Chapter - II

RADICAL YOUTH MOVEMENT

IN THE UNITED STATES:

People are asking us "What is your Programme?". I hand them a mess score card, or I tell them to check yellow pages, "out programs there". ... programs! The goal of revolution is to abolish programs and turn spectators in to actors. It is a do it your self revolution and we'll work out the future as we go.

Jerry Robin,
in *Do It*
2.1 New Left as the Ideological Basis: From Moderate Theory to Militant Action

1950s belonged to the Middle America. A majority of Americans under the able leadership of Eisenhower seemed content in a period of comparative political tranquillity and private prosperity. Individualism had declined in America. "Human Worth", reaffirmed by the founding fathers of the American constitution became the guiding spirit and "more equal opportunity" became rule of the land.¹

The United States had historically prided itself on the economic opportunities it provided to its citizens. The continued existence of economic opportunity was important in 1950s. Many blue collar families were eager to obtain white-collar positions. Corporation and government employees sought higher pay, greater responsibility. The existing trends demonstrated greater opportunity than before for the educated sons of both the manual labourers and the businessman in white collar world.² Much is written on this "upward Mobility". Even on job, there was little dissatisfaction. A University of Michigan project that interviewed hundred of


labourers, farmers, professionals, managers and sales personnel concluded that most were content and had successfully adapted to their occupation.3

The majority of farmers and middle-class white-collar job holders found their work so interesting that they chose to remain in their position even when they could afford to retire. The disaffection of social critics from the values and ambitions held by most blue and white-collar middle-class Americans stem from the European tradition of social dissent that flourished at the turn of the century. The economic and the political consequences of the capitalist-managed industrial revolution were deplored. Many social critics were inimical to any or all characteristics of the capitalistic society in the United States: corporate and individual ownership of the means of production and exchange, public and religious disapproval of moral laxity and sexual deviance, individualism forged by competitive endeavour, social recognition based on professional achievement or material success, authoritarianism in home cantered around the father, and comparatively little concern for the poor and the black.4

But the Second World War diverted the nation’s attention from internal crisis, energized economy, and the great expectation of a socialist solution to the depression

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vanished. The political ineffectiveness of the intellectual left in the 1950s loomed large. Senator Joseph McCarthy's probing of activities suggestive of communist subversion caused some intellectuals to pause instead of rallying against existing social abuses. Stalin's perversion of the Soviet Socialist experiment and the experiment and the wide-spread disillusionment with applied Marxism-Leninism as an infallible social doctrine was of major importance. There was a loss of faith in the capacity of socialism to produce a "new man" and a better society. The spectre of an armed totalitarian Russia astride Eastern Europe and Gazing westward proved compelling in uniting the country. Distinguished spokesman from the American Left suggested a moratorium in government criticism in a symposium published by the partisan review, and many journals followed this suggestion.¹

Thus the "American Left" itself was partly responsible for its failure during fifties. It could not make any significant political impact. Many members of the Left looked at this development with dismay and disgust. This convinced them that the Old Left has outworn its usefulness and that a New Left was necessary.

Under these circumstances some detractors of the American way of life abandoned political objectives and issues to zero in American culture in personal habits and mores of private citizens. Dwight Macdonald censured physical ugliness

¹Sidney Hook and Irving Howi, "Our Country and our Culture: A Symposium III", Partisan Review 19, no.5 (September-October 1952), P.575.
and rampant greed: Eric From decried the submergence of individuality in group anonymity.

Meanwhile, intellectuals who called attention to political or social issues were widely read by students who would subsequently form the New Left. Three of the most prominent were C. Wright Mills, David Riesman and Eric From. David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* was published in 1950, *The White Collar* by C. Wright Mills was followed in 1951 and Eric From's *The Sane Society* was published in 1953.

Riesman described the change of American citizen from self-reliance to a reliance on others, defined the new social character as "other directed" and explained how the nation's children, from mothers knee to maturity, were conditioned to make decisions about direction and content of their lives, not from the set of a revered moral precepts but entirely on the basis of the approval of selected contemporaries.

Eric From contended that although the thrust of Western civilization was to liberate man from economic and political servitude, the majority had never known the ultimate recognition of the self. Rather self-awareness came from the membership in larger bodies of voluntary, religious and professional organizations. This in no way diminished the drive for identity, however From asserted that this need as strong as urge for self preservation. This social phenomena of conformity,
consumption and manipulation are inter-related with the lack of true self-awareness, that is we cling to others in order to locate and identify ourselves.

In *White Collar* C. Wright Mills explained why the nature of big business and big government made it almost impossible to be anything but "other directed" and conformist. Fixing his attention on the new salaried middle-class at work, he examined the kinds of jobs available in a sophisticated industrial economy and probed the nature of these positions, seeking clues to job satisfaction and opportunities for advancement and success. There had been a transformation from the propertied independence for the majority as small farmers and the self-supporting businessman to permanent salaried employees in the ranks of corporate and state administration. One or two per cent of the employed act as managers, representing and running the corporation of their legal owners, and these managers are people of prestige and power. For the vast multitude of beneath the power however, there is little hope for financial independence. Their income in undistinguished by a sense of status superiority to the manual worker.* Mill saw society in general a "great sales room" presenting an array of wares to be sold before the next shipment arrived. The industries biggest problems were induction of its conception. The entrepreneur had to face the impossible road blocks of bureaucratic inertia. A man is appraised by what he appears to be rather than by who he really is: Mill

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*C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).*
deprecated the fatalism and impotence that gripped society from the politically indifferent man in the street to the abdication of the intellectual for a salary status.

The Power Elite of Mill appeared in 1956, telling a counter theory. Denying the existence of an aristocracy or conspiracy, Mills claimed that a vague inter-relationship operated within the highest levels of the military, the corporate world, and the political executive that enabled the influence of a "political-military-industrial complex" to be felt before decisions, were made on national policy. Those who qualified for this inter-relationship generally had common schooling, common social acquaintanceship and affiliations, and enjoyed financial advantages. Congress, labour and other traditional interest groups occupied only "Middle levels" of power. The ramifications for the individual citizen, isolated from the levers of power, were immense.

Mills contended that enormous power was being exercised without the wielders being held responsible for the consequences. This lack of accountability to the people or their representatives contributed to his subsequent call for young intellectuals to lead the resistance against what he considered irresponsible uses of economic and political power.⁷


The Lonely Crowd of Riesman was hailed as "most influential in enlightening the readers understanding of the nature and direction of change in America." But Mills offered a hypothesis to explain what was wrong with America. In other words he "put a name on it". More than any other single individual C. Wright Mills contributed to the rise of New Left.

