organization toward violence. Emphasis within the movement was now clearly upon Black power, pride, and Black separatism. The old goals of equality and social integration fell by the wayside. Rather than attacking specific injustices within the system, the militants declared the system itself to be racist and began waging war on it.

All this had a rather profound impact on the campuses. Militancy at black colleges and universities rose sharply. There were numerous violent clashes between black students and local and state law enforcement agencies; the most serious incidents occurred at Jackson State College and

Howard University. In the North, militant students, mostly black, turned against the university itself, identifying it as a primary agent of social repression.

They saw the university as a white-oriented institution systematically excluding Blacks, and other minorities, from its student body or professional staff, but only too happy to have them as janitors, maids, or cooks. Militant minority students also found the curriculum to be almost exclusively oriented towards white middle-class America. There was little or no mention of the cultural heritage or contribution of the nation's racial and ethnic minorities. At institution after institution, presidents and chancellors came face to face with groups of angry Black students demanding an immediate end to the repression. If the university was slow to act or, as in some cases, if it was unable or unwilling to do so, the students did not hesitate to turn to direct confrontation and if that failed violence as a means of pressing their demands.

The struggle for racial equality aroused deep emotions on the campuses, emotions that obviously helped foster an environment conducive to the spread of unrest and activism. However, the resultant pattern of protest reflected an ambiguity in purpose and direction. While most members of the collegiate community were in sympathy with the general goal of equality, there was considerable divergence of opinion as to what the goal actually implied and how to achieve it. It took the emergence of another issue, discontent over the growing war in Vietnam, to actually provide a

unifying theme for campus unrest. Because, as the war drug on and the level of fighting escalated public concern over the war also escalated. This added a certain degree of legitimacy to the student activists' early opposition to the war, markedly bolstering their self-assurance, and leading them to eventually step up and broaden their protest efforts.²³

Prior to about 1965-66, faculty and student attitudes towards the war were mixed. It was during these years that the teach-in concept originated at the University of Michigan. The idea was to provide an impartial forum where all opinions on what was happening in Southeast Asia could be presented, contrasted, carefully analyzed, and conclusions developed concerning the rightness or wrongness of U.S. involvement. However, beginning in the spring of 1965 and continuing well into 1968, a series of events took place which destroyed this plurality of views and turned opinion on the campuses, and in the nation at large, almost unanimously against the war. The series of events referred to were decisions by the United States to increase its commitment in South Vietnam. Each increase in the U.S. commitment usually escalated the level of fighting and usually involved ever greater numbers of U.S. troops assigned directly to a combat role. It was this gradually increasing level of U.S. involvement in the direct prosecution of the war that affected public opinion.

Even though attitudes on the campuses were hardening against the war, the early protest efforts continued in much the same vein as the teach-ins. That is, they were basically

peaceful in nature, were intended to draw public attention to the war, and, at least from the activists' perspective, were intended to educate people as to its purpose. Examples of this kind of activity included petition drives, protest vigils and rallies, peace marches, and public information lectures designed to provide "accurate" information on the war.

By mid-1967, the continuing escalation of the war had caused an even further hardening of attitudes and led to a major change in the nature, focus, and moral tone of antiwar activity. From peaceful, nondisruptive tactics aimed at protesting the war itself, the emphasis shifted to illegal, violent, obstructive actions aimed at interfering with the war making machinery. As the President's Commission on Campus Unrest observed: "From having been a 'mistake,' the war was soon interpreted by radical students as a logical outcome of the American political system. They argued that what was most objectionable was not the war itself, but rather 'the system' that had entered, justified, and pursued it. According to this logic, the appropriate target of protest was 'the system' itself, especially those parts of it that were involved in the war."²⁴ Thus the shift in protest emphasis.

On the surface, this would appear to have broadened significantly the protest issues in reality the opposite was true. While there was much rhetoric flying about proclaiming the immorality of "the system" and repeated demands for

its destruction, attention and interest actually settled almost exclusively on two issues. These were the Selective Service System and the universities' involvement in the war through defense research and admission of military and war industry recruiters to the campus. In many respects, both came to stand, symbolically, for "the system" and bore the brunt of most attacks against it.

To many antiwar students and faculty, the Selective Service was one of the worst evils spawned by "the system." It was the institution feeding young men into the mammoth war machine and seemed to operate in a highly arbitrary, capricious manner. Protest actions against the Selective Service System ran the gauntlet from draft card burning to occupation of local draft board offices and the destruction of their records and to sit-down demonstrations aimed at blocking military induction centers. Disruptions also took place at many colleges and universities in an effort to stop the release of information about students' academic standings to the draft system.²⁵ And on many campuses antiwar groups sponsored counseling centers where young men could obtain "unbiased" information about the draft and their obligations and options.

University involvement in the war was one of the more controversial issues on campus. Radical students and faculty charged that by offering ROTC courses, by allowing military and war industry representatives to recruit on campus, and by conducting military funded research, the institutions of

higher education were training the people and developing the technology needed to keep the war going. According to the radicals' view, then, the universities were in large part responsible for prolonging the war through the ties they maintained with the military and the defense industry. Consequently, most protest activities centering on this issue were intended to force the institutions to sever those ties. Additionally, the dissidents expected the universities to endorse, unequivocally, the antiwar movement and to place all their resources at the movement's disposal.

The tactics employed to achieve these goals, such as strikes, building occupations, and so forth, were much the same as those used with other issues. What served to distinguish protests over this issue and the Selective Service from other protests was their moral tone. Extremely self-righteous to begin with, the antiwar activists eventually grew to tolerate no dissent from their viewpoint. This attitude helped to curtail significantly rational academic discourse as the attitude of intolerance came to permeate virtually all areas of the university.

