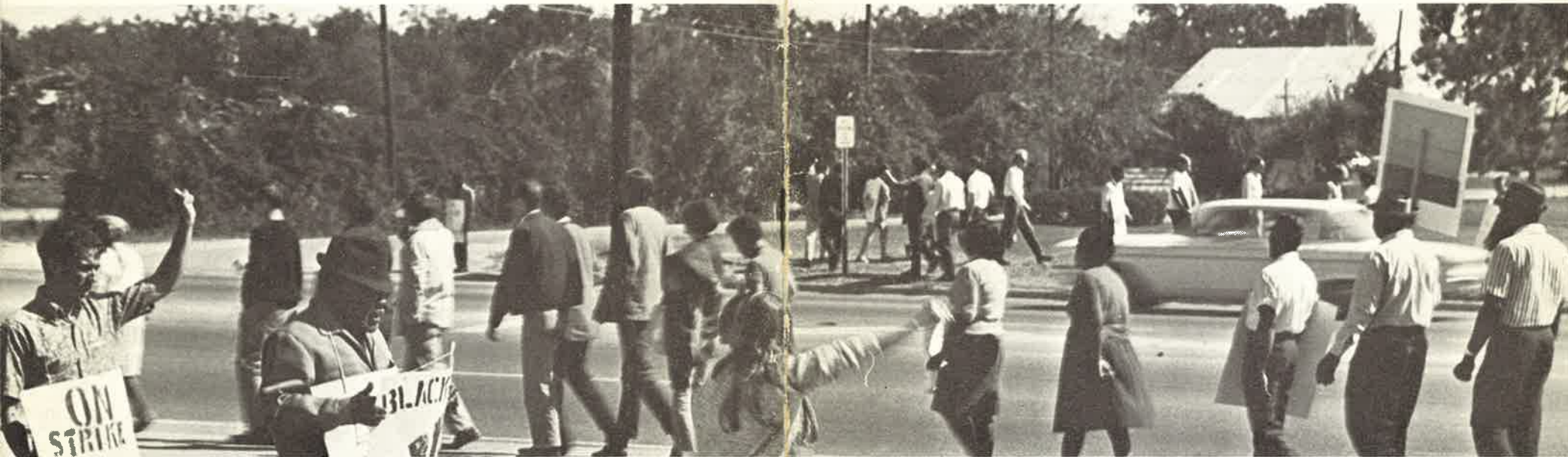




FIGHT RACISM!



Top: Boston SDS march, October 4, 1969, passes MIT
Bottom: Students support Tallahassee strike

Articles from SDS' experience in fighting racism on campus and supporting black workers' actions

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
173A Massachusetts Avenue, second floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

sds

15 cents



Harvard students demand end to racist pay differential.

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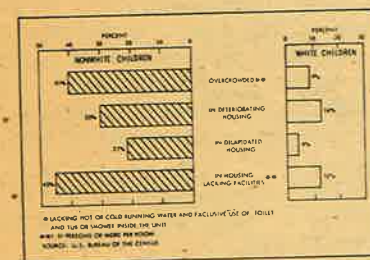
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Rulers Build Racism -- Attempt to Divide and Conquer

by Glen Fritcker, Sonoma State
Curt Schneider, San Francisco State
Greg DeGiere, San Francisco State

In the last few years, ghetto uprisings have occurred in every major American city. Chicago, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and Newark have all seen militant rebellions by thousands of third world men and women. Sociologists, psychologists, and government commissions have cranked out hundreds of studies pinning the problem on "white America's racial prejudices". But this is only one side of the problem. For non-white Americans, the major aspect of racism is the oppressive impoverished conditions under which they are forced to live. Black people are not rebelling against whites--they are rebelling against the miserable reality of ghetto existence.

Compare the realities of life for the average black and white families. A black worker earns \$3,000 less a year than a white worker. His family has to make do with one-half a white family's income. A black worker is lucky if he's able to find a full-time job; only one out of two blacks can, as opposed to two out of three whites. And 7% of blacks are unable to get any work at all--more than twice the percentage of whites unemployed. The chances are one out of three that a black family falls below even the "poverty level" set by the government at \$3,300 for a family of four. (In San Francisco a family needs \$10,000 to live "moderately", according to the government!) Half of all black families live in housing so bad that even the government classifies it "substandard". And slumlords and ghetto merchants force black families to spend 10% more money each year than whites for this housing, food and clothing.

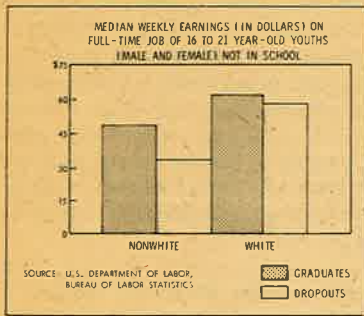


40 percent of all nonwhite children in 1960 lived in overcrowded housing

The average black teenager goes to a rotten high school where the most he learns is how to do an unskilled or semi-skilled job. And it's three times as likely that he'll drop out to work by the time he's 16 as it is for a white teenager. Even the blacks who stay in school

find out that an education doesn't free them from the effects of racism. A black high school graduate earns 25% less than a white high school dropout. And the income gap between black and white college grads is the same \$3,000 that it is for all black and white workers.

To pour salt into the wounds, blacks (11% of the total U.S. population) are forced to provide 40% of the U.S. manpower in Vietnam--a war against their interests. And the black soldier's chances of being killed in action are substantially greater than the white's (18% vs 11%).



Weekly earnings for full-time jobs lower for Black high school grads than white dropouts

Pretty rotten situation, and it's getting worse every year, not better. It is this situation which has led to the hundreds of rebellions in ghettos throughout the country. But what is the basis of this racial oppression? Some will argue that the problem is caused entirely by people's attitudes toward blacks, and that no one really gains anything from these attitudes except a "feeling of superiority". We feel that some people definitely profit from racism: the businessmen, landlords, and ghetto merchants. Within the capitalist economic system this class (about 0.5% of the population) own and control over 85% of basic industry, communication and transportation, and thus dominate the U.S. economy. They are out for one thing--to make money. To do this, they will pay as little as possible in wages to workers (who make up the vast majority of the population) and charge as high rents and prices as they can. Low wages and high prices mean billions in profit for them, and lousy economic conditions for the vast majority. Racism is one way they ensure high profits. For one thing, they bring in an estimated \$20 billion just from differentials in wages between blacks and whites, and this doesn't take into account the untold billions they make by keeping blacks and whites divided to keep down the wages of both.