Jack Newfield, a former Member of "Students for a Democratic Society" extolled Mills as one of the authors who "nourished" the growth of New Left. He urged students to combine thought and action, to become new intellectual force for change, and to supplement the working class as the primary agency for radical social reform. The students felt American society supported racism, oppressive institution, capital punishment and wars against popular movements in under-developed countries. "Alienation" was used to describe the society's effect on its citizens, and American society was seen as the source of injustice and suppression of liberty in general, the activists did not feel the same outrage against Castro or Mao of Khrushchev that they could against their own rulers. It was "our" fault. Brought up and nurtured on the United Nations and liberal political values, hearing them

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articulated so well by President Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson, they demanded purity at home first, and when it was not forthcoming, quickly became convinced that it was impossible, that there was something rotten at the core of American society.\textsuperscript{11}

The New Left therefore originated as an individualistic reaction to both personal and social problems. Each student went into the movement that he believed best suited his interest and needs. Some joined radical organizations confined to a single campus, whose members participated demonstrations around a variety of issues. On a more theoretical level, students conceived, planned and carried on symposiums, although faculty inertia had often to be overcome for this to be done. To campuses in every part of the country they brought leading cultural and political figures, whom they often asked unexpectedly candid questions. In early 1959, while students at Yale University started a new programme called "Challenge" to persuade their peers to take an interest in world problems, in Cuba Fidel Castro and a small band of revolutionaries toppled the regime of aging Fulgencio Batista to presage the New Left in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{12}

Five principal events occurred in the United States between January 1959 and November 1960 to spark a student reaction and to launch the New Left Movement.


1. The election of John F. Kennedy as President.

2. The seizure of power by Castro in Cuba.

3. The sit-ins against segregated facilities in the South.

4. The execution of Caryl Chessman at San Quentin.

5. The furore aroused by House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) hearings in San Francisco.

With the exception of Castro's rise to power and Kennedy's victory, these events occurred within a period of four months. Though Kennedy neither said nor did anything specifically to cause these events, his ascendancy to the White House helped create an atmosphere conducive to the student political expression. To many students Kennedy exemplified a kind of public virtue they wanted to believe existed. His language and demeanour seemed to assure them that vigour would replace complacency and the social wrongs would be righted.¹³

Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy maintained that,

The poverty and degradation of the Cuban peasants under Batista and of unconscionable profit taking by financiers, chiefly from the United States, who dominated Cuban economy angered the students.¹⁴

¹³Ibid., pp.21-22.

C. Wright Mills stated that Castro and the echelon of leaders were not communists, but a new breed of radicals, indeed the first victorious "New Left of the World". Castro and his followers demonstrated that a socialist force apparently free of a communist van guard could "expropriate the capitalist class. The Revolution in Cuba symbolized a non-communist Revolution within an underdeveloped country and not as United States government used to think, a communist plot, within the Western hemisphere.

To Some students, especially those living in comfortable, secure and comparatively unchallenging circumstances, the Cuban Revolution conjured romantic visions. Castro's Chief companion, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, also an intellectual and man of action, described the life style of a guerrilla fighter in a manner certain to appeal students idealistic and romantic pre-conceptions of guerrilla warfare.

The more uncomfortable the guerrilla fighter is, and the more he is initiated in to the rigorous of nature, the more he feels himself home, his morale is higher, his sense of security is greater. At the same time, he has learned to risk his life in every circumstances that might arise, to trust to luck like to tossed coin, and in general, as a final result, of this kind of combat, it matters a little to the individual guerrilla whether or not he survives.16


Within two weeks after the death of Cryll Chessman, House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) met in San Francisco to question witnesses about the alleged communist party activities in the Bay area. Faculty members from the University of California, San-Francisco State College, San Jose State College and Stanford University signed petitions and published newspaper advertisements objecting to the committee's appearance. On May 12, 1960, a group of students gathered at San Francisco city Hall to voice their disapproval of the committee.

Critics divide them into two groups:

Some were, the children of old radicals, unionists, leftists, etc... the other half were new...mostly from Democratic rather than Republican families. They were like the British Universities and left review public. The "affluent Society" is their real enemy."

On May 13th, however, the demonstrators shifted to disruptive direct action tactics. The HUAC meeting was interrupted by people who entered city Hall, assembled outside the hearing room door and chanted "open the door, open the door". When the same disruption occurred the following day, the police swept the protesters down the stairs with fire hoses and turned them away in paddy wagons. There were thirteen injured and sixty two jailed. Students triggered the riot when they climbed over the barricades and stormed the door leading to the Board of Supervisors chamber where the hearing was being conducted, an eye witness, a

protester who managed to slip into the hearing room with some of his cohorts before the door was closed gave this account of how they stopped his meetings: "A few of us were able to get past the bouncers and prevent the hearings from proceeding by several renditions of the 'star spangled Banner' and other committee favourites".

HUAC subsequently produced a film entitled 'Operation Abolition' that showed portions of the action in the city Hall with a view to show that the students action the city Hall was guided by the communists. When the film was exhibited on college campuses throughout the country, its detractors launched an effective counter attack consisting of television and radio appearances, nationwide speaking tours, debates and distribution of hundreds of thousand pieces of literature. As a result, students who would have otherwise accepted the HUAC episode became either converted or sympathetic. Rightly concluded George Thayer,

We are indebted to the Committee for that film said Clark Kissinger of the Students for a Democratic Society. "It showed those big cops clubbing students..." Groups of every variety began to spring up protest all over the country."


2.2 Student Non-Violence Coordination Committee (SNCC), and Students for a Democratic Society 1964-1967:

From Campus Campaign to Community Organizing.

The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was the moving spirit in the early phase of the students movement in the United States. Always small in numbers and composed chiefly of southern black students, SNCC grew out of the welter of civil rights movement in 1960. The sit-ins against institutional discriminations, the freedom rides to desegregate public facilities in inter-state transportation, voter registration in deep south, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's appeal for equal rights at the national level of the Democratic Party -- all were in the programme of SNCC. It demonstrated that a dedicated group of men and women could act as a catalyst in stirring the nation to consider the racial problems. Joseph McNeil who having being refused service said, "Well, we ought to have a boycott... we should go in and sit down... and ask for service... if they refuse us we can continue to sit there... and we'll go to jail and then we'll ask the people not to buy at the place".21


During sit-ins at Nashville and other southern cities, well dressed black students were told to abide by the following rules despite whatever physical provocation they might encounter:

- Don't strike back or curse if abused.
- Don't laugh out.
- Don't hold conversations with floor workers.
- Don’t leave your seat until your leader has given you the instructions to do so.
- Don't block entrances to the stores and the aisles.
- Show yourself courteous and friendly at all times.
- Sit straight and always face the counter.
- Report all serious incidents to your leader.
- Refer all information to your leader in a polite manner.
- Remember love and non-violence.
- May God bless each of you.²

Within two weeks after the incident, concerned students blocked to sit-in at National Stores like the F.W. Woolworth Company, the Walgreen Drug Company and the S.H. Cress Company in fifteen cities in five southern states.

In the North the first young white activists found fulfilment in identifying with, and struggling for improvement in the lives of human beings less fortunate than themselves -- even if the scene of battle was miles away. What happened from February to the middle of April proved first that the moral appeal of the sit-ins against segregation was national in scope, and second, that the sit-ins and their northern support were a distinct student phenomenon.