These years (1965-1967) also saw the rise of several campus-based political groups the most notable of which was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Originally the student affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), a socialist labor organization, SDS split with the LID in the very early 60's over differences in political ideology. By 1965, the organization was made up almost exclusively of

white students, many of whom had worked in the early phases of the civil rights movement. Angry and disillusioned with traditional approaches to social change these individuals, during the years in question, turned SDS towards a progressively more radical and revolutionary sociopolitical philosophy.

Evaluating the role Students for a Democratic Society actually played in the spread of campus unrest is difficult. A diverse, complex organization, SDS was involved in a wide variety of protest activities both on and off campus. Outwardly, at least, the fact that SDS had a national headquarters and a network of local chapters around the country seemed to lend a degree of legitimacy to the organization's activities. It was, however, the sense of diversity and complexity along with an extreme diffusion of power and continuous internal transformation that ultimately characterized and defined SDS.²⁶

Also, this period (1965-1967) saw the emergence of the counter-culture. Centered largely around the campuses, it advanced a life style directly at variance with traditional American beliefs. What is important for our purposes is to establish the fact that the counter-culture and the campus political activist movement were two distinctly different things. While membership in, or support for, one did not necessarily preclude membership in or support for the other, neither did it automatically guarantee it.

The concept behind the counter-culture movement envisioned an alternative life style to that which was the accepted American norm. At best the counter-culture wanted conversion to its beliefs and worst it would settle for peaceful coexistence. The campus activist movement on the other hand did not envision an alternative life style so much as it did the change of the existing one (precisely what type of change depended on the chronological point in time and orientation of the movement). These differences brought the counter-culture people and the student political activists into the same kinds of conflict, although not as heavily and not nearly as often with each other, and for many of the same reasons, as the two groups had with the "establishment."

All this is not, however, intended to minimize the impact of the "Counter-culture movement" on the "Student movement." Because, despite the differences in philosophy, the counter-culture helped foster an environment especially on the campuses conducive to the acceptance of the ideas advocated by the political activist movement; that is ideas at odds with more traditional American values. Also, the counter-culture communities, generally found around most major colleges and universities, provided an environment emotionally supportive of the dissidents themselves.²⁷

By the end of 1967, then, the following elements characterized the developing pattern of protest. First was the twin focus on racism and the war in Vietnam with the goal of ending both. Second was the rejection of the peaceful legal

tactics of the early civil rights movement in favor of illegal, often violent protest methods. Third, and perhaps most important, was the acceptance and affirmation of the Berkeley idea that colleges and universities were responsible for off-campus social and political problems. Fourth, a refinement of the Berkeley idea was the identification of the university as the enemy by dissident students and faculty, because of the repressive role the institutions of higher education were perceived as playing in the maintenance of the social order. With some modification, these were also the basic elements that would characterize the next, and final, phase of the decade of student unrest.

The disruptions at Columbia University during the spring of 1968 marked the first fusion of the above elements. In February 1968, the University began construction of a gymnasium on land located in Morningside Park, a recreational area used extensively by the Black community of West Harlem. While plans called for the facility to be utilized both by the University and area residents, many of the latter disapproved of the building site and the nature of the use arrangements. Initial protests, during the months of February and March, came mainly from neighborhood groups, but did involve some students; and arrests were made in an effort to break down opposition to the gym.²⁸

In late April, a group of Black students, seizing upon the gym issue as symbolic of Columbia's attempt to control the Harlem community, barricaded themselves inside the

University's administration building, Hamilton Hall. They demanded that Columbia halt construction on the gym and end its exploitation of the surrounding Black neighborhood. The Columbia SDS chapter, and a coalition of other student groups, quickly announced support for the Black students, and added the demand that the University sever all ties with the Institute for Defense Analysis, a Pentagon sponsored research consortium. Eventually, the dissident students took control of four other buildings and declared the campus closed until the University yielded to their demands. The University held off taking any direct action for a full week; but, finally yielding to pressure from a variety of outside sources, the Columbia administration summoned the New York City Police to clear the buildings. What resulted has been described as a police riot with 707 people arrested and 148 injured; the effect, much the same as that of the Sproul Hall "bust" at Berkeley, was to polarize the Columbia campus and swing the sympathies of scores of moderates behind the dissidents. Following the clearing of Hamilton Hall and the other buildings, an uneasy calm descended on the Columbia campus. But it was not to last; and, in late May, white students, led by SDS, again occupied the administration building, this time outraged that the University had suspended SDS leaders because of their role in the April protests and because the University seemed to be ignoring their demands. Once again, the Columbia administration summoned the police to clear Hamilton Hall; and once again the result was a violent clash between police

and protestors. Following the second Hamilton Hall "bust," there were several lesser confrontations and demonstrations until the end of the Spring Semester brought some degree of calm back to the campus.²⁹

As at Berkeley, the protestors at Columbia were generally successful in achieving their demands. In June 1968, the University did break its ties with the Institute for Defense Analyses. Also, the University did stop construction on the gym and eventually abandoned the project all together.

Unlike at Berkeley, the issues at Columbia were not local campus issues linked to off-campus issues. They were instead political issues relating directly to the functioning of the university and its role as a political instrument. Ostensibly, the issues were, of course, the construction of the gym in Morningside Park and Columbia's ties to the IDA. In reality, the issues went deeper than that and focused, as the radicals saw it, upon Columbia's role in repressing the poor Blacks in New York City through control of the ghetto, and repressing the poor overseas by supporting American imperialism through the IDA.

Convinced that Columbia was already a political weapon, the radicals sought, essentially, to make it their own political weapon as opposed to "the system's." This also differed somewhat from the objective of the FSM at Berkeley which was not so much interested in politicizing the institution as in restoring its openness and neutrality. At Columbia, the protestors were after neither.