Some members of SDS feel that all white people are enabled by their "white skin privilege" to benefit from these profits. However, when an employer pays a black worker \$3,000 a year less than a white worker, the \$3,000 goes to the employer--not the white worker. In fact, if they tolerate this pay differential they help keep their own wages down as well. When a boss threatens white workers who want higher wages by saying "Don't strike, or we'll give your job to a black man who will work for less," he is using racism against all workers. We feel that the racist ideas that white people hold (e.g., blacks are

"naturally inferior", "lazy by nature", "dumb no matter what", etc.) have been developed and perpetuated to justify the economic situation, to divide white workers from black workers who have an even greater need to fight back and have been taking the lead in working peoples' struggles around the country. The ruling class pushes racist ideas through its press, media and its educational system. As long as whites see themselves as threatened by blacks, both lose.

The idea of "white skin privilege" rests on the myth that most white people are part of an affluent "middle class". Real wages have been going down for most workers every year, while taxes, prices (and profits for the bosses) are skyrocketing. One-seventh live in slums and one-third aren't fully employed--which says nothing about the lousy wages of most who are. Racism is one of the main ways the ruling class achieves its age-old strategy--divide and conquer. Historically workers have faced poor economic conditions and historically they have seen that it was only unity that gave them the strength to change these conditions. Out of this need, unions developed which allowed workers to struggle collectively in their own interests. Racism serves to destroy unity by pitting whites against blacks, causing them to compete with each other instead of uniting against their employers. Down south, all workers labor for the lowest wages in the country. A primary reason for this is because they have been divided by racism. Yet in Newport News, Va. (to cite just one example) thousands of white workers defeated racism enough to follow the lead of 250 blacks in a strike that shocked the bosses--the result, better wages and improved conditions for all.



NOW I GET THE POINT OF RULING CLASS RACISM

FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

People all over the country have begun to see the need to do something about racism. SDS sees this fight as crucial. As a broad-based organization of people with differing views, there are varying approaches within SDS as to how this can best be done. However, we are generally united around the need for students to ally their struggles with those of working people, especially black people. Over the past year, we have led and participated in many anti-racist actions and have learned through these struggles some of the best ways to go about this.

Students at San Francisco State, for example, recognized that problems of racism existed on campus. We saw racism in hiring and firing practices, in course content, and in the exploitation of campus workers. Our first response to these problems was to turn to the administration and trustees ("If they just knew, they'd do something about it"); but after two years of committees, convocations and red tape, we found them absolutely unwilling to act. We realized that their "hang-up" was not lack of knowledge--they knew all too well. The trustees, all of whom are rich corporate businessmen, have a material interest in perpetuating racism.



S.F. State Strike -- students march on Administration Building

So in June 1968, San Francisco State students, led by the Third World Liberation Front, sat in and successfully demanded the rehiring of a Chicano professor. This was the beginning of mass student action against racism at State. On November 6, 1968, the Black Student Union called for a strike and presented the administration with 15 demands. (The 15 demands will be fully discussed in a pamphlet on racism being prepared by people at S.F. State.) SDS and many other white students saw the importance of continuing the fight against racism and joined the strike.

At first the majority of white students opposed us. Racist attitudes--often manifest as "That's their problem; I'm here to get my education"--worked effectively for the administration at first. However, we felt that most students--who were presently working, or who would certainly work upon graduation (as teachers, social workers, etc.)--had a real interest in defeating their own racist attitudes and the racist policies of the school administration. Through discussion, rallies, forums, leaflets and classroom education, we talked to these students. By January, 80% of the student body was on strike and they fought every attempt by the trustees to break that strike--from brutal cops to phony committees.

So, too, at Columbia. Black and white students, led by SDS, built a campaign against Columbia's plans to kick hundreds of families out of their homes in Harlem and to build a gym in Harlem's park. After futile discussion with the administration, students went on strike, forcing Columbia to cut back its expansion plans for a time, and showing the people of Harlem that students could be their allies in the fight against racism.



And at Harvard, students opposed a "riot" control course when they realized it was designed to devise new ways to put down black people fighting their oppression. Led by Harvard Afro American Society, they forced the administration to cancel the course at its very first meeting.

At the SDS national convention in June, a proposal was passed calling for SDS to step up the fight against racism. Tactically the program calls for:

1. Fighting the racist exploitation of campus workers--supporting demands for preferential hiring of black and Latin workers, better wages, better working conditions, and the right to unionization. Uniting with these workers and getting jobs alongside them. Immediately we should raise as mass issues on campus demands for an end to sharp examples to racist oppression of black workers.
2. Opposing racist university expansion--making sure we don't fall into the trap of asking for "good expansion" since the ruling class's schools will only expand to attack the people.
3. Smashing racist courses and institutes--especially police institutes and courses for putting down ghetto rebellions.
4. Supporting black rebellions--and defending black liberation movement fighters. Raise money, demonstrate, and mount sharp attacks on the schools in support of black rebellions.
5. Building for actions nationwide November 12 with two main demands: END THE RACIST ATTACKS ON BLACK PEOPLE! and U.S. GET OUT OF VIETNAM NOW--NO NEGOTIATIONS!



Racism of White Students -- Roadblock to Change

Bob Wetmore, Berkeley SDS

Last spring Berkeley SDS demanded that the University fire a racist professor, Arthur R. Jensen. This big shot in the Department of Educational Psychology wrote an article for the Harvard Educational Review which "proved" scientifically that black people and working class people, in general, are genetically inferior to white middle class people. To prettify this bit of hogwash, Jensen claimed that all he was showing was that black people and white people are "different". In fact, he said, black people might actually be better at rote learning (!) than whites.

Now Jensen trains teachers, and his report was widely circulated to school districts throughout the area. What a beautiful rationale his paper was for a system which imprisons black youth in rotten ghetto schools, from which they proceed to the lowest paying jobs in the economy, to the rolls of the unemployed, or to death in Vietnam! Jensen's report was the perfect excuse for white teachers to acquiesce to conditions in these schools--why unite with parents to demand a better education so that black children can read and write if, after all, black children are dumb to begin with?

We thought, when we began to raise the demand to kick Jensen off campus, that it would meet with tremendous support from students. We were wrong. We seriously underestimated the racism of white students. Students gave a thousand and one reasons for not firing Jensen. One of these was "academic freedom". The Daily Cal, mouthpiece for the administration, said we were fascist, as bad as Reagan, because we, too, wanted to establish "political tests" for teachers. "Academic Freedom" promotes the illusion of a neutral university which presents all sides and takes no stand. This myth keeps students from fighting against the corporate heads who run the university. "Academic Freedom" means in practice (and can only mean) freedom for those whose politics present no threat to the administration. This is clear when we look at how many hundreds of professors are fired and speakers cancelled because what they say runs counter to the interests of the administration.