A conference at More House College in Atlanta in early October, 1969 celebrated SNCC's inauguration as a permanent organization, ending its ad hoc status. An executive committee of twenty one members, including two other advisors, were to be elected at annual SNCC Conference and act as the policy making body. The SNCC memorandum stated:

Certainly we should work to organize campuses. They should be organized around student problems, not problems we think are important, and imposed upon them, their problems are likely to be things like dress regulations academic freedom even food. We can organize groups to deal with these problems in the context of democratic rights hooked with each other in a statewide basis. We will relate them through campus organizers... Many of these organizers will be potential SNCC staff.  

Student activists continued through the winter of 1960-61 to sit in and to be arrested, and in February SNCC formally adopted, jail no bail policy originally advocated by King in April 1960, four members were sent to South Carolina, where

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they were subsequently arrested for civil rights activity and jailed with ten local students. Where all the fourteen demonstrators elected to forfeit bail, it was a tactic intended to dramatize the Negro quest for equal rights to the rest of the nation and also to reduce the rising cost of legal expenses.

The idea of Freedom rides originated with the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), early in the 1961. Freedom Rides designated bus loads of black and white volunteers who travelled to depots of deep south. For SNCC the Freedom Rides symbolized a juncture presenting two choices for the future: direct action (sit-ins, economic boycotts, Freedom Rides) or community organizing (voter Registration etc.) Marrion Barry and Diane Nash led the faction favouring direct action tactics. Charles Jones and Robert Moses supported community organizing.

Early in 1962, the major civil rights organizations agreed to concentrate much of their energy on Registering Negroes to vote. The SNCC personnel were angry and frustrated by their own "power-lessness" and appalled by the obvious injustice of the Negroes plight led to the consequences by Summer's end, the Movement had ground almost to a halt, and SNCC gradually became more radical. A SNCC

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2Ibid., p.43.

2Ibid., p.45.
conference held in Nashville on 23-24 November 1962 reflected both the impasse and radicalization.\textsuperscript{27}

From 1963 onwards, SNCC's reputation and symbolic status eluded quantitative analysis. No longer regarded simply as a civil rights organization, it had evolved into an organizational forerunner of American New Left. On this basis, SNCC's action might be interpreted as moral, but SNCC regarded itself as a political organization grabbing for tangible power in the form of office, authority and patronage. Thus SNCC can be defined radical in terms of degree of political change it sought and methods it sanctioned to achieve a new political order, independent centres of power and parallel institutions. The students had the maximum community organizing in the summers of 1964. SNCC's ambitious summer project sponsored by the students for a democratic society was a success. The primary purpose of the 1964 summer project was to break the opposition of white segregationists in the south and in the prowess politicalizing the students of the northern colleges. In Mississippi, the area of most intense concentration after two-and-a-half years of travel was only six per cent.

Many people in SNCC felt that Negroes would be denied the vote until the national government sent Federal Marshals and soldiers to enforce Negro rights. Within SNCC, an air of urgency transcended mental and physical fatigue, a white

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p.49.
field worker contended that SNCC's time table depended on both economic and political factors.

According to Mike Miller,

The economic time table was the conscious plan of the white citizens council to mechanize out of the Mississippi Delta the teens of thousands of Negroes who could elect country, state and national politicians if they were able to gain the vote.28

Freedom schools were started as a part of the summer program, Charles Coff, an envisioned SNCC worker called upon Negro youth for liberation from an inferior educational system. He stated objectives for a system of Freedom schools in a prospectus presented to SNCC in December 1963 which emphasized:

1. The need to get into the schools around the state and organize the students, with the possibility of a state-wide coordinated student movement developing.

2. A student force to work with us in our efforts around the state.

3. The responsibility to fill an intellectual and creative vacuum in the lives of young Negro Mississippianes, and to get them to articulate their own desires, demands and questions. More students need to stand up in class rooms around the state, and ask their teachers a real question.29


The accomplishments of 1964 Mississippi summer are more notable in the light of the violent atmosphere that prevailed in the state at that time. But the Freedom schools achieved more than any other single programme of the summer project. Because of their experiences in the Schools, many students were motivated to take a deeper interest in higher education. The summer project staff regarded the decision to continue the schools beyond the summer as a triumph in itself. But soon after the Regular School year began, the Mississippi state legislature passed a law forbidding the existence of schools not licensed by the country superintendent of education and denying license to any school encouraging disobedience to laws of Mississippi. Because of paucity of funds, SNCC Newsletter in North and South contained pleas asking that everything from books and erasers, to Volkswagen buses and short wave citizen band radios should be sent to Freedom Schools.30

If the Mississippi summer project accomplished some of its objectives, it also experienced set-backs. Although thousands of volunteers were expected from the North, less than a thousand came and the programme suffered accordingly. The major failure, however, occurred within the ranks of the summer project participants as the sceptical attitude of some SNCC staff members towards the Northern white collegian at the beginning of the experiment.31 Some of the problems between the


31Ibid., p.84.
black Mississippi veterans and white students arose in part from their radically dissimilar background and values. Mississippi summer thus represented a critical juncture in the evolution of the student movement. It marked SNCC's last attempt to accomplish its ends within the established institutions. The case in point was the Democratic Party in conjunction with the liberal-labour union. It marked the last stage before SNCC renounced non-violence and turned toward black power. It exposed incompatibility among many black and white radicals. Finally, Mississippi summer experiment contributed to the radicalization of visiting white students—some of whom returned to Berkeley and launched the Free Speech Movement.  

Students for a Democratic Society was originally the Student Section of the League for Industrial Democracy (LTD), a well established social-democratic organization founded by Jack London and Upton Sinclair. A joint LTD-SDS brochure printed during the 1959-60 school year stated that "the function of SDS on the college campus is to raise issues, to ask the pertinent questions", about social problems, although on some situations it (SDS) takes direct action. For the most part SDS members were students in eastern campuses. Until 1960 SDS generally followed the parent organization's quasi-activist, educational approach. Then the sit-

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8Ibid., p.86.
9Ibid., p.109.
ins erupted in the South, then the campaign for equal rights captured the imagination of the students. In 1960, SDS arranged a conference on human rights at the university of Michigan in the Spring. In a four day series of meetings and workshops, those in attendance learned confrontation techniques helpful in battling discrimination on their own campuses. SDS was known as the Northern counterpart of SNCC. In 1960-61 as SNCC established its independence from established civil rights groups, SDS became increasingly sensitive about the degree of control exercised over its affairs by LTD. SDS claimed that between 1960 and 1962 the League interfered with its operation by discharging staff members and curtailing programmes. By extending the scope of its influence to include other youth organizations, SDS hoped to coordinate activities among these groups in much the same way as SNCC has initially functioned. The following SDS statement emphasizes the significance of its relation with other groups.

Its (SDS) approach to political action has made a bridge between organizations and movements. It is developing a task force in Washington around the Congress and liberal organizations. It has functioning and fraternal relations with the A National Student Association, the Young Democrats, the Campus Group of Americans for Democratic Action. The YPSL (Young Peoples Socialist League), Student Peace Union, the Young Christian Students, and Student Religious Liberals, SNCC, Core and Campus NACCP not only in national level but with the day to day programming by the local units of these groups.  