The Columbia demonstrations were among the most violent up to that time. Protestors and police fought openly for possession of the campus buildings, and violent physical clashes on the campus in general were common. Many of the dissidents, especially those operating under SDS auspices, had obviously made arrangements to defend themselves, anticipating a police assault.

In addition to the personal violence, the incidence of vandalism and property destruction was more pronounced at Columbia than it had been previously. This was due, I believe, primarily to the politicalization of the demonstrations. Outraged over the political and social policies of the university and those who ran it, the protestors struck at the symbols of the institution, its physical facilities. And from simple vandalism, these acts eventually escalated to terroristic acts--bombing buildings, bomb threats, intimidation of those unsympathetic to the protest cause, and the like.

Finally, the demonstrations at Columbia served to intensify a long developing public backlash against campus disruption. Since the Berkeley unrest in 1964, pressure had been growing on political officials and university administrators to take a stronger line in dealing with campus disruptions. In the two and one-half years following Columbia, the hard line, "no nonsense" movement snowballed. By late 1970 over half the states had enacted laws aimed at quelling campus unrest. Most of the new statutes required the colleges

and universities to cut off financial aid and expel students guilty of committing crimes or violating campus rules; they also usually required the dismissal or suspension of faculty members for similar offenses. Most states also made it a crime, punishable by a jail sentence or fine, for anyone to willfully deny the free use of university property and facilities to any member of the university community.³⁰

Contributing to the politicalization of the university and the protest process, and also part of the backlash, was the tendency on the part of legislatures in some states to link university appropriations to frequency and intensity of protests. Usually, the fewer and less vocal demonstrations a school had, the better chance it stood of getting its budget approved. And sometimes it was even raised if a neighboring institution seemed particularly prone to disruption.³¹

For the dissidents, the significance of the Columbia unrest lay not so much in the events themselves but in how they were perceived. Tom Hayden, a co-founder of SDS and leader of one of the strike factions, interpreted Columbia as the beginning of a "new tactical" stage in the student movement. He believed that he was watching a significant swing towards militancy and the development of real revolutionary resistance.³² Mark Rudd, head of the campus SDS and a key figure in the unrest, echoed Hayden's views, characterizing Columbia as providing a model for militancy and offering an alternative to conventional compromise and reformist politics.³³ Both saw the events at Columbia as indicative

of widening on-campus support for radical student militarism, and they believed that the militants were now firmly in control of the campus protest movement. The events of the next several months seemed to confirm this view.

Between the spring of 1968 and the early fall of 1969, disturbances, similar in nature to what happened at Columbia, occurred on a number of college and university campuses around the country. Illustrative of this trend was the unrest at Harvard, Stanford, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The rhetoric, tactics, and scenario of events were virtually identical on all three campuses and very closely paralleled events at Columbia.³⁴ Also, as at Columbia, the local SDS chapters played a key role in organizing and directing these protest activities. Furthering the parallels with Columbia was the focus of this unrest, which crystallized principally around the issue of university involvement in foreign policy formulation and, to a lesser degree, around the largely symbolic issue of university racism. The object in each case was to force the university to sever some sort of ties with the defense/foreign policy establishment as a first step in restructuring the institution into a center of revolutionary action.³⁵ For the most part, again as at Columbia, the radicals were successful, at least in their immediate goals.

During this same period, emboldened somewhat by their success on the campuses, the militants began to broaden the arena of action. Convinced that they had a revolutionary

power base in the colleges and universities, student radicals, under the sponsorship of SDS, sought to establish off-campus alliances with the working class and the poor. The rationale for this move was explained in a resolution adopted by the SDS National Council in December 1968. It gave voice to ideas long present in the campus-centered movement and read, in part: "The movement must involve working people or it will be isolated and doomed. Campus struggles must relate and tie to working-class struggles. Active support should be given to local strikes; students should keep in close touch with rank-and-file union caucuses and individuals previously contacted; community support and involvement should be sought for SDS activities."³⁶

The manifestation of this off-campus effort was extremely localized and not very effective. SDS members did participate, in the spring of 1969, in wildcat auto worker strikes in New Jersey and Michigan.³⁷ Additionally, there were other, extremely scattered attempts to organize plant workers; and most activity was concentrated in the auto industry.

In reality, the off-campus organizing efforts fizzled almost as they began. One reason was lack of receptivity and interest on the part of the group targeted for organization. However, of equal importance was the fact that, by spring 1969, SDS itself was beginning to splinter.

Differences over tactics, objectives, and control of the organization exploded in the open during the SDS National Convention in June. The result, after five days of near

chaos and almost constant argument, was a split and the formation of two separate Students for a Democratic Society groups. On the one hand was the more-or-less original SDS organizational structure which ended up intact and under control of the Progressive Labor faction, a Maoist oriented group. And on the other hand was the old traditional SDS leadership, or most of it, Karry Ashley, Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dohon, et al., and their backers, the Revolutionary Youth Movement and the Black Panthers, forming their own organization, also called SDS.³⁶ It was this latter branch that ultimately evolved into the fanatical Weatherman group.

The primary difference in the two groups was their advocacy of violence, terrorism, and support of the Black Panthers. The Progressive Labor element represented the somewhat more moderate elements, and the Revolutionary Youth Movement the more radical and militant. When the two split at the Chicago Convention, SDS, in reality, ceased to exist. The PL sponsored organization eventually faded into obscurity, and the RYM faction turned to urban guerrilla warfare. What this, of course, meant was a decline in SDS influence in the on-campus student movement and the break-up of off-campus activities. This did not happen immediately but took place over several months, being well along by the end of 1969. It should be noted that some local SDS chapters, of varying ideological commitments, did remain active into the 1970-71 academic year and did continue to influence local protest activities.