Because of our relative isolation from the student body, we really weren't prepared for all the rationales, sophisticated and not so sophisticated, for not getting Jensen off campus:

--"Why don't you refute him instead?"

--"What about those figures on page 12, paragraph 2--they seem pretty good to me."

--more blatantly, "What if Jensen is right?"

--"Do you think that by getting rid of one man you'll defeat racism in the University?" (Our response has always been NO!)

All of these responses, many from honest people, were racist not only by virtue of their content, but also because they failed to take account of how Jensen's activities actually oppress black people and all working class people. Just think for a minute about what students would have said and done if Jensen had "proved" that Jews or Irish Catholics conform to various racist stereotypes. There would have been quite an uproar. And all the nice rationalizations for not fighting racism would have taken an infinitely smaller form. The main obstacle to winning white students to fighting against Jensen wasn't free speech or academic freedom. It was racism. This racism made it harder for students to see through the liberalism and to fight the university's racist policies. We have to be aware of the hold racist ideas have on white students. By defeating racism we mean winning students to ally with struggles in the interest of Third World working people. Defeating racism is the key task in building a progressive mass radical movement among students.

Another area in which racist attitudes present themselves within the movement itself is over the question of accepting Third World leadership. While the politics which lead a struggle are primary, nevertheless many students fear Third World leadership because of the racist fears which have been drilled into us in this society. One clear example of this kind of attitude came out during the Third World strike at Berkeley last year. One of the "leaders" of the Berkeley movement, a member of the Oakland Seven, announced that when the strike started it was a Third World "thing", but now that the oppression was coming down on the "white movement", that the "white movement" had a "right" to have a say in what was going on. This implied that the strike wasn't being run properly because Third World people were calling the shots. In other words, the question of leadership was between "black or white" rather than between those who fought for demands in the interest of the people and those who did not! We are not saying you never criticize Third World leadership in a struggle. We feel it is essential to criticize and struggle against political positions which are against the interest of Third World and white workers and students. But these criticisms must come from a perspective of advancing the movement in a pro-working class direction. Too often white students reject any and all leadership from Third World people for racist reasons. We should fight to defeat the racist attitudes which hold back massive student support for Third World leadership fighting in the interest of all students and working people.

We have seen through many struggles that the only way to defeat racist ideas and attitudes is in the context of fighting racist practices (university expansion, ROTC, cop institutes, exploitation of campus workers etc.), seeing how racist attitudes hold back the fight. We have seen clearly how it is not enough to "theoretically" understand the role of racism in maintain a system that profits from the super-exploitation of black working people, but that these racist practices must be fought and fought hard!

The university plays a key role in serving the corporate giants and the politicians they control. The racist ideology (not to mention the racist practice!) of the university is needed to justify the profits

made from super-exploitation, and resulting oppression, of Third World working people. In addition, the university itself is a boss (15,000 non-academic employees at UC Berkeley) that enforces racist pay differentials, gives Third World people the worst jobs, and smashes strikes as ruthlessly as would Ford, Levi Strauss, or National Airlines. We must expose and fight the university's racism in order to concretely aid the struggles of Third World and white working people and to smash racism's divisive effect on students' and workers' struggles.

A concrete program for fighting racism in the university would include the following:

ALLY WITH CAMPUS WORKERS--Workers employed by the university are severely exploited. This is especially true of Third World workers who get the worst jobs and are forced to work under terrible conditions for low wages. We should take jobs on campus and get to know the workers and student employees on the job. We should win student employees to fight with the full-time workers for better conditions in the interest of all working people. A concrete way to fight the racism of the university is to demand an end to racist pay differentials. We should also support struggles for better wages, working conditions, and the right to unionization for all campus workers.) We must win students to a pro-working class attitude and to fight the schools' attempts to use students as scabs. Building an alliance with campus workers is the key way to fight racism for two reasons: 1) The material super-exploitation and oppression of the Third World working class (high rents, low wages, rotten housing, vicious police terror etc.) is the essence of the racist oppression of this economic-political system. 2) Only through a strategy of allying with the working class in common struggle can students play a progressive role in defeating racism and imperialism.



Berkeley SDS on the picket line against racist employment practices

FIGHT UNIVERSITY EXPANSION--Universities expand into working class communities to better benefit big business by 1) building more department and schools which will continue to teach racist, anti-working class ideas to students and 2) establish more centers for military research and sociological research. This research is used to plan imperialist wars abroad (like the Institute of Defense Analysis at Columbia) and to plan how to keep down revolts of working people, particularly black people in the U.S. Often this expansion is done at the expense of the working class--most often black workers. We must ally with Third World workers and students to stop universities from continuing Urban Renewal (Removal) schemes, like the gym at Columbia or Imperial City at Harvard and MIT, that kick working people out of their homes.

EXPOSE AND MOVE ON RACIST COURSES AND INSTITUTES --More and more schools have police science institutes and "riot control courses" blatantly set up to train cops to more skillfully squash working class revolts, particularly in the ghettos. In addition, many schools operate Urban Studies Departments supposedly to "solve the problems of the urban poor." In reality, these departments train people to go into big business-government community front groups, i.e. Redevelopment Agencies, Model Cities, and the War on Poverty, which kick people out of their homes to make way for money-making developments and attempt to turn people away from militant struggle by putting on a show of helping the people. We should expose these departments and courses and build a movement to kick them off campus.

SUPPORT BLACK REBELLIONS-DEFEND BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT
As the black liberation movement gains in strength the ruling class steps up its attacks against black workers and students. We must build support for those attacked. This must be done among students on campus and taken to white workers. We must fight attempts to turn white workers and students against black workers and students. We must build massive support demonstrations constantly raising ideas in the interests of students and working people. We should mount sharp attacks on the university (take over a building, walk-out, etc.) in support of black rebellions.

Workers and Students Fight Racist Curtis Brothers

by Ed Galloway, Baltimore NIC
Ellen Bergman, Pittsburgh
Mark Woodard, U. of Maryland
John Mintz, St. Albans

For over two months truck drivers at Curtis Brothers Furniture Co. in Washington, D.C. have been on strike and supported by University of Maryland SDS and other chapters in the area. During this period, despite early disappointments, the strikers' determination to win has grown rather than diminished; and contact between the strikers and SDSers has increased. As students have shown themselves to be honest, open and able to fight racist and anti-working class attitudes within themselves, a real worker-student alliance has been forged which has been able to more effectively fight Curtis, the boss.