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³SDS, 'Relationship between SDS and LTD', (Position Paper from the SDS national executive committee to the LTD Executive Committee, 12 July 1962, 112 East, 19 Street, New York, N.Y.), p.11.
SDS was joined and organized by Young People whose experience with the American electoral process, the Communist Party, and the American trade unions led them to be deeply mistrustful of bureaucratic structure and of representative democratic forms...

It was common among us to see the United States and USSR basically equivalent evils and the common denominator factor was the centralized bureaucratization of both societies where politics took place without "publics" without responsibility.\(^6\)

In the opinion of the SDS, the self-perpetuating autonomy of government bureaucracies and invisible oligarchic minorities not only denied American citizens access to, and control over, the governmental apparatus and their own destinies but also resulted in misplaced national priorities. SDS believed that billion of dollars were spent unnecessarily for defense, leaving the more pressing domestic problems unresolved.

SDS grew out of the feeling that SDS could tie together under one heading and one office an analysis which saw civil rights, poverty and defense expenditures intertwined. The analysis said that poverty and discrimination were inextricably linked, that defense expenditures not only bred war but also domestic slums and hunger.\(^7\)

Liberals were criticized by SDS for either abetting or tacitly accepting the condition of man and the State in early 1960s. SDS knew in 1961 that mere


\(^7\)Barry Blue Stone, "Guns 2, Butter 2, A Program for SDS", *Campus Voice*, 30 January 1966.
opposition to accepted approaches and solution to social problems would not mobilize a new Left. For radical reform, new agencies and programmes were required. Many students in SDS agreed with C. Wright Mills that a New Left could depend for radical action not on American workers but on themselves and fellow intellectuals who were educationally equipped to seek and find new solutions. Therefore, in order to 'change' society, a New Left had to draw "on what remains of the adult labour, academic and political communities, not just revolt in despair against them and the world they have designed for us". At the end of 1961, SDS concentrated on formulating a programme and a social analysis. The programme would be,

radical democratic designed to entice apathetic youth to join a New Left. It would help develop a movement for university reform; educate students about social, economic and political problems, promoting participation in ongoing civil right, civil liberties and ultimately progress these movements into unified progressive force in American politics."

To the SDS collective mind, America's defense posture was illogical in the light of the apparent Soviet disinterest in building a first strike arsenals. They argued that the American military response has been more effective in deterring the growth of democracy than communism and had fostered suspicion, suppression and stiff military resistance to the United States in the Soviet Union. While deploring the

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*SDS, SDS Announcement: Statement of Aims, pp.1-2.
absence of personal and institutional freedom Soviet Union, SDS argued that the Soviets were not inherently expansionists, aggressive or prepared to dominate mankind by military means. SDS took the risk to promote values and social programmes sacrificed or endangered by the military-industrial complex.

The complex was criticized for spending on defense rather than giving support to underdeveloped countries in Asia, Latin America, and for opposing Third World revolutions in Laos, Guatemala, Cuba, Egypt and Iran. SDS presented a programme for Radical change to promote welfare legislation and end the Cold War, arguing that a reversal of foreign policy assumption and funding would radically affect domestic priorities and ease international tensions. Public spending would abolish squalor, terminate neglect, and establish an environment for people to live in with dignity and creativeness.

Extending its multi-issues approach, SDS planned a University reform project for the 1962-63 academic year. At this juncture, its purpose was not fundamentally to challenge university authority but to begin the essential task of giving political education to a student in SDS ideas and beliefs.

Its objective included:

A stimulation of basic research and discussion by students on the present nature of university education in America, the dominant values and purposes of students pursuing that education, the role of
the university in the society...potential of the university to act as an agent of social change.

The direction of student action, independently or in conjunction with faculty support, to the task of remaking university into an institution that is dedicated to and concerned with the pursuit of scholarship, education for social responsibility, transmission of domestic values and the development of creative capacities of American youth."

Even though SDS had stressed the strategic necessity of forming a coalition with prominent elements of the liberal labour nexus within the democratic party, the likelihood of such coalition was questionable by June 1963 SDS convention. A revised SDS outlook was expressed in an important position paper entitled America and the New Era. The document accused of Kennedy administration of engineering a society where debate is diminishing and the opportunities to express opposition and create ferment are declining.

It is clear that in the present situation, the New Frontier can not solve the three most pressing needs our time: disarmament, abundance with social justice, and complete racial equality. The tokenism of administration with respect to unemployment, automation, poverty and social stagnation is clear. No programme has been offered which can cope with these problems...tokenism can not bring racial equality to a society which is radically segregated, nor can it meet the increasing demands of the Negro Freedom Movement."

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It had become increasingly clear to SDS -- especially in view of the difficulties SNCC had encountered in the South that something more than moral persuasion was necessary to push labour and other liberal groups into militant action.

New constituencies are brought into political motion, as new voices are heard in the arena, as new centres of power are generated, existing institutions will begin to feel the pressures of change, and a new dynamic national social and political life could come into being.\(^a\)

The need for the students to come out became evident. Intellectuals from the universities were also appealed.

America and the New Era endorsed local insurgent actions that included mass direct action and voter registration campaign among Negroes, political reform movements directed against democratic machines. SDS described it broadly as,

\[\text{efforts to initiate organized protests in depressed areas, and urban slums, to organize new union workers, to focus reform political clubs and candidates on issues and programmes directly relevant to the urban poor and to involve slum-dwellers directly in political efforts.}\]

SDS had concluded that the job of white radicals was to provide the civil-rights movement with white allies who would positively reinforce the power of

\(^a\) Ibid., pp.19-20.

\(^b\) Ibid., p.20.
Negro demands. And what better allies are there than those organized around their own needs and demands, a functional and not merely charitable alliance?

The dream of new inter-racial Populism was hard to resist. ... an inter-racial movement of the poor, in which white too were demanding decent homes and incomes, could not help out but demonstrate that civil-rights acts which merely outlawed segregation of accommodation facilities missed the essential point.4

SDS activists hoped that a successful movement or organize the white poor in the North would enable the white students to acts a catalyst in expanding the operational center for they had a political objective in mind -- that is acquisition of power, convinced that poverty continued because of the power lessness of the poor.

SDS established Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), the administrative vehicle for community organizing an Washington in 1963. Momentum increased in January 1964 as organizers were despatched to Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Louisville, New York, Philadelphia and Trenton. Leading organizers stressed the over-riding importance of tailoring a programme to meet the circumstances of a particular community, insisting that until the poor and unemployed combined into centers of power to press for real change, neither local living conditions, crime rates, nor the quality of secondary education will improve, SDS planned eventually to convert the community unions into alternative power

centers to which people could entrust their allegiance instead of looking into the civil officials.