As noted above, following the break-up at the June convention, the Revolutionary Youth Movement faction of SDS turned increasingly to violence and terrorism. In the months after June 1969, the group adopted the name Weathermen and plunged head-first into the struggle against U.S. imperialism.³⁹

Throughout the late summer and early fall of 1969, the Weathermen worked at organizing high school students and high school aged youth, in Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Their avowed purpose was to develop a cadre, similar to the Chinese Red Guard, fully willing to take part "in the violent and illegal struggle."⁴⁰ While Weathermen sponsored groups did participate in minor street actions and vandalism, the summer's efforts were for the most part unsuccessful. Differences in socioeconomic background and understanding of the street environment surfaced between the Weathermen and their recruits, which in the end brought a complete break between the two.⁴¹

In one last revolutionary gasp, the Weathermen called for a "national action" in Chicago during October 1969. Instead of the predicted tens of thousands, about 600 militants showed up to help "tear the pig city apart." Despite the widespread violence and vandalism, the national action accomplished nothing save to land about half the participants in jail and to turn majority opinion both inside and outside the movement sharply against the Weathermen faction.⁴²

Late in December 1969, the Weathermen and their allied groups held a "war council" at Flint, Michigan. The Weather leadership presented a plan calling for paramilitary guerrilla operations and urban terrorist activities throughout the United States. This precipitated a final split within the Weathermen; about two hundred members elected to go "underground" following the call for terrorism and guerrilla activities. The rest opted for a somewhat more moderate position. Within a month of the Flint war council, a terror bombing campaign, attributed to the now Weather underground, began.

While the activities of the Weather underground were not centered on the campuses, that is where they did the most damage and still found the bulk of their support.⁴³ According to the President's Commission on Campus unrest, "In a few major campus areas--the San Francisco Bay Area, Madison and Cambridge--they [did] great damage. At Stanford, in April 1970, bands of 'guerrillas' systematically terrorized the campus over a period of several nights, throwing rocks, breaking windows, and setting fire to buildings. After the August 1970 explosion at the University of Wisconsin, which killed a post doctoral researcher and did \$6 million worth of damage, underground newspapers all over the country gleefully reported that another blow had been struck against the 'pig nation.' Students at Madison expressed regret at the death of the young researcher--but some refused to condemn the bombing of the Army Mathematics Center which caused it."⁴⁴ Clearly,

then, during the period from early 1968 through early 1970, the militant radicals set the tone of university-centered protest. Their actions were captured by the news media, thus ensuring at least in the popular mind that violence and terrorism became synonymous with campus unrest and student protest.

However, by late 1969, the influence of the radicals was declining steadily while the influence of the moderates was rising steadily. A force on the campuses since the late 1950's, the moderates had remained dedicated to the original ideas of peaceful protest and reform. The moderates' organized support came largely from religious affiliated Civil Rights and anti-war groups, while their constituency rested with the large mass of uncommitted students that made up most of the collegiate population.⁴⁵ Even during the period of radical dominance, 1968 to mid-1969, the moderates were extremely active both on and off campus. It was mostly moderate students, and faculty, who worked in the presidential campaigns of Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy. And it was a coalition of moderate groups who sponsored the mammoth, though peaceful, anti-war marches of April and October 1969.

The reason, then, for the increase in the moderate's influence over the nature and direction of campus protest was two-fold. First, the internal struggles and fragmentation of the militant groups already described had shattered their credibility. The result was a power vacuum at the upper echelons of the student movement, a power vacuum which the

moderates quickly filled since they were the only other group within the protest movement possessing even a limited degree of structure and organization.

Second was the impact of a long-developing campus centered backlash against the militants and their methods. As the level and frequency of violent terroristic acts rose, there was a corresponding rise in peaceful protest and demands for social reform.

Many individuals, both on and off campus, came to realize that violence and irrationality was no longer an exclusive characteristic of "the system." The student protest effort was becoming equally violent and irrational; consequently, by condoning the acts of the radicals, they were helping to perpetuate the very things they opposed.⁴⁶

Because of these conflicting philosophies, during the first months of 1970 the protest effort was characterized by a sharp degree of ambivalence. Militant radicalism, though dying, was clearly not dead and still had its adherents. Conversely, moderate reformism, while gaining in popularity, was not yet totally accepted. Incidents reflecting both points of view took place during January, February, and March; however, by late April, the moderates were beginning to emerge as the firmly dominant faction.

This fact was amply demonstrated by the May 1 demonstration at Yale in support of a group of Black Panthers on trial for murder. Some 12,000 people gathered on the New Haven green listening to speeches and eventually marching through

the town. Despite prior fears, the demonstration remained basically calm due in large part to carefully concerted efforts by the sponsoring groups to retain control and work closely with local and university authorities.⁴⁷

Within hours of the New Haven demonstration, the growing influence of the moderates became even more evident. Early on 1 May 1970, United States and South Vietnamese forces crossed into Cambodia. Their mission was to locate and destroy North Vietnamese and Viet Cong base camps and supply depots in the Cambodian border region adjacent to South Vietnam. For years the NVA and V.C. had used this region with impunity as a staging area for operations in South Vietnam. By denying the area to the enemy, the United States hoped, if only temporarily, to curtail NVA and V.C. operations in South Vietnam, thus giving the Saigon government time to establish itself and allow the ARVN time to gain some confidence following the withdrawal of American troops.