The Curtis family owns a real estate company, a bank, and Washington's largest furniture store--all of which prey off of Washington's black working class community. Their holdings aren't limited to the Washington area--a textile factory in Georgia, for example. While Curtis rakes in hundreds of thousands in profits, he pays black drivers \$1.60 an hour to start (white workers get a little more), deducts for health and welfare benefits known only to him, and forces his drivers to operate unsafe trucks. The strike was started to alleviate some of these problems through unionization. A wage increase to \$3.20 an hour to start, health and welfare benefits, safety conditions and union recognition were the issues.

FIGHTING RACISM

One of Curtis's main weapons against the strike has been racism--none of the white workers have gone out on strike. Curtis's racist practice of paying white workers slightly more than black workers and granting them somewhat better working conditions has very successfully divided the white and black workers. Thus, a major point in leaflets put out by both the workers and SDS has been Curtis's racism, and how the union, if won, would benefit all workers.

This approach of directly confronting racism was more effective among white shoppers than we originally anticipated; many turned around and refused to buy at any of Curtis's many "sales". One way we fought the racist attitudes among customers was for a black worker and a white student to approach customers together and discuss the issue of racism specifically, talking about how it was the boss's rule of thumb--divide and conquer. Moreover, the experience of supporting

the strike and getting to know the black workers helped us to fight many of our own racist attitudes and involved many students new to SDS in the fight against racism in a concrete way.

The strikers were able to rely on support from the almost completely black working class community of the area, support they have built by leafletting and talking to people. As a result, Curtis's profits have fallen 60-70%. In retaliation there has been increased intimidation and repression of the black community. One day when a large number of high school students showed up on the picket line, police went around telling parents not to allow their kids to "get into trouble".



STUDENTS AND WORKERS LEARN THROUGH STRUGGLE

Recognizing the need for a union to fight the bosses, the strikers also knew the sell-out nature of the union leadership. One union "organizer" used to show up every few days and sit around in his air-conditioned Cadillac and turn back some of the union trucks making deliveries. The strikers knew what this kind of support meant and ran this "leader" off (he was the same one who had told the media that SDSers were not wanted on the picket line). The workers have dealt much more effectively with trucks making deliveries than those who drop in occasionally from the local. Earlier in the summer, however, some of us spoke out too generally against the union. It was the workers who reminded us that it was a union they were striking for, and that it was the leadership, not the union, that was the problem.

At the same time we learned lessons about the nature of state power. Some so-called "revolutionaries" came and suggested that the strikers use the courts. When pressed, they admitted you couldn't win through the courts, but that you could harass Curtis and reach the community through publicity in the media. The workers, however, have been winning on the picket line with militant action, and Curtis is hurt by shrinking profits more than he could ever be by court cases. Slashed tires and a burned truck cab have been accompanied by workers' leaflets to the community documenting Curtis's treatment of tenants and his robbery through banks and furniture stores. They have called for strong community action, leading the fight against Curtis's racist exploitation of the black community. It has become more and more obvious to us that to win you must rely on the people, not on the courts or "good" elements among the bosses they serve.

Events in the strike have also cleared up many of our questions on the nature and uses of nationalism; two instances stand out. Early in

the strike a black cop approached a striker and a student and asked the worker what he was doing "walking with trash". The black worker's reply was that he knew where he stood, where the cop stood, and where the student stood, and it was obvious who was together. And later, in an even more revealing incident, a black scab told a black worker that he shouldn't be angry at him for scabbing since he was a "soul brother". "You're no soul brother of mine, you scab," was the reply. "You're on the wrong side of the line." At which point the scab sent after the striker with a hammer and hit him in the head. This attack was warded off by workers and students on the line; and it was the striker and his defendents who were arrested, not the scab.

We made a particular effort to raise political ideas with the workers during the strike, and this was instrumental in our getting to know the workers well. In addition to racism, we talked about how Curtis was part of a class that exploited all workers, and made this concrete with research showing his own particularly widespread interests. We raised that it was this same class that oppressed students and that on campus we were fighting in the interests of workers against our common enemy. One very important issue to raise was male chauvinism, not in the abstract but discussing how it divided the strikers from their wives and the SDS women who came down to support them on the picket line. We've tried to avoid abstraction, but we've often used this as an excuse for not raising our politics--a weakness we'll have to correct.



ADVANCING THE WORKER-STUDENT ALLIANCE

In order to build a real worker-student alliance, more is needed than recognizing the oppression workers face every day in this society, or even fighting together with them in a specific instance; trust and lasting friendship between workers and students must be developed. At the Curtis Bros. strike, activity which began on the picket line was expanded to helping workers build community support for the boycott of Curtis Furniture, and contact between workers and students was broadened to social activities such as parties and picnics or simply meeting and talking after picketing. This has reached a point where some of the students and workers are so close that they wouldn't let a weekend go by without seeing each other somewhere off the picket line--genuine friendships have developed. Both workers and students are already planning ways to get together in the fall and throughout the rest of the year.

These ties have rendered useless the bosses' and their-cops' attempts to divide the students from the workers through the use of traditional anti-communist baits (such as "all they want is disruption"). Because we have been open and honest with the workers about our politics and about our anti-working class and racist attitudes, the bosses' line that we were all students. . . that we didn't have to work the way the strikers did. . . didn't work at all. We also talked to the strikers about how we were taught certain ideas in school that divided us from workers, and how our actions on campus and at the strike were efforts to defeat those attitudes and ideas. In the end, though, practice was what convinced the workers, not words.

If our actions won first of all the respect and later the trust and friendship of the strikers, this was determined by the attitudes with which we approached the task of building ties with the workers. We were interested in learning from them; we didn't arrive with any message to deliver. Because of this attitude, one of the primary results of our work was the political development of individual SDSers and of SDS in the area. And it is probably this attitude that most sharply differentiates us from most of the Revolutionary Youth Movement supporters who came down to the line. While some RYMers have played a good role, most of them arrived on the picket line with a lot more to say than to learn; they spent most of their time with each other, engaging in abstract theoretical discussions which separated them from the strikers (as did their Mao buttons), and thus learned little.

Through our experience at Curtis Bros., black workers and white high school and college students have greatly increased their understanding of what a worker-student alliance should be and how to build it. The workers, who know us and our politics, have expressed an active willingness to defend us. In one instance a scab in a Curtis truck tried to run down a student who was standing alone. Within seconds the scab was dragged out of the cab by one of the strikers;

other strikers let students know that if he hadn't been there to do the job, they would have, and would be in any incident in the future. This is the beginning of a fighting alliance.