ERAP, opposed the administration of the government's war on poverty programme in Chicago by canvassing areas to be affected and asking potential recipients to demand local control. However, there was no ideological framework which SDS wanted to impose. When it was asked if socialism was not needed to alleviate the poor, SDS leader replied, "We don't want to tell the poor what the solutions to their problems should be".43

To Todd Gitllin, the community organizing programme was very important.

The Government war on poverty is also a war on us, and unless radicals were involved in community organizing -- beginning now -- beginning yesterday -- then surely the organizational managerial society will triumph.44

But serious problems haunted the programme. ERAP organizers criticized inadequate staff preparations that had resorted in an inefficient utilization of summer volunteers.

Casey Hayden, an SDS activist in Chicago remarked,

I don't think anything like a summer project should be considered for Chicago again unless fulltime staffs willing to spend a great deal of


44Ibid.
time planning how to use students and training them when they arrive.\textsuperscript{47}

Inroads had been made on a street by street basis, but no project had succeeded in starting an inter-racial movement of the poor and no project had succeeded in organizing a community. But in New York the organizers reported they were subjected to police harassment, arbitrary arrests, and plagued by eviction notice by fearful landlords. Finally ERAP demanded that actual political power be shifted from city has to inner city neighbourhood. According to Richard Rothstein,

Whether ERAP was justified in concluding after so short a trial that the ranks of labour and liberalism could not be galvanized by the power of our example and that the power structure was totally inflexible and unresponsive to demands from below is a question that must remain unanswered.\textsuperscript{48}

By December 1964, in national council meetings, the SDS leaders had decided that ERAP and community organizing did not fit into the over all SDS programme. Students were disinclined to join ERAP in large numbers or for long periods of time in 1964-65, thus there was a loss of enthusiasm for ERAP among SDS members by 1965.


In fact by allowing ERAP to develop separately from SDS based campus unity, SDS hierarchy was faced with a situation in which non-students were organizing members while the regular membership of SDS remained full-time students. The period of transformation of SDS affected other programmes than ERAP, like peace, research and education project. The dissolution of ERAP, reorientation of other programmes contributed to the transformation of SDS from 1964-66, moving to left of the political position.

Reversing its earlier position of conditional acceptance of American society, SDS repudiated all American institutions. SDS adopted a platform primarily concerned with Vietnam war, American foreign polity, and the Third world rather than domestic social change. SDS was unable to decide on a programme, attractive to the membership and conducive to achieve new goals, and an influx of new members exceeded the SDS hierarchy to assimilate them. AT the same time SDS abandoned its anti-totalitarian position and accepted the membership and the influence of the communist progressive labour party. Thus, in practice SDS rejected the original concept of participatory democracy and declaimed the current variations of Marxism, Leninism.  

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2.3 Post-1967 Radicals or Move: From University Strike to Street Fighting

On 1st January 1966 the League for Industrial Democracy permanently severed its relationship with SDS because the latter had rescinded its constitutional stand to exclude "totalitarians" from membership and insistence on Co-operation with the communists in anti-Vietnam protests. By 4th February the My Second Movement voted to dissolve and, enter into SDS announcing to add a new element to the Movement by introducing its perspective to SDS. "Our goal is the development of a mass socialist student movement in America".

Disciplined members of the communist old Left entered SDS underscored the failure of effective SDS leadership, especially, in view of a swelling membership insufficiently educated in political theory and antagonistic to elected authority. Most SDS members however were less pre-occupied with internal problems than with the Vietnam war.

Richard Flacks discussed the ambivalent effects on the war on New Left in the New Left Notes,

The Vietnam war has made the movement much more sensitive to the international scene, but has rendered the domestic strategy of the left largely irrelevant, has increased the size and heterogeneity of the


movement but thereby diluted the possibilities for effective political dialogue and decision making, increased the militancy and alienation of the Left, but therefore distorted its capability for rational political analysis, made the new Left an important source of political opposition in the United States, but one lacking a definite set of strategic goals around which national programmes can be organized.  

In spite of internal structural difficulties and theoretical unpreparedness to cope with the old Left, SDS approved a programme to protest selective service examination for the draft, set for 14th May.

SDS devised a counter-examination of its own. On 14th May, the First Day of selective examination almost all the 400,000 draft age college students of 800 colleges, also received SDS's "National Vietnam Examination" composed of eighteen multiple choice questions and answers complete with sources of information. The questions and answers were intended to arouse doubt in the reader's mind about the legitimacy of the United State's Vietnam policy, class ranking, one aspect of selective service classification, stirred even greater resentment in New Left circles than the examination. Draft status was to be determined by the grades, a male student earned in the University classes. Those with low grades were subject to immediate draft, where high grade students were deferred from military services

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until graduation. The issue of draft deferment elicited much interest in the university campuses.

The Council meeting of some at Michigan university called for the vision of radical America. The posture is clear from the views of Paul Booth, the National Secretary at that time:

Our Movement has changed its priorities dramatically at a number of Junctures, in Spring 1964, we transformed SDS from an intellectual center into a community organizing campaign. In Spring 1965, SDS became the leader of Student anti-war Movement. This year we have moved to make it a radical political action organization with a broad programme.\textsuperscript{35}

SDS in 1966 continued the tendency to organize themselves around the questions that affected their own lives. To politicize the new-comers who lacked political and philosophical background Radical Education Project (REP) was started. The thrust for action was so imminent that criticism about the internal operation of SDS was dismissed in December 1966 Council meetings.

SDS simply was not interested in talking about organizational problems or about political analysis. Neither ideological clarity nor organizational stability are fundamentally important for SDS. What counts is that which creates movement. What people can do with their lives and bodies.\textsuperscript{34}


One of the many problems that deterred SDS from leading an American New Left was the altered character of SDS its membership. Since 1965, a sizeable number of new members had lacked the intellectual interest, political perception and revolutionary Zeal necessary to develop a workable alternative social system. Carl Davidson, Vice-President of SDS from 1966-1967 maintained that these members were motivated more by action than by ideas. They would appear at demonstrations and then withdraw into their own worlds until some other protest was called.

They are usually the young members, freshman and sophomores, rapidly moving into the hippy, Bob Dylan syndrome, staunchly anti-intellectual and rarely read something unless it comes from the underground press syndicate. They have never heard of C. Wright Mills or even Bob Moses, nor do they care to find out. In one sense, they have no politics, they turn out regularly for demonstrations. They are morally outraged about the war, cops, racism, poverty, their parents, the middle-class, and authority figures in general. They long for a community and feel their own isolation acutely, which is probably why they still with SDS.²

Despite such divisiveness, members of the typical SDS chapter tolerated, each other politically on their mutual distaste for American society. The SDS and SNCC had experienced certain tactical reverses does not explain the indiscriminate repudiation of American society by New Left activities. The fact is that many of them lacked revolutionary self-discipline and were inept in political analysis. The old Left had understood the necessity of retaining many features of an advanced

²Carl Davidson, "National Vice President's Report: Has SDS Gone to Pot", New Left Notes, 3 February 1967, p.4.
technological society while changing the basis of ownership and nature of political authority.

