

Student Protests: A Threat and an Appeal*

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Even if a person were trying to, he could hardly avoid receiving information on student protest activities. Not only do newspapers, radio, and TV fairly scream out with protest stories almost daily, but a considerable amount of people's day-to-day conversation also includes some reference to the what, why, where, and when of the protest movements.

Opinions about these protests range widely. In attempting to describe "what" protests are, opinions range from a description of them as a "fad" which will soon pass away, to that of a movement which will eventually result in the complete change of higher education as we know it. The range of opinions about the "why" of student protests includes analyses of metabolic processes and theories of social evolution. Opinions about the "where" of protests involve focusing on the "multiversity" with its depersonalization and "identity-losses" to universities having "weak-kneed" and "lily-livered" administrators. Opinions of the "when" of the campus protests have included statements like, "They'll end after the elections," to, "We can count on something like this from now on."

In this article we will attempt to provide information which will enable the reader to develop more considered opinions as

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to the what, why, when, and where of student protest movements.

Data Collection

In doing this, we certainly do not claim to know many, much less all, of the answers to questions being raised. As sociologists we suffer from the fact that there is a considerable time lag between the time that problems are first encountered until the time that reliable information is provided which is based on solid, empirical research. Such is the case now; our research is not yet producing definitive answers to these problems. The information given here is based on an intensive analysis of scientific and nonscientific articles in journals, newspapers, magazines, and books; and interviews with educators, dissidents, right-wingers, and legislators throughout the past year. Nevertheless, the views presented here remain relatively nonscientific and subjective even though a broad spectrum of facts and opinions have been encountered.

To understand these student protest movements, it is necessary to understand something about the students themselves, and particularly how they differ from students of the past—from us!

For the most part, they have never known hunger, prolonged pain, physical infirmity, hard labor, lack of clothing, inadequate housing, or lack of job opportunities, at least until they became part of the protest movements. They have never been in a depression, cranked a car, fought in a war, seen anyone die, held a permanent job, painted a house, milked a cow, saddled a horse, or eaten vegetables they helped grow in a garden. Hence, their background of experience is such that you might conclude that they have lived in a different world from most of us.

They are impatient. They have grown up in the jet age when minutes can bring about as much change as weeks did in the past; when fifteen minutes can bring a missile from Russia to their own back yard. They have grown up in a time when sufficient energy is available to literally move mountains, to send men to the moon, and to destroy the world.

They live in places where sufficient wealth and know-how exist to adequately clothe, house, feed, educate, and care for all people, *and they know it*. Through television, radio, paper-

backs, newspapers, magazines, and their own travels, they are better informed of the world around them than any student generation in history has ever been. Not only are today's students more aware of the world around them, they are more involved in it than previous generations were. The entire world is their concern, even more perhaps than the United States was our concern when we were students.

Moreover, they have a greater commitment to solving the world's problems than students of the past have had. Why? Because they believe their own existence and that of others to be in real jeopardy unless the world's problems are solved. They want to solve these problems now, today! Why not wait until they are out of college to solve these problems? Because being in school is the only real existence; the only life they remember has been one in which they have been in school.

Moreover, the student today has recognized, perhaps more than any of the rest of us, that today's colleges and universities has vast actual and potential power for making and changing society. Student activists feel, therefore, that they can accomplish more by remaining a part of the university scene than by leaving it.

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), for example, in the "Port Huron Statement" have said:

The university is located in a permanent position of social influence. Its educational function makes it indispensable and automatically makes it a crucial institution in the formation of social attitudes. In an unbelievably complicated world, it is the central institution for organizing evaluation and transmitting knowledge. . . . Social relevance, the accessibility to knowledge, and internal openness—these together make the university a potential base and agency in the movement of social change.

The "what" of student protests might be described then as attempts to solve problems of local and worldwide interest by using the universities as a change vehicle, and to accomplish these changes through violence, actual or threatened.

Determining the "why" of any social movement as complex as that of the student protests is no easy task. One of the factors responsible for the student protests is the active support given by Communists, of both the Moscow and Peking variety.