Many of us feel that the building of such a strong alliance has been partly due to the length of the strike. Because of the short length of most strikes (which do provide the basis for developing a worker-student alliance) all too often long-lasting ties are not developed. The program of building a campus worker-student alliance provides the time and contact needed to develop the kind of fighting alliance forged at Curtis Bros. Last year at the University of Maryland, a struggle began among University employees (who are mostly black women) to build a union and gain union recognition. This is particularly significant because Maryland is a state institution; any struggle must be waged against both the University and the State. SDS at Maryland supported this effort last year, but because we didn't have the perspective of really developing close ties with the workers we were not as successful in our support as we could have been. We plan to change this by getting jobs on campus this fall, and putting into practice there what we have learned at the Curtis Bros. strike--not to mention bringing together the people we have gotten to know from both places. There has already been a meeting of the shop stewards of the Curtis teamsters and the U. of Maryland Association of State and Municipal Employees in order to discuss ways in which they might be able to help each other. The workers have seen how their struggles relate--how they are in fact part of the same struggle--and how they can fight together. And they also see that students are willing to fight on their side and can be trusted, that a worker-student alliance can be built that fights in the interests of workers and students, against the concrete ways they are exploited by the bosses who run the shops and the universities.



Lessons from the San Francisco State Struggle

by Ernie Brill Curt Schneider
Elena Dillon Steve Zeltzer
Howie Forman

From November 1968 to March 1969 thousands of students at S.F. State College participated in a militant strike called and led by the Third World Liberation Front. In many ways the strike at S.F. State was representative of the growth and the increasingly pro-working class nature of the student movement. SDS played a major role in the strike by not only giving political and tactical leadership to the Strike Support Committee, but also by laying the groundwork that eventually won thousands of students to participate in a prolonged struggle against racism.

Our work had begun in December 1967 with SDS's first attempt to fight racism. Following the suspensions of a number of members of the BSU (Black Students Union), SDS and Progressive Labor Party (PL) held numerous rallies and issued many leaflets calling for the takeover of the Administration building. On the day of the proposed sit-in we found ourselves thoroughly isolated and generally despised by the vast majority of the student body. Only about 75 students sat-in. Although we involved few people and made many errors, for the first time at State the issue of racism was sharply raised with hundreds of white students as something they had to act against, not just theorize about in class.

From then on every committee of SDS (labor, campus action, anti-draft) began to educate and agitate on the role of racism: how it affected students and why it should be fought. This resulted in hundreds of students participating in a sit-in in June 1968 to fight the firing of a Chicano professor by the administration and to kick ROTC off campus.

When the strike started we continued to go to the students on campus in order to combat their racism and to win mass support for the strike. We put out thousands of leaflets, held rallies, held small discussion groups on the lawn and used "classroom education" (small groups of strikers going to every class and talking about racism, the class nature of the university and urging students to strike) and won thousands of students to actively supporting the strike. Through this work we reversed our previous error and helped bring political understanding of and determination to fight racism to thousands of students who eventually participated in the Third World Strike.

Countering the racism of most white students on campus was crucial, but it was also necessary to struggle politically within the strike support committee (a coalition of white students including SDS, PLP, the "Programs"--experimental college, tutorial service, etc.--and hundreds of unaffiliated white students involved in the strike).



SDS EXPOSES CAMPUS "AUTONOMY"

During the first mass meeting of the strike committee, SDS and PLP argued for the position that the strike's main issue was racism and the class nature of the university. "No", said the Program's leaders, "racism is too amorphous, white people can't relate to it." They said the main issue wasn't racism--it was campus autonomy. The major problem on campus, they argued, stemmed from the Trustees' authority over the campus. They reasoned that we, as a community (administration, faculty, and students) should reign jointly over the campus and solve our own problems. We had to achieve campus autonomy.

SDSers argued that the university wasn't a neutral institution that had somehow gotten into the wrong hands (Trustees) and that we could fix up by taking control over. Universities, like all this society's institutions (police, factories, courts) are class institutions. That is, they are run and controlled by a handful of wealthy industrialists to protect and serve the interests of that class of people.

The Trustees represent some of the largest corporations in the state, totalling millions of dollars in profits each year. Trustee Charles Luckman, for example, is a multi-million dollar architect-developer-constructor. One of his biggest "achievements" was designing and building the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Project in L.A. which pushed many black working class families from their homes to make room for expensive "high-rise" apartments.

For Luckman, the university serves a crucial function. The racism that the university teaches provides the justification needed by Luckman for making huge profits by kicking black working people out of their homes.

Based on this class analysis of the university, that the ruling class needs the university to better oppress the working class (through teaching racism, anti-working class attitudes, etc.), we argued against a demand for campus autonomy. The Trustees will not give over control of the university if that control threatens their interests. On the other

hand the administration is only too eager to set up student-faculty committees which do not threaten the interests of big business. For example, the school newspaper, the Daily Gater, for years printed racist articles, distortions about SDS, PL, BSU and TWLF, and was allowed to be student controlled. However, as soon as the paper began supporting the strike and printing articles about the SDS work-in and other radical ideas, it was suspended by the administration.

Demanding campus autonomy doesn't challenge the class nature of the university and builds the myth the ruling class always pushes: that the university is something apart from the rest of society, that students can control their lives without changing society as a whole. This idea serves only the ruling class because it keeps students isolated instead of fighting in alliance with workers for demands that serve working people.

Throughout the strike, people in and out of SDS also argued that the university should not be run by students and faculty but should serve the people who pay for it--the working people. Many students were won to support this position, but as our analysis of the class nature of the university developed through the experience of the strike, we saw that it was an illusion to say that the university could serve the people under this system. (Ideally, the university should serve the people, but S.F. State cannot serve the people anymore than an auto factory can serve the workers until the entire system is changed to serve the people instead of making profits off their labor. We saw that we couldn't build an island of liberation in one school or one factory. To fight for this builds wrong ideas about who controls the institutions of society, for what purposes, and how the people can fight back successfully.

The most important disagreement in the strike committee was over whether or not racism was the main issue. Defeating the issue of campus autonomy was part of the battle in convincing strikers that racism was the issue. But many honest students still felt that it would be impossible to win white students to support an anti-racist fight since white students simply couldn't relate to it.

SDS and PLP argued that racism was certainly not amorphous! It blatantly oppresses Third World people--high rents for rat-infested slum housing, poor working conditions for Third World workers, low wages (the average black workers make 54% of the wage of the average white workers). These things should be pointed out and discussed with students on campus. In addition, we pointed out that, while the people most oppressed by racism are Third World workers and students, racism also hurts white workers and students in a real way. Racism is a key tool college administrators and bosses have to keep Third World and white working people at each others throats instead of fighting the real enemy. Racism benefits only the ruling class (big business interests), not white students and workers.