Herbert Marcuse nourished the seed of elitism in SDS by doubting the capability of most Americans to deciding what was best for them and by downgrading their cultural preferences. For Marcuse, American society was totalitarian -- "a non terroristic economic-technological coordination which operates through manipulation of needs by vested interests". Multimedia advertising has mesmerized the average citizen to the point of mindless consumption, with the results that most Americans were incapable of making the decisions that shaped their lives independent of the political economic interests that sought subtly to rearrange choice and preferences for self-serving ends. As long as citizens were, "indoctrinated and manipulated" they did not know their own minds, and the answer to the question what their true needs were "can not be taken as their own".  

Marcuse contended that the negative character of human nature might prevent citizens from making the right decision in free election even if they received accurate information from the government before hand.

The weakness and ignorance of people would cause them to be the subject to the powers that be, under such circumstances even a free

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vote could be a vote of servitude, and a democracy could become a system of domination and exploitation by consent."

Many members of SDS agreed with Marcuse that they lived or would probably live, an intolerable one dimensional existence, but they felt that at the same time his revolutionary theories were too pessimistic. One result of this acceptance of many of Marcuse's critical postulates but dissatisfaction with his practical conclusions was SDS's sudden interest in a "new working class theory". The theme of participation and control, the theme of key note of SDS's programme for the university was utilized to induce newly graduate students to use their professional position for revolutionary purposes.

Meanwhile, the students anti-war movement, of which SDS was an important part, was internally divided over the question of tactics. The initial dispute arose when SDS had decided vigorously supporting mammoth anti-war demonstrations on the ground that they were ineffective in halting war. A disagreement over anti-draft tactics that arose in 1967 ultimately wakened the overall effectiveness of students anti-war movement. The principal antagonists were national SDS and a group of activists who called themselves "The Resistance", though in some instances they enjoyed a dual membership and shared a mutual respect. The motivation for this self-sacrifice was complex. The young men had the courage of their conviction that

"Ibid., p.12."
the war was wrong and should be opposed, and they would not remain safely ensconced in the university sanctuary while the poor, the black and young working men went to Vietnam in their place. Politically, the Resistance hoped that enough students would surrender their deferments and submit to the judicial process to clog its machinery, to fill the prisons and create a national furore causing people to question the legitimacy of the draft, American foreign policy and the state itself. On 15th April 1967, 175 students burnt their draft cards. A number of SDS regional councils and many local chapters voted against endorsing the 15 April march chiefly to them it was another conventional anti-war demonstration. According to Carl Davidson, the induction centre was the place for disruption and proselytizing against the war.

Anti-Draft Organizing moves from protest activity to activity that takes on more and more of the characteristics of a seditors resistance movement. Direct action at induction centers and court rooms begins to desanctify those American institutions oppressing people both at home and abroad.*

Finally the disagreement that grew between the SDS and the Resistance was based on SDS's denial that "the burning of draft cards was a political act and the beginning of political movement".*

*Carl Davidson, "Proxis makes perfect", in our Fight is here: Essays on Draft Resistance (Distributed by SDS, 1668 West Madison, Chicago, Illinois, 0660612, 1967), p.3.

In The New Radicals in the Multiversity, a position paper by Carl Davidson published a few weeks after the conference adjourned. Davidson applied the concept of student power and the new working class to specific circumstances found in the universities. In a plea for student power, he denounced the universities for specializing in occupational training and prevailing middle class culture instead of developing "independent minded" critics. Though the term student power was admittedly 'vague and undefined" Davidson contended that the rebellion of college students over the issue of participatory democracy and worker control provided the best approach for revolt in the United States.60

Despite SDS's re-emphasis on student power, the new working class, and anti-draft unions, as 1967 came to a close. None of these ideas and programme had sparked a national movement. At a National Council meeting held from 6-8 October, planning sessions failed to produce concrete programmes centred on either local issues or anti-imperialism. In a speech on 27 October, Carl Davidson stated that the "possibility of peaceful change in America had died" and observed further than the broad objective of SDS -- the ambition to sanctify legitimate authority -- to disrupt

and dismantle existing institutions negated its possibility, concluding bleakly, "The
time tells me what we have to do this time is to destroy". 61

The SDS leadership had failed to recognize that for most SDS members the
essence of radicalism was taking part in anti-war marches and demonstrations. It was
too late, however, to recoup the past.

Adding to SDS's vulnerability at the end of 1967, the posts of President and
Vice-President had been eliminated and replaced by a "Troika" elected by the
national council, the national secretary, the inter-organizational secretary, the
internal education secretary. These secretaries headed the national office, which also
had a restricted number of other staff personnel. The national interim committee,
originally conceived as a supervisory body over the National Office, was
downgraded as "too hierarchical and bourgeois". hence the national council was the
only body left capable of overseeing and restraining the national office. But by this
time individual SDS members, representing no one at national council meetings. 62

“Editorial, “Speech at Annual Guardian Meeting : Carl Davidson Outlines Four-

“Richard Rothstein, "Representative Democracy in SDS", New University
Conference Newsletter, 21 April 1971, pp.4-5.
Therefore the effectiveness of both the National Council and the SDS chapters were destroyed, leaving the National Office as the only central SDS unit to face the progressive Labour Party.

The year 1968 began with a dispute between the SDS national office and the progressive Labour faction within the organization over Clavert's and Davidson's proposal for ten days of anti-war activities in April, which the national office supported.

Progressive labour faction however, was opposed to ten days Resistance Programme and offered an alternative a 'base building' programme aimed at cultivating a worker-student alliance. Many SDS chapters rejected Davidson's and Caever's proposition for "Ten Days to Shake an Empire" as an attempt by the national office to exert its authority over them. Although decentralization and independence were traditional in SDS, the influx of new members since 1965 made overall planning extremely difficult and reinforced the autonomy of the chapters. National leadership problems were aggravated by the attitude of new members, who were motivated not by strictly political considerations but either by an emotional reaction against the war or by a cultural rejection of social values. This chaotic state of affairs so exasperated that the Editorial Staff of one New Left periodical that it
concluded SDS was not a political party at all but a "flag connivance" for radical students wishing to deviate from "the values of actual surrogate parents". 63

It was at this time while SDS was structurally decomposing and being undermined by PL ideologically -- that the organization became enamoured with the Black Panther Party. In 1968, each group having vied to absorb the other, the Panthers supplanted SNCC as the best known organization of black radicals in the country.

The Black Panther Party was officially organized on 15 October, 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California. Newton introduced a programme comprising ten provisions, including comprehensive welfare benefits for the black people, exemption from military service and a demand for their own national destiny. In addition to being devotees of Mao, the Panthers based their decision making on the Leninist concept of "democratic centralism".

While National SDS concerned itself with the Black Panthers, an insurrection paralyzed the normal functions of Columbia University and polarized its faculty and students body. On 30th April 1968 approximately one thousand policemen entered the campus and forced student demonstrators out of the buildings they had occupied for a week. In the process of clearing the campus, more than 700 students were

arrested and 148 people were injured. The revolt had been instigated by the campus SS whose policies were governed at the time by members who believed in politics of confrontation.