While the military success of these operations was debatable, their impact on the campuses was not. The move into Cambodia was seen as a conscious coordinated effort on the part of the Nixon administration to broaden the fighting and expand the scope of the war. Rallies and marches demanding immediate withdrawal from Cambodia and ultimate withdrawal from Vietnam took place on campuses all across the country. On the whole, these demonstrations were peaceful, although there were exceptions. A computer center at Fresno State College in California was destroyed by a

firebomb, and the National Guard was called to put down riots at the Universities of Wisconsin and Illinois. Probably the most famous example of protest related violence occurred on May 4 at Kent State University in Ohio, when National Guardsmen opened fire on a group of students protesting the move into Cambodia. The demonstration which spawned the shootings was itself basically peaceful, at least prior to the intervention of the Guard. It was, however, preceded by two days of sporadic vandalism and violence including the burning of the University ROTC building and widespread property destruction in downtown Kent.

While it might have been reasonable to expect Kent State to trigger a renewed wave of violence and terrorism on the campuses, such was not the case. If anything, the incident brought out a deepened, intensified commitment to non-violence. Students, faculty, and administrators actively worked together on many campuses to develop alternatives to violent action.

The now twin issues of Kent State and the Cambodian invasion sparked a wave of non-violent protests and political activities. Numerous institutions either suspended classes or rearranged academic requirements to allow students to work in congressional political campaigns. This so-called "Movement for a New Congress" started at Princeton and spread rapidly. Officially sanctioned, it brought scores of previously uncommitted students into the anti-war effort. The Student Strike Coordination Center at Brandeis University

reported, in the four days after Kent State, an average of 100 new student strikes each day. This was contrasted with an average of 20 per day in the six days following the Cambodian invasion but prior to the Kent State shootings. According to data prepared by the Urban Research Corporation, "by the end of May 1970 nearly 1/3 of the approximately 2,500 colleges and universities in the U.S. had experienced some degree of disruption during the month."⁴⁸

One of the largest protests during this period took place in Washington on May 9. More than 60,000 people, most of them college students, gathered on the Ellipse, near the White House, to peacefully demonstrate against the war. At the same time thousands of student lobbyists fanned out across Washington to contact Congressmen, Senators, and Cabinet Officers, hoping to convince them to stop the war. Perhaps the most dramatic gesture occurred on May 11 when Yale President Kingman Brewster, Jr., led over a thousand students and faculty members to Washington where they spent several days presenting arguments against the war to virtually every member of Congress.⁴⁹

Throughout the summer, the campuses remained in turmoil. Students continued to work in political campaigns at the local, state, and national levels, attempting to make the system work in their favor and building a power base for the 1972 presidential election. Demonstrations and protests also continued. Although these were for the most part peaceful, there were some exceptions. During June and July, the

University of Kansas was beset by intermittent violence and disruptions over the war. Before the summer was over, the Highway Patrol and the National Guard had been summoned to the campus to restore order; and one student was dead, apparently shot accidentally by police.⁵⁰

Despite all these actions, the mood of contemplation and reassessment, described earlier, continued to dominate the campuses. The violence of Kent State, Jackson State, and the University of Kansas, along with the terrorism of the radicals and the irrationality of the war were all major factors in shaping this mood. Campus reaction to these events had helped unify the moderates and in turn led to the isolation of the radicals within the student population.⁵¹ Further, the appeal of mass violent demonstrations, such as those at Columbia University during the spring of 1968, as a tactic to facilitate political and social change had worn thin. After two and a half years of such widespread activity it appeared as if nothing solid had been accomplished. Racism, either intended or de facto, was still a major problem; the poor were still poor; and the war was still grinding on, though perhaps with just a bit less momentum than it had a few years earlier.⁵²

Taken together, this all led to a kind of catharsis in the protest movement. While it had been building since the previous summer, the events of May through September 1970 provided the actual impetus; and, when it was over, the

nature of the campus protest effort had again changed dramatically.

With the resumption of school in the fall, this change was clearly evident on the campuses. While demonstrations continued, with 43 per cent of the institutions of higher education reporting at least one major protest incident during the 1970-71 school year, they were sharply different from those of previous years.⁵³ The silent prayer vigil and candlelight marches had replaced the violent rally designed to provoke a confrontation with university authorities. On many campuses, administrators and faculty endorsed student actions and in some cases participated actively in them. Late September and early October did bring a renewed spate of bombings by radical groups; but most, if not all, of it was centered away from the campuses.

This was the time of the bombing of the Army Mathematics Center at the University of Wisconsin. It was followed in early October by the bombing of the ROTC building at Washington University, the bombing of a National Guard Armory in Santa Barbara, California, and the bombing of a United States Court House in New York. Following these blasts, Youth International Party spokesmen in New York produced a tape allegedly made by the SDS Weathermen group claiming responsibility for the bombings and announcing that they marked the start of a "fall offensive of youth resistance." The reaction on the campuses was not as the Weathermen anticipated. Rather than marking the prelude to a general student uprising,

the bombings reinforced the desire for peaceful change and compromise.

During the entire school year, a sense of "eerie tranquility," as President Kingman Brewster of Yale described it, seemed to hang over the colleges and universities. Subdued though far from pacified, the campuses remained centers of political reform and anti-war activity. This became especially obvious in February and March when South Vietnamese forces, supported by American troops, invaded Laos. Their objective, as with Cambodia the year before, was to destroy North Vietnamese and Viet Cong supply and support centers located in the border areas of Laos adjacent to South Vietnam. As with the Cambodian invasion, this operation provoked a response on the campuses.

Stanford probably had the most dramatic incident when students briefly occupied the university's computer center. The Weathermen also were active, exploding a small bomb in the basement of the Capitol building in early March. For the most part, though, the campus response remained relatively low key, taking the form of silent prayer vigils, marches, and the like.