As the struggle against racism on the campus intensified, the struggle against racist attitudes within SDS also sharpened. Those in SDS who had at first questioned that racism should be the strike's primary issue also feared the militancy of Third World students. To be afraid of militant actions is natural, but objectively it leads to not fighting racism sharply. This was always struggled against very sharply and in

general SDSers and others in the strike support committee not only supported the militancy of Third World students but participated in it. There was also a racist fear of talking with Third World students. Much of this came from not distinguishing between most of the leadership of TWLF, who we felt had anti-working class politics, and the rank and file who were in the vanguard of the strike. We most combat racism in SDS! If we fail to do this we will be unable to smash the university's racist practices in alliance with Third World students and workers.

Through the struggle over racism and especially through the practice of talking to non-striking students about joining the strike, most strikers were convinced that racism was the main issue and we had to organize around it on campus and in the community. Because they were convinced that racism is against the interest of white workers, hundreds of students in the strike saw the importance of bringing the issues of the strike to white workers. During the strike we passed out over 100,000 leaflets at factories, shopping centers, bus depots, etc. We held a lot of community forums, spoke at union meetings, and spoke on radio and TV shows. Through these activities many students overcame anti-working class attitudes and began to see the key role workers, especially black workers as the most exploited part of the working class, play in society and must play in a fight against racism.

NATIONALISM IN THE STRIKE

As the S.F.S.C. strike developed several incidents arose that SDS felt would hinder the growing pro-working class consciousness and the success of the strike. One of these was the appearance at several rallies of wealthy black businessmen and politicians. These people, brought to State by the invitation of some of the third world leadership, were hailed as leaders in the black community and important strike spokesmen. Among them was millionaire publisher Carlton Goodlet who had used police to break up and intimidate workers in his printing shop when they began to organize and fight for a union to enable them to win higher wages and better working conditions.



Also included among this contingent was S.F. county Supervisor Terry Francois. Francois spoke avidly in favor of the strike at a rally on campus but a week later at a Board of Supervisors meeting he voted in favor of granting S.F. police extra overtime for their strike breaking activity at State.

The content of these rallies began to bring serious questions to the forefront. What analysis had led most of the third world leadership at S.F. State to bring to campus big businessmen and politicians whose primary function was to participate in the oppression of third world working people? We felt more and more that this analysis flowed from the ideology of nationalism.

One aspect of nationalist ideology is that all classes within a nationality (in this case black people) can be relied on to fight for liberation of the people of that nationality. But how can big businessmen such as Goodlett play a role in fighting for the interests of black people (98% of whom are working class) when they themselves are involved in the oppression of working people?? They cannot!! Goodlett and other businessmen - black and white - have economic interests totally opposed to the majority of black people.

This was further elucidated in the strike when Goodlett spoke about the need for non-violence and "pacifist action" after masses of students on campus actively fought the cops. It is no accident Goodlett pushed pacifism, for it served his class interest. By not fighting back when police attacked and by relying on "community" leaders instead of relying on third world working people and students, the strike suffered a severe setback.

Towards the end of the strike we saw a growing reliance on these "community leaders", and we began wondering how this reliance related to the 15 demands of the Third World Liberation Front. Analyzing them in the light of the strike, we began to see that most of the fifteen demands did not in fact serve the vast majority of people in this country - the working people.

Two of the 15 strike demands in particular show the lack of working class perspective of most of the demands. One demand was that Nathan Hare, Black Studies Department Chairman, receive a salary of \$18,000 instead of \$12,000 a year. True, the fact that Hare's salary hadn't been raised along with those of other department chairmen was a reflection of the racism of the University. But the way to deal with such racism is not to demand privileges for an already privileged strata of the university bureaucracy! During the strike SDS questioned Hare's role as an administrator. How could black people in the community relate to a college administrator getting more money, especially when administrators such as foremen, managers, supervisors, EOC officials, black and white, oppressed them daily. Since the university serves only the ruling class, an administrator seeking to serve the working people wouldn't last long. As part of the university management, administrators, be they black, white, brown, or yellow, can only serve the bosses in the long run regardless of their intentions as individuals.

BLACK STUDIES: A THREAT TO THE RULING CLASS?

Another demand was for a department of Black Studies. During the strike we supported this demand, while raising serious questions about it among ourselves. We agreed that educational institutions deliberately excluded and whitewashed the history, culture, and contributions of third world working people, (just as the school system systematically deletes pro-working class history). However, we wondered what the content of the Black Studies Department would entail. Would it tell the history of the growth of this country as it really was - with the working people fighting for every change - or would it have the same old courses with the word 'black' in front of them? In convincing white students to strike against racism, we specifically stressed that only a pro-working class Black Studies Department could serve the people (we still had illusions that SF State could set up a pro-working class Black Studies Department).

After the strike we re-evaluated our position. We realized that the university would neither create nor allow a Black Studies Department that told the true story of black worker's struggles. For example, Dudley Swim, a trustee of the Calif. state colleges, and President of National Airlines, allow radical or revolutionary ethnic studies when he was named strike-breaker of the year by the Wall Street Journal for his role in breaking the airline mechanics' strike and firing hundreds of workers? Until last year Swim was also on the Board of Directors of Del Monte Corp., one of the huge corporations which viciously exploits farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley. Dudley Swim and the rest of the Trustees need racism to divide their workers and to make their profits--they are not going to allow the university to be used against their interests!

Proponents of ethnic studies departments usually defend this demand by saying that this is where students will learn how to serve the people and how to lead the movement. In fact, the way radical Third World and white students will learn to serve the people is not only through sitting in university classrooms but is by actually participating in struggles now that directly support the day to day struggles of Third World and white working people, like the General Electric Strike and the fight of the farm workers. And it is here in the course of these activities on campus and in the communities that the leadership of a movement that really fights against the oppression of all working people will be developed.



Through the experiences of the strike and through a lot of discussion of the demands, most SDSers saw that the ideology of nationalism holds back the struggle against racism. By nationalism we don't mean the national feelings and identity Third World people have for members of their own race. When we speak of nationalist ideology we mean a political outlook that sees all people in a nation or national group as having basically the same interest. This denies the existence of classes in the Third World community. It denies the fact that the basis of racism is the super-exploitation of Third World workers.

In practice this means that the demands raised are not in the interests of the masses of Third World people (like the demand for more money for administrators) and don't sharply attack racism. It also means that the people who emerge as the leaders of the movement are the bourgeois members of the community (businessmen, lawyers, etc.), not the people most oppressed by racism - Third World workers.