SDS had only a small following at Columbia but it capitalized on issues that concerned a much larger proportion of the student body. SDS had also discovered that a fruitful tactic in protesting the Vietnam war was to attack the IDA, an independent institution that evaluated weapons system, did other work for the Department of Defence and was supported by the Columbia Board of Trustees, Mark Rudd, the Campus leader of SDS however indicated that these were the means rather than the ends for which the insurrection was launched.

It was an insurrection against the repressive structure of the society, specifically against racism and imperialism. The essence of the matter is that we are out for social and political revolution, nothing less. There is no shock value except that of waking people up to the fact there is a revolutionary movement in existence and that we, hundreds of students of an elitist university, are involved in the struggle for liberation. Many liberals still do not understand this struggle, still believe that the real is to get a few reforms in the university structure...in effect, the strike is a protest against the entire society.44

The Columbia Rebellion appeared to prove the efficacy of forceful radical tactics at a time when SDS and the New Left were at the Nadir of their fortunes, but the ten days of anti-war demonstrations in April were a disappointing failure. Liberal

students who had supported SDS since the early 1960s were campaigning for senator Eugene McCarthy or Robert Kennedy. Contenders for Democratic presidential nomination until the Columbia insurrection, Senator McCarthy's electoral campaign had replaced SDS as the major political force on campuses through the nation.

From the militants' viewpoint, Columbia was a triumph because it regenerated ADS, radicalized SDS members and other participating students, and brought into the open a penchant or violence which until that time had for the most part been expressed verbally. Mark Rudd epitomized this inclination by remarking, "I think every one should have a right to go and talk to an interviewer, but if the Dow guy comes, ...him and napalm him". For many young radicals, obscenity was the essence of verbal insolence. It symbolized not just an absence of respect for institutional authority, but that social authority no longer existed for radicals using the phrase.

The psychological meaning and justification of violence was explained by Dotson Rader, another participant in Columbia events: "In a country whose system emasculates young men, street disorders, seizures of buildings, dislocations, confrontations, the tempting of violence had become rituals of manhood; violence

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"John Hoffman, "Interview with Mark Rudd", Los Angeles Free Press, 11-17 October 1968, p.1."
was wanted, I hungered for it to prove myself". The behaviour of SDS leaders revealed not only a profound lack of respect for authority in this case the man in charge of the university -- but also species of manipulative tactics used to achieve objectives. As Mark Rudd describes, the tactics particularly concerned the faculty:

We proposed over and over that the faculty join the strike, adopting our six demands and putting itself in opposition to the illegitimate racist, pro-war administration, very few "socialist or Left wing scholars are willing to throw in with the lot of some upstart Blacks and half crazed nihilist-anarchist students... In a sense, however, our tactics towards the faculty were not all wrong. We did use them as a buffer between US and the administration for six days. This may have been crucial.

The issue of the relationship between workers and the students received more attention as a result of short lived fraternity between the students and the workers in France during a student Revolt in May. The abuses and the antiquated conditions in the French University System were notorious, and French universities were over crowded to a degree unknown in the United States. Another sources of irritation among the Left leaning students was the scarcity in French universities of young men and women from the working class families. For many students in social sciences who passed their final examinations, moreover, there was lucrative, secure job waiting after graduation. Daniel Cohn Bendit a young radical leader of the revolt,

*Dotson Rader, I Ain't March in Anymore, pp.117-18.

contended that the cry for reform had caused rebellion. Professor Raymond Aron, a well-known French scholar argued that the revolt had two purposes, the establishment of student power in the universities and the instigation of a national political revolution. Aron maintained that the revolt did not begin spontaneously or with the idea of university reform rather it was entertained and activated by students and teachers to the left of Communist Party.

The new interest in a student worker alliance fostered by the French Revolt resulted in an "international assembly of revolutionary student movements" held in Columbia University from 18 to 23 September 1968. Student Radicals from France, England, Germany, Italy and other Western nations agreed that students should form insurgent alliances with members of the working class, but the conference adjourned before the participants could decide how this objective might be accomplished.

As a result of France experience, the stock of the progressive Libber Party, advocates of workers, students alliance within SDS ascended, while the national office was placed temporarily on the defensive.

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"Daniel Cohn Bendit and Gabriel Cohn Bendet, Obsolete Communism, pp.30-35.

"Raymond Aron, "The Elusive Revolution" 6, 35, 36, 52 and 53.

P.L. introduced a "national student labour action project" (SLAP), especially a reiteration of its case for a student worker alliance. The document held that New Left activists were isolated from the majority of students and workers and recommended a Union of students and workers to forge a more powerful revolutionary movement. American imperialism has arisen from the explanation of the working class. Therefore, a student movement must be part of the revolutionary struggle of the working people.

In March 1968, an alliance between the Peace and Freedom Party and Black Panthers Party was announced. The former agreed to endorse the Panthers' ten point programme and to help free Huey Newton from jail by whatever means necessary.

In 1968 the "Yipiees", a synthesis of political activist and the hippie, competed with Eugene McCarthy and the Peace and Freedom Party in distracting attention from SDS. Until the beginning of 1967, the New Left movement was inherently political in terms of purpose, programmes and personal motivations. The human "Be-in' staged in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, off the Haight-Ashbury area, in January 1967 brought another dimension to the movement, for on that occasion the "hippie tribes gathered together for the first time. The word "hip" used predominantly by the Black Jazz musicians to denote some one who was worldly wise with a modern or advanced flavour. Hippies were dropouts, primarily from the
middle classes, successors to the Beatniks but distinguished by a new motive--experimentation with psychedelic drugs.

Despite the esoteric, apolitical character of the hippies, their complete estrangement from the norms of straight society placed them in total opposition to that society. In February 1968, Rubin, Abbie Foffman, Paul Krassner and Edsanders announced the formation of Youth International Party (Yippies) as a merger between the Free-wheeling hippies and politically motivated revolutionaries. Rubin knew that more and more young people were drifting into the hippie scene and he wanted to capitalize on its potential. By borrowing the clothes style, and attitudes of the hippies to promote a new political party, they were assured publicity and followers, but they also flurried belong recognition the hippie vision of a society populated with individuals kindly disposed towards one another.

To Yippie leaders rock music became "the most vital revolutionary force on Earth". Culture was seen as a battle field, the significance of running away from home, dropping out, and turning on was political. Abbie Huffman explained,

What we are for, quite simply, is a total revolution. The old system is dying all around US and we joyously come out in the streets to dance on its grave. Without free stores, liberated buildings, communes, peoples parks, dope, free

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7John Sinclair, "Rock and Role Dope", Fifth Estate, 26 December 1968, 8 January 1969, p.5.
bodies and our music, we’ll build our society in the vacant lots of the old and we’ll do it by any means necessary. Right on.”

As for the future Jerry Rubin said:

People are asking us "what is your program?" I hand them a mets score card, or I tell them to check the yellow pages, "out programs there". ... Programs! The goal of revolution is to abolish programs and turn spectators into actors. It's a do-it-yourself revolution, and we'll work out the future as we go.