GOALS AND MEANS OF THREE RADICAL GROUPS

(compiled from their official publications)

Students for Democratic Society (SDS)

Goals

I. General

- A. Destroy American society
- B. Participate actively
- C. Regard nothing as sacred
- D. Cut through the significance and meaning of policy statements
- E. Disengage oneself from all institutional concerns

II. Disorder

- A. Disturb the peace
- B. Disarm the police
- C. Tear apart the institutions
- D. Develop guerilla forces for urban areas

III. Civil Rights

- A. End racism
- B. Defend the right of black people to defend and liberate themselves by *any* means necessary

IV. Military Affairs

- A. Support the people's struggle in Vietnam
- B. Hinder the American war effort

V. Government

- A. People should have democratic powers in all major institutions
- B. Government will listen to the needs of the people, not big business that controls it

VI. Education

- A. End the grading system

Means

I. General

- A. Wrest control of the editorial process from administrative bureaucracy
- B. Contact allies in labor and civil rights and other liberal sources off the campus

II. Disorder

- A. Set up barricades
- B. Fire Molotov cocktails
- C. Jam radio equipment
- D. Drop bombs down manholes and plumbing systems
- E. Halt vehicles causing traffic problems
- F. Demonstrate individual dissent by use of questions, speeches, and all kinds of heckling

III. Civil Rights

No specific means indicated

IV. Military Affairs

- A. Disrupt draft boards by registering under false names so federal agents will lose time tracking down the problem
- B. Picket recruiting areas
- C. Hold war crime trials for recruiters
- D. Disrupt recruiters by getting tables next to theirs and causing a rucus
- E. Place war crime and other dramatic posters at recruiting sites or training classrooms
- F. Remove recruiters by force, fear, or threat
- G. Make appointments with recruiters to harass, debate, and take up time

V. Government

Pick public fights with welfare workers

VI. Education

- A. Start trash-can fires in high schools and set off the alarms

Black Panthers

Goals

I. General

We want freedom now

II. Military

- A. We want all black men exempt from military service
- B. We want peace

III. Economic

- A. We want land—forty acres apiece

- B. We want bread

- C. We want decent housing
- D. We want clothing
- E. We want full employment
- F. We want an end of exploitation by the white man

IV. Political

- A. We want to determine the destiny of the black community
- B. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people
- C. We want black juries from black communities for black trials
- D. We want justice

V. Education

- A. We want an education that teaches us our true history
- B. We want to know our place in this society

(SDS continued)

- B. Achieve "student power"
- C. Disrupt the educational system

GOALS AND MEANS OF THREE RADICAL GROUPS (compiled from their official publications)

Black Panthers

Means

I. General

Achieve our goals by any means

II. Military

Refuse to fight for a government that does not protect us

III. Economic

- A. Make federal government responsible for giving every man employment and a guaranteed income
- B. Put means of production in the hands of the community, not in the hands of big business
- C. Put land and housing in co-operatives

IV. Political

- A. Maintain the right to separate under provision of the constitution
- B. Organize black self-defense groups dedicated to defend the black community
- C. Bear arms
- D. Free all blacks from jails—they were imprisoned by biased judges and juries

V. Education

Organize youth groups for indoctrination sessions

(SDS continued)

- B. Disrupt meetings of student body officers
- C. Win a majority of the seats in government elections
- D. Boycott classes
- E. Get student teaching assistants to strike
- F. Instigate mass demonstrations
- G. Instigate sit-ins
- H. Make appointments with university officials to hinder their work
- I. Check out all the library books to hinder library function
- J. Make debate and controversy the common style for educational life

Hippies

Goals

I. General

- A. Promote nonviolence
- B. Oppose acquisition of material goods
- C. Promote complete freedom of expression
- D. Explore meaningful experiences
- E. Advocate gentleness in human interaction
- F. Live for the moment
- G. Maintain a political stand
- H. Oppose asceticism
- I. Oppose academism but not intellectualism
- J. Include everyone in the realm of social interaction
- K. Participate, not spectate, particularly in the arts
- L. Support female equality—no double standard of morality, allow women to be as equally promiscuous as men

II. Military

End the war in Vietnam

III. Economic

- A. Do away with pay toilets
- B. Provide free food
- C. Use hippie guides on bus tours through Haight Ashbury
- D. Work should be a sideline, not the main time consumer
- E. Oppose technology, commercialism, and careerism
- F. Support communalism as a way to minimize cost of living
- G. Oppose commercialization of hippiedome by Madison Avenue

IV. Law and Order

- A. Oppose legislation prohibiting use of psychedelic drugs
- B. Maintain better communication with authorities
- C. Abolish laws preventing self-expression
- D. Oppose organization
- E. Support communalism
- F. Oppose bureaucratization

Means

I. General

- A. Give to persons who are in need
- B. Promote nudism, sexual promiscuity, and drug usage
- C. Participate in hallucinogenic experiences
- D. Heighten experiences through sensory experiments

II. Military

Use slogans like "make love not war"

III. Economic

- A. Protest by urinating and excreting in