In the Third World student movement there is a sharp struggle going on between those who want to fight primarily around ethnic studies departments and those who see that the fight against racism can only be a struggle that is actively fighting against the oppression of the majority of Third World working people. This means raising demands in the interests of Third World campus workers, organizing students in support of strikes (like the farmworkers) and fighting against police terror in the Third World communities. In SDS we must win masses of white students to action in support of struggles in the interest of Third World workers. A primary way to do this is to raise or support demands on campus directly attacking the oppression of campus workers, most of whom are black, chicano, chinese, and fillipino, and who have had the worst jobs and conditions on campus. In this way we will begin to build a movement which will fight against racism in alliance with Third World and white workers in sharp fights against the university administration.

Fight Racism --

Build the C W S A

Racist Yale Gives In

by A. W. Capitman, Ken Harris, Joanne Parsons, Barney Rubin, Drew Wechsler, and Mark Zanger

On Monday, November 3rd, 200 students marched on the personnel office at Yale University in response to the racist firing of a black waitress in a college dining hall. After two hours of "negotiations" between Yale bosses and a small delegation of students, the angry crowd forced its way past police guards and occupied the office, holding the business manager, the dining hall manager and the personnel director captive for nearly three hours. Only after 47 students were suspended did the occupiers leave the building. The next day the administration gave in; they rehired the woman with all back pay restored. This action occurred as the outcome of an intense agitational campaign led by SDS around the harassment and speedup of campus workers, especially in the dining halls and kitchens.

Working conditions for Yale's 5500 employees have worsened this year due to a 15% increase in enrollment with no corresponding increase in the full-time work force. In the dining halls dishwashers and waitresses earn \$1.96 an hour and seldom rise over \$2.50 an hour even after years of service. Instead of hiring more workers at better pay to meet the increased work load, the university has hired more managers and student managers to squeeze even more work out of the present staff! We chose to concentrate our campaign around these conditions.

SDS members obtained jobs in dining halls whenever possible and started to develop ties with fellow workers. To dramatize the need for more workers, we initiated a petition campaign to end speedup. We also organized groups of five students to go into dining halls and work alongside workers. Wearing T-shirts saying 'this place needs ten more workers--end speedup and fight Yale bosses', the groups showed exactly how additional workers would better dining hall conditions for everyone except the bosses. This tactic gave SDSers an opportunity to talk with both students and workers about the terrible conditions and the need for immediate action. Employees were impressed with the seriousness of SDS members. It wasn't all talk any more. However, we soon realized that any demand for the end of speedup by the hiring of 120 more workers was not sharp or immediate enough to be won by students alone. We were falling into the trap of making demands that could not be won without a long-term struggle involving all the workers.

MILITANT WORKER FIRED

On Thursday, October 30, there was a regular meeting of Yale SDS's campus worker-student alliance committee (CWSA) which discussed the question of long-range, general demands versus short-range demands around specific grievances. At this point, a committee member told about the firing two days earlier of a black waitress who had been harassed by a student manager. The SDSer had heard of this from his fellow workers (stuff like this is not published in the Yale Daily News).

On Saturday a student and a campus worker (an SDSer who graduated from Yale last year) chosen by the CWSA committee, visited the fired worker, Mrs. Colia Williams, to determine the facts and discuss possible action with her. Mrs. Williams has five children and had been on welfare before coming to work for Yale. Her income as a waitress (working from 10:30 to 7:30) was not much higher than subsistence welfare payments, especially since working meant extra expenses for babysitters and nursery school.

The reason Mrs. Williams was fired was because she stood up to the manager and the student manager ('bursary captain') when they harassed and overworked her. On the Sunday before she was fired, Mrs. Williams was busy setting up coffee when the student manager angrily said, 'Your job is trays!' and wagged his finger at her, hitting her on the nose. Later, he purposely bumped into her and when she asked why, he said, 'If you don't like it, get out of the way.' Mrs. Williams answered him by throwing a glass of cranberry juice in his face. The bursary captain told the assistant manager 'if that bitch ever touches me again I'll kill her'. The next day, Monday, the senior manager had Mrs. Williams clean the whole dining hall alone. She finished her work around 3:30 and sat down to have her dinner. But the manager told her to get up and clean the two back rooms. When she objected, the boss told her to 'watch her step'. She did the extra work, never getting a chance to eat her dinner. On Tuesday, Mrs. Williams walked over to the personnel director to request a transfer. Upon her arrival she learned she had been fired for 'unsatisfactory work'; since she had not been on the job long enough to join the union (she was four days short of the mandatory 30 days), there was no way for her to regain her job.

We asked Mrs. Williams if she wanted to fight. She said she did. On Monday we leafletted the campus, outlining the facts and explaining why we felt the firing was not the result of bureaucratic foulups or a 'communications breakdown', but that it was one instance of the system-racism through which Yale oppresses its workers.



STUDENTS
MEET
AFTER
SEIZURE
OF YALE'S
WRIGHT
HALL

RACISM AND CHAUVINISM

Yale concentrates black, Puerto Rican, and women workers in the worst job categories where the pay is lowest and the conditions are miserable. This enables Yale to make super-profits off black workers, especially black women, and the wage differential keeps the wages of all workers down. White workers and students, seeing all this, often believe the lies they're taught that black people are stupid lazy, unreliable, etc. By pushing these ideas, the bosses hope to keep workers divided so that they can get away with things like firing potential militant leaders on the slightest pretext. The managers know that a militant black woman like Mrs. Williams can set a 'bad' example - bad for the bosses! - and that's why they fired her. But this time they wouldn't get away with it!