Between the SDS national council meetings in October and December, movement members outside the campus pondered certain fundamental issues. Julius Lister, probably the most original New Left writer, warned student activists that despite their rhetoric and ideological concern for the working class, the interests of student and workers were far apart. The worker thought about survival, the cost of milk, taxes, and the doctor bills, while the isolated student radical thought about love and political theory. One student radical steeped in community politics agreed with Lister, admitting that students had "no idea of the complexities" and pressure in the lives of average people and romanticized life as radicals as much as they had when they were liberals.

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77Abbic Hufman, Revolution for the Hell of it, p.114.
By the winter of 1968, the internecine war between Progressive Labour and its opponents had diverted attention from the substantive question and was enfeebling the spirit and administration of SDS. As the December National Council at Ann Arbor, Michigan, approached, the enmity between PL and the national office intensified. The PL dubbed them as anarchists. Contemptuous of baseless Guerrilla street action and the new working class strategy, PL accused the national office of identifying "doing your own thing" with revolution. Enemies of PL were confident that the faction would be resoundingly defeated at the December 26-31 national council meeting at Ann Arbor attended by near one thousand SDS members. To the surprise of the national office, PL's worker student alliance resolution was passed. PL attributed to this a growing number of SDS members who wished to be serious revolutionaries and who were disenchanted by the antics of the anarchist wing of SDS, maintaining secondly, that its workers students alliance offered a persuasive means to escape the isolation of the Student Movement. PL also condemned the isolated terrorist tactics of the street gangs while renewing its belief in orthodox revolutionary violence.

The National Council also passed a resolution on women at the December meeting. The Resolution demanding women liberation was motivated by women of SDS who complained of being taken for granted as typists, helpers and bed mates without being permitted, as a rule opportunities to attain positions of power within
Consistent with the national offices interest in subordinating SDS to the Third World, the document stated that "black working class women were the most oppressed group in society", and insisted that SDS must terminate the practice of male supremacy.

1969 - The Death of the Movement

In SDS final months, three major groups saw themselves as Revolutionary Vanguards in the United States. The national office of SDS, the students-workers alliance of the progressive labour party and the Black Panther Party. The No, PL and BPP were essentially general staff without armies, for neither the nation's students, youths, workers, nor the Black community believed in them. The national office and the Progressive Labour Party attacked one another in every subject. At the same time progressive labour increased its criticism of the Black Panther. Although PL endorsed violent Revolutions, it stated that the Panthers "ignore working class demands and concentrate on the question of self-defence and conduct themselves in semi-military fashion". PL and the Panthers each regarded itself as the foremost vanguard and singularly endowed to lead the Revolution. Therefore, PL did not spare the Panthers, accusing their chieftains of possessing a superficial

knowledge of Mao's thought and waging an indiscriminate war against the White people while abandoning the black community to direct all their resources toward Freeing Huey Newton.76

The significance of national office's position at the Austin conference held from 27-30 March was very important. The No had jettisoned the theories and programme of student power, anti-war resistance and the new working class in order to serve the Revolutions of the Third World people in the United States or abroad. Because of the influence of the Panthers and the PL, the No adopted stated, as well as Mao and Che Guevara, as its revolutionary heroes. Above all the reverence of Stalin symbolized SDS's final political and oral capitulations. This phenomenon was nourished in part by the PL's communist military and discipline and in part by SDS's isolation from genuinely democratic and humanitarian influences present in the American society.

The new authoritarianism was particularly visible at SDS's last annual convention held from 18 to 22 June at the Chicago Coliseum. Progressive Labour defeated the national office attempt to manipulate the convention from the podium, though by a narrow margin. On the second day of the convention, national office leaders like Bernadine Dohrn, Michael Klonsky and Mark Rudd agreed to

subordinate their theoretical difference to crush PL. PL members were scourged as "arm chair revolutionaries" unfit for a vanguard role, speakers asserted that "the Panthers are vanguards ....we have earned it with our blood."

The next day, the national office and its followers violated the SDS constitution by expelling the progressive labour caucus. The national office published a manifesto outlasting its revolutionary positions and the sins of PL.

1. We support the struggle of Black and Latin colonies within the US for national liberation, and we recognize those nations' right to self-determination; and

2. We support the struggle for national liberation of the people of South Vietnam, led by the national Liberation Front and the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government. We also support the Democratic government of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, as well as Democratic Republic of China, the Peoples Republic of Korea and Albania, and the Republic of Cuba, all waging fierce struggling against US imperialism. We support the right of all people to pick up the gun to free themselves from the brutal rule of US imperialism.

The Progressive Labour Party has attacked every revolutionary nationalist struggle of the Black and the Latin People in the US, as being racist and reactionary. For example they have attacked open admissions, black studies, community control of police and schools, the Black Panther Party and their "breakfast for children" program, and the League of Revolutionary Black workers.

The Progressive Labour Party has attacked Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Revolutionary government of Cuba—all peoples struggle for freedom against US imperialism.

The Progressive Labour Party because of its position and practices, is objectively racist, anti-communist and reactionary. PLIP has also in principle and practice refused to join the struggle against male supremacy. It has no place in SDS, an organization of revolutionary youth."

With the Progressive Labour and No both claiming the little SDS, matters were further complicated by a division of the national office into two sub-groups Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) I or the weatherman led by Bernadine Dorn and March Rudd and Revolutionary Youth Movement II (RYM II) led by Michael Koonsky. The perspective of RYM I was elaborated in the position paper ‘You Don't Need a Weather Man to know which way the wind blows. According to this document, the overriding concern of the revolution was conflict between US imperialism and the national liberation struggle being waged against it. The purpose of the revolution was the defeat of US "imperialism by world Communism. The Weather Man renounced the idea of bringing about the a revolution in the United States alone, solely for and by means of the working class. Instead white radicals

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should support the black liberation and international revolution led by a vanguard composed of Blacks.

RYM 11 led by Michael Klonsky, agreed with Weather Man that the principal revolutionary concern was the defeat of United States imperialism by oppressed colonies, including the Black colony in this country. In other respects however, they differed chiefly over the contention of RYM 11 that the proletariat, rather than Blacks of other Third World peoples would eventually be the leading revolutionary force. While this brought RYM 11 closer to PL's basic postulate, it criticized PL's dogmatic insistence that the movement chosen between the working class and third world peoples."

Despite RYM 11's intention to establish itself as a separate political entity, only RYM 11 and PL survived the 1969 convention. Today what remains of SDS is PL. The dismemberment of SDS in June 1969 was anti-climatic. Considering the nature of the New Left's transition after 1965, a Schism was inevitable. But the self-destruction of SDS altered the legacy of the New Left. The Weather Man ran amuck in the streets of Chicago and other American cities in late 1969 and then went underground, emerging from time to time to commit terrorist acts.

"Mike Klonsky, "Revolutionary Youth Movement 11", New Left Notes, 8 July 1969, pp.5, 8 & 9."