The only demonstration to draw any serious national attention was an anti-war rally in Washington, D.C., towards the end of April. Disturbed over the apparent escalation of the war by the Laos invasion, some 200,000 gathered for this rally. The protesters were not just college students, college aged youth, or counter culture devotees, as they had

been in previous rallies, but included segments of American society not traditionally in the anti-Vietnam war camp. Most notable among these was organized labor.⁵⁴ Also, unlike at previous Washington protests, the intent was not to provoke a confrontation with the police, or to occupy government buildings. The purpose was to express openly feelings about the course of the war and to attempt to rouse support in Congress for bringing it to an end. Sizable groups, including a large contingent of Vietnam veterans, buttonholed Senators and Representatives, pressing the demand that Congress cut funding for the war and act to speed up the Nixon administration's troop withdrawal program.

The demonstration was for the most part very peaceful. A small group of Vietnam veterans were arrested during a sit-in at the Supreme Court building. The vets, some of them disabled, were attempting to force the court to rule on the constitutionality of the war. All charges against them were eventually dropped.

District of Columbia officials did take rather extensive security precautions, fearing a repetition of the "trashing" and violence of previous years. Federal troops were moved into the area and, along with National Guard units, were kept out of the city proper in assembly areas from which they could deploy quickly in the event of trouble. Principal security and crowd control responsibilities fell on the D.C. police who were extremely careful not to let themselves be provoked by the demonstrators nor to place themselves into a

position where their actions could in turn provoke the demonstrators.

On May 1, about 30,000 people converged on Washington for an antiwar demonstration sponsored by the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, a group with close ties to the Yippies (Youth International Party). Billed as a counter to the late April demonstration, the avowed purpose of this one was to bring the government to a halt until the government halted the war. To accomplish this goal, demonstration organizers planned to block major intersections and access bridges around Washington.⁵⁵ For the most part, May Day, as it was referred to by its organizers and the press, was a failure. Demonstrators did succeed in blocking a few intersections and bridges, but only briefly, as they were quickly dispersed by police and National Guardsmen. There were also some incidents of "trashing" and general vandalism around the city; but these too were rapidly dealt with. At no time, though, did the protesters even come close to their goal of shutting down the government.⁵⁶

The overall impact of May Day was negative. The late April demonstration, especially the participation of the Vietnam veterans and their impassioned pleas for an end to the war, had left a deep impression on many in the government. By contrast, May Day revived many of the old feelings about dirty, long-haired kids, drugs, and revolution. Still, as the 1970-71 school year drew to a close, the nation's campuses were generally calm, though far from quiet. Clearly, the

nature of protest had altered considerably; the focus was almost exclusively on ending the war, the tempo was slowed, but the intensity and level of participation had increased.

During the summer and throughout most of the 1971-72, protest activity continued to decrease. The war was slowly winding down, and the administration's policy of troop withdrawal seemed to be showing results. Also, a sense of tiredness prevailed on the campuses; after two and a half years of almost constant large-scale mass demonstrations, people were clearly tired, or perhaps disillusioned, as the rejection of the mass demonstration tactic, described earlier, deepened.

All this is not to say that the campuses were totally free of demonstrations during the year. In the spring, the United States resumed intensive bombing of North Vietnam, which triggered renewed demonstrations on the campuses. The schools worst affected were Columbia, University of Maryland, Stanford, and Kent State, with the most serious incidents occurring at the first three. There were, however, major differences this spring, with greater unanimity and most protests proceeding in a peaceful vein and sanctioned by the colleges and universities. Perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of the changed mood was the denunciation of the bombings issued by the Presidents of eight Ivy League colleges and MIT. Also, the protests everywhere were met with a firmness and an intent to allow dissent, but with a clear commitment to keep the schools open.⁵⁷

As the spring term came to an end in late May, the wave of protests also ended. The summer was quiet, as was the fall. With the war obviously winding down, much of the intensity was gone from the peace movement. And while civil rights remained an issue, it was no longer attacked with the same sense of urgency. In short, the campuses were tired. More than ten years of social upheaval and struggle for change had finally taken its toll.

On the surface, then, by 1972 the student protest effort appeared to have come full circle; and in a sense it had. The progression we have described went from peaceful civil disobedience to disruptive protest to almost terroristic violence back to peaceful protest. At the same time, the concept of change being fought for also altered; from the idea of reform within the system emphasis shifted to destruction of the existing system and its replacement with something totally new and different coming back eventually to focus on reform within the system again. But with all the seeming similarities, the last stage of the movement was yet dramatically unlike the first, because, for better or worse, the politicization of the American colleges and universities was now an accepted fact. That this was so is evidenced by the commitment on the part of numerous institutions, following the disturbances of May 1970, to allow their students special vacation time to work in political campaigns and by the institutions' willingness to allow their resources to be utilized in attacking issues such as the war. The forms of

protest and the sometimes enormous numbers involved also reflected increased politicization.

Chapter III

IDENTIFYING PATTERNS OF ACTIVITY AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We have established the following pattern in the university-centered protest of the 60's. It was apparently the continuation of a long tradition of student unrest at American institutions of higher education. This tradition dates back, at least, to the early 19th century. Campus unrest during these years centered primarily on local college problems. The institutions of higher education were perceived as not having responsibilities in matters other than educational ones, student concerns clearly reflected this orientation.

In the second half of the 19th century, this traditional pattern of campus unrest started to break down. The institutions of higher education, responding to a variety of social pressures, slowly began taking a greater interest in issues of national import. At the same time, prompted by the same social pressures and by the shifting orientation of the colleges and universities, students also began to show increased interest in a wide range of social and political issues. By the late 1890's, what amounted to a new pattern of student unrest was clearly emerging. Students were concerned about, and involved in, off-campus social and political issues.

Such concern and involvement usually had the tacit approval of the institution as long as the functioning of the college or university was not impaired. The idea of social reform best characterizes this period.

This pattern of student dissent continued with varying degrees of intensity well into the 1950's. In fact, in its early stages (about 1958-1964/65), this latest round of campus unrest did not differ greatly from what had gone before. Protest and unrest on the campuses during these years focused primarily on civil rights, with the colleges and universities serving primarily as sympathetic havens out of which civil rights reformers could operate.

By 1964, frustration over the apparent lack of success with the social reformist approach ran deep both on and off the campuses. Particularly affected were white northern college students who had gone South to work for Black rights and who had come face to face with the illusion shattering reality of American politics. Angry and embittered, these students began to view the rest of the national power structure in much the same terms as they had come to view the local Southern power structure. And, most important because it shaped the whole character of campus protest after 1964, they came to perceive of the university as an important cog in that power structure, and consequently as a legitimate target of protest.

Basically, dissent over civil rights during these years also served to attune the campuses to the pressing needs for

social change, thus, in a very real sense, raising the social conscience of the collegiate population. This in turn led to increased concern with issues other than civil rights, principally the war in Vietnam. It also led to a splintering of the various campus protest groups, as blacks and whites went separate ways concerned about seemingly separate but, in reality, often highly intertwined issues. As concerns broadened, frustration over the nation's inability to deal with these social ills rose and led to increasingly more violent protests as student activists sought to destroy the existing sociopolitical system and replace it with one more responsive to human needs. But the turn to violence, while highly dramatic, was counter-productive and in reality fairly short-lived. Violence seemed to equate the student activists with that which they opposed and, in their own eyes, made them appear less noble than they believed they were. Rejection of the violent approach led to a kind of backlash, with people turning to more peaceful, legal kinds of protest designed not to destroy but to change the system from within. The late spring and early summer of 1970 served as a period of catharsis for the protest effort. Kent State, the Cambodian invasion, and the events associated with them served to illustrate the ultimate futility of violent protest, isolate the militant groups from the mainstream of the protest effort, and finally provide the impetus for the redirection of the campus protest movement back towards social reformism.

However, the social reformism of 1972 was not the same thing as the social reformism of 1960-64. The emphasis in 1972 was on organizing to take political power and to use that power to secure specific reforms. In the 1960-1964 period the emphasis had been on trying to publicize problems in an attempt to force the existing power structure to make reforms. Also, the base of support for such actions was much broader in 1972 than it had been in the early 60's; events in the intervening years drew scores of previously uncommitted students and faculty into the struggle for change. The types of legitimate protest actions had broadened also; now included were student strikes directed at shutting down the university and political lobbying, among other activities. Clearly, then, by 1972 the American institutions of higher education and their associated student bodies were thoroughly politicized.

Despite this strong tradition of unrest on American campuses future trends are far from clear. Since about 1973 the campuses have been relatively quiet, perhaps the quietest they have ever been. How long this period of calm will last is impossible to predict. The various factors contributing to it, including the troubled American economy and the changing character of the student population, may well continue as they are now, for some years to come. On the other hand one of these factors may change, or a totally new factor may be introduced which will act as a catalyst

altering conditions on the campuses and sparking a new period of unrest.

NOTES

1. Julian Foster and Duward Long, eds., Protest! Student Activism in America (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 14.
2. Alexander W. Austin, The Power of Protest (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975), p. 19.
3. Seymour M. Lipset and Gerald M. Schaflander, Passion and Politics: Student Activism in America (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971), p. 12.
4. The Report of The President's Commission on Campus Unrest (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 20.
5. Lipset and Schaflander, Passion and Politics, p. 128.
6. Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard 1636-1936 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 230-231.
7. Morison, Three Centuries, pp. 252-253.
8. Lipset and Schaflander, Passion and Politics, p. 133.
9. Ibid., p. 12.
10. Howard W. Peckham, The Making of the University of Michigan 1817-1967 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 46.
11. Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 259-261.
12. Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin: 1848-1925 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), pp. 412-418. See also, Winto V. Solberg, The University of Illinois (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), pp. 207-213 and pp. 319-326.
13. Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University A History (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 363-365.

14. Ibid., pp. 366-369.
15. Campus Unrest, p. 20.
16. Austin, The Power of Protest, p. 18. See also Campus Unrest, pp. 20 and 21.
17. Campus Unrest, p. 21.
18. Ibid., p. 23.
19. Austin, The Power of Protest, pp. 20-21.
20. From Mario Savio's Speech, "An End to History," found in: Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, The New Radicals: A Report with Documents (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 230-234.
21. Campus Unrest, p. 25.
22. Edward E. Sampson and Harold A. Korn, eds., Student Activism and Protest (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970), pp. 14-17. This section includes some observations about the impact of the news media, especially television, on the spread of campus protest.
23. Campus Unrest, p. 30.
24. Ibid., p. 31.
25. After March 1965 student draft deferments were based on academic standing rather than just enrollment.
26. SDS was an extremely loose coalition of individuals with very diverse points of view. As such it was almost chameleon in nature capable of reshaping itself almost at will to support whatever issue or cause seemed important at the moment. For more information see: Alan Adelson, SDS (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), or Louis Heath, Vandals in the Bomb Factory: The History and Literature of The Students for a Democratic Society (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976), or Jerry Rubin, Do It (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).
27. For background information on the counter culture or the associated student political movement see any of the following; Michael Cohen and Dennis Hale, eds., The New Student Left (Boston: 1966); W. L. O'Neil, Coming Apart (Chicago: 1971); Charles Reich, The Greening of America (New York: 1970); Rolling Stone Magazine, The Sixties (New York: 1977); Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counterculture (New York: 1969); Irwin Unger, The Movement (New York: 1974).

28. Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, Confrontation The Student Rebellion and the Universities (New York: Basic Books, 1969), pp. 108-127.
29. Austin, Power of Protest, pp. 25-26; Bell and Kristol, Confrontation, pp. 67-95; Immanuel Wallerstein and Paul Starr, The University Crisis Reader (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 4-7, 160-198, 329-341, 386-385.
30. Campus Unrest, p. 40.
31. Ibid., p. 41.
32. Tom Hayden, "Two, Three, Many Columbias," Ramparts (June 15, 1968): 12.
33. Mark Rudd, "Columbia," Movement (March 1969): 24-27.
34. Wallerstein and Starr, University Crisis Reader, pp. 221-236 (collection of documents and reports on the unrest at Stanford University) and pp. 263-292 (collection of reports and documents on the unrest at Harvard University).
35. Letter from Dr. Bill B. May, research engineer at the Stanford Electronics Laboratories, addressed to President Kenneth Pitzer of Stanford, April 15, 1969, found in: Wallerstein and Starr, University Crisis Reader, pp. 231-234.
36. Excerpt from a pamphlet produced by the Stanford Research Institute Coalition, a student protest group, early 1969, found in: Wallerstein and Starr, University Crisis Reader, pp. 226-231.
37. Heath, Vandals in the Bomb Factory, pp. 142-143.
38. Adelson, SDS, pp. 234-242.
39. The name Weathermen came from a policy statement issued by the Revolutionary Youth Movement II faction at the SDS National Convention in Chicago, during the summer of 1969. The paper was entitled "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows."
40. Heath, Vandals in the Bomb Factory, p. 161.
41. Ibid., p. 163.
42. Heath, Vandals in the Bomb Factory, pp. 142-143. See also Adelson, SDS, p. 247.
43. Campus Unrest, p. 43.

44. Ibid.
45. Foster and Long, Protest! p. 403. See also; Campus Unrest, p. 41.
46. Kenneth Keniston, Youth and Dissent (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 208.
47. Campus Unrest, p. 44.
48. Campus Unrest, p. 18.
49. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
50. "Youth Slain in Lawrence Disorders," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 21, 1970, p. 1. See also; "Troubled Lawrence Cooled by Citizens," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 22, 1970, p. 1.
51. "New Campus Mood: From Rage to Reform," Time, Vol. 96, No. 22 (30 November 1970), p. 38.
52. "The Students: All Quiet on the Campus Front," Time, Vol. 97, No. 8 (22 February 1971), pp. 14-15.
53. Austin, Power of Protest, p. 36.
54. "Protest: A Week Against the War," Time, Vol. 97, No. 18 (3 May 1971), pp. 10-11.
55. "The Chess of Ending a War," Time, Vol. 97, No. 19 (10 May 1971), p. 12.
56. "Self-Defeat for the 'Army of Peace,'" Time, Vol. 97, No. 20 (17 May 1971), pp. 13-15.
57. "The Crisis Managers," Time, Vol. 99, No. 19 (8 May 1972), p. 63.

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CAMPUS PROTEST IN THE 1960'S AND THE
TRADITION OF STUDENT UNREST IN
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

MICHAEL RALPH PENROD

B.A., Kansas State University, 1974

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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1981

ABSTRACT

The patterns of college student unrest and dissent which appeared on the campuses during the 60's was merely the contemporary manifestation of a long tradition of unrest and dissent on American campuses, a tradition which extends back to the late eighteenth century. In fact, in its early stages (about 1958-1964/65), this latest round of campus unrest did not differ greatly from what had gone before. Protest and unrest on the campuses during these years focused primarily on civil rights and the methodology of protest was basically social reformist. The intent was to dramatize the plight of American Blacks and by doing so to force the government to take action.

By 1964, frustration over the apparent lack of success with the social reformist approach ran deep both on and off the campuses. Particularly affected were white northern college students who had gone South to work for Black rights and who had come face to face with the illusion shattering reality of American politics. Angry and embittered, these students began to view the rest of the national power structure in much the same terms as they had come to view the local Southern power structure. And, most important because it shaped the whole character of campus protest after 1964, they came to perceive of the university as an important cog

in that power structure, and consequently as a legitimate target of protest.

Basically, dissent over civil rights during these years also served to attune the campuses to the pressing needs for social change, thus, in a very real sense, raising the social conscience of the collegiate population. This in turn led to increased concern with issues other than civil rights, principally the war in Vietnam. It also led to a splintering of the various campus protest groups, as blacks and whites went separate ways concerned about seemingly separate but, in reality, often highly intertwined issues. As concerns broadened, frustration over the nations inability to deal with these social ills rose and led to increasingly more violent protests as student activists sought to destroy the existing sociopolitical system and replace it with one more responsive to human needs. But the turn to violence, while highly dramatic, was counter-productive and in reality fairly short-lived. Violence seemed to equate the student activists with that which they opposed and, in their own eyes, made them appear less noble than they believed they were. Rejection of the violent approach led to a kind of backlash, with people turning to more peaceful, legal kinds of protest designed not to destroy but to change the system from within. The late spring and early summer of 1970 served as a period of catharsis for the protest effort. Kent State, the Cambodian invasion, and the events associated with them served to illustrate the ultimate futility of violent protest, isolate

the militant groups from the mainstream of the protest effort, and finally provide the impetus for the redirection of the campus protest movement back towards social reformism.

However, the social reformism of 1972 was not the same thing as the social reformism of 1960-64. The emphasis in 1972 was on organizing to take political power and to use that power to secure specific reforms. In the 1960-1964 period the emphasis had been on trying to publicize problems in an attempt to force the existing power structure to make reforms. Also, the base of support for such actions was much broader in 1972 than it had been in the early 60's; events in the intervening years drew scores of previously uncommitted students and faculty into the struggle for change. The types of legitimate protest actions had broadened also; now included were student strikes directed at shutting down the university and political lobbying, among other activities. Clearly, then, by 1972 the American institutions of higher education and their associated student bodies were thoroughly politicized.