Our leaflet called for a mass meeting during lunch time in the dining hall where Mrs. Williams worked and announced our intention to 'march' on the office of Henry Krenski, the personnel director, to demand that he rehire Mrs. Williams immediately with all back pay restored! About 300 students attended the meeting and for an hour Mrs. Williams and SDS members answered students' questions and discussed plans of action. The more the students heard, the angrier they grew. At 2:00 we marched to the personnel office and demanded to see Krenski. The doors to the office were heavily guarded by campus police, but Krenski allowed a delegation of ten to enter to 'discuss things calmly'. Most of us recognized this as a stall but we complied anyway to see what he had to say. He tried to tell us that the matter was 'out of his hands' and we should go to someone higher up the chain of command. We didn't fall for this one, however, and told Krenski to get on the phone to his superiors and get them to come down as well because we had no intention of leaving until Mrs. Williams got her job back. After three nervous phone calls, A. R. Dobie, the dining halls manager, and J. F. Embersits, university business manager, walked into the office all smiles and asked the delegation for 24 hours to 'ascertain the facts'. The delegation relayed this to the 200 students waiting outside. They greeted the offer with hisses and shouts (one student, not an SDS member, shouted, 'He had enough facts to fire her, didn't he?'). There was a chant of 'speedup Krenski'. Meanwhile about a dozen students had fought their way into the office, and after Embersits and Co. refused to call in anyone to give new facts the rest of the crowd outside forced their way in. When the bosses tried to slip out 'to get a drink of water', students refused to let them out until Mrs. Williams was rehired. Krenski was permitted to leave because the shock of having students sitting in his office for a worker might have aggravated his heart condition. When the 5:00 closing time came, various deans came in to threaten students, and when that failed, began taking down names. To divide us they took only some of the names; at 5:30 the provost, Charles Taylor, attempted to announce that everyone still in the office in five minutes would be subject to 'academic discipline'. He was shouted down with the chant, 'Rehire Mrs. Williams!'



YALE STUDENTS CHANT IN PERSONNEL OFFICE

REV. COFFIN'S 'CONSCIENCE'

The provost's threats had failed to scare us off, so the administration had the police shove back a crowd of several hundred supporting us to let Rev. W. S. Coffin crawl in. Coffin had a long chat with Provost Taylor, then stood on a desk and said, 'I don't agree with your cause. Don't you know you're holding those men prisoner in there?' Students began yelling, 'Don't sell us out again, Bill; join us!' Coffin said 'conscience' wouldn't let him join us, and he left, no doubt off to write the speech he is going to give for the Moratorium. It's clear what the 'peace' Coffin will be calling for is -- the peaceful exploitation of working people, both in Vietnam and in Yale's dining halls!

At 5:40 Taylor managed to announce over the chants of 'Rehire Mrs. Williams!' that we were 'no longer students at Yale'. Now we had to discuss whether to stay until the university called in the police. We reasoned that a police bust might turn our exposure of Yale as a racist boss into a campaign against 'police brutality'. Since the most important thing we could do was to win more students to supporting the action itself, we left, determined to come back the next day stronger than ever. Shortly after 7:00 we marched out, letting the captive bosses go home to their troughs.

The next day we issued another leaflet and held another mass meeting at 1:00. About 350 students came. At 3:00 the administration had promised an 'open meeting' but when we marched over we found that the meeting was open only to a handful of students, only three of whom we were allowed to elect. We

waited outside while inside Mrs. Williams and her supporters fielded questions from a battery of bosses. The union was represented by its business manager, who read a brief statement washing his hands of the whole matter (on the technicality that Mrs. Williams had worked only 27 of the 30 days an employee must work before joining the union)!



STUDENTS RALLY OUTSIDE ROOM WHERE MRS. WILLIAMS WAS SOON TO BE REHIRED

BOSSSES 'SAVE FACE'

We decided to break up and mobilize the campus for a rally to plan further militant action that evening in case the administration refused to yield. Shortly after 6:00 we learned that the university had rehired Mrs. Williams with all back pay restored -- on the face-saving 'technicality' that they supposedly never fired her in the first place. The administration put Mrs. Williams back at the beginning of her 30-day probationary period, even though at the time of the firing she had only three days to go. By these tactics they are saying that (1) Mrs. Williams was stupidly mistaken in thinking that she was fired and that (2) they still think she is an incompetent worker who must be watched. This is a further racist attack on her.

In view of the administration's backing down, the rally that evening focused on the suspended students. Many people wanted

to build a movement around the 'political repression' of the students, but many of us argued that while it was important to fight the suspensions we had to defend ourselves by specifically defending our action in allying with a campus worker. We continued gathering information about the harassment of campus workers throughout the week. Now workers began contacting SDS on their own, and we soon had a number of grievances to raise to the student body, including other fired workers (one with 14 years seniority) and 20 maintenance workers threatened with suspension for refusing to come in on a Sunday to clean the football stadium. The administration has now commuted the suspensions to year-long probations; our demand had changed from 'reinstatement' to 'no punishments at all!'

C W S A EXPOSES RACISM

In the last few weeks, we have found that building the campus worker-student alliance (CWSA) is the best way of winning students to an understanding of what racism really is; its material basis in the super-exploitation of black workers and the role of racist ideas arising from these conditions in defeating the struggles of workers and students. And it is also the best way of exposing the class nature of the university, of exposing the myth that the university is concerned only with the 'pursuit of ideas' and that it stands 'above' the struggles of working people around the world and at home. More and more students are coming to see that the men who run universities profit from the exploitation of working people, both on the campus and overseas. That is why they exploit campus workers, have ROTC, war research, etc. More and more students see that campus workers are fighting the same enemy as the Vietnamese are, that the same small group of men who run universities and oppress their workers are responsible for and benefit from the war in Vietnam.

And the best proof of that lies in the Yale administration's response to the campaign to get Mrs. Williams rehired. Kingman Brewster, President of Yale, and William Sloane Coffin are leaders of the Moratorium in New Haven. Out of one side of their mouth they say they want 'peace' in Vietnam, but out of the other side they suspend 47 students fighting on the side of a black worker. Brewster and Coffin have made it only too clear that they don't want to fight the exploitation of working people at home, they want to maintain it; so what does their talk of 'peace' for Vietnam mean? It means a cover for the continued exploitation and oppression of the Vietnamese people!

By implementing the campus worker-student alliance, we have found that the struggle against US imperialism is identical with the fight against Yale's racism because imperialism depends on the super-exploitation of black workers at home and Third World people abroad. By finding the specific, short-run grievances of workers and taking them to students in a mass way, we can expose whose side the university is really on and build an alliance of workers and students to fight imperialism effectively.

SUPPORT SDS LITERATURE

S.D.S. should be an organization that concretely helps people struggle against racism and the imperialist war in Vietnam. This can be done through articles in New Left Notes, and an expanded literature program. We need to continue and increase an interchange of ideas and experiences among those now involved in SDS and others who could be involved in our struggles. But shipping and printing require money, and we have to raise it. There are lots of ways that work -- fund-raising parties, dinners, film showings. All should become a regular part of our political work. SDS depends on donations to grow. Despite outright attacks made on SDS (jail sentences, high bail, etc.) and attempts by various liberal forces to divert the movement from sharply fighting the administration (the Moratorium), we are growing -- in strength and numbers. We get more mail, print more New Left Notes, and many more people write requesting buttons, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, and speakers. If SDS is to grow and reach larger and larger numbers of people, we must see that a serious effort to raise money is a necessity -- and ACT upon that necessity NOW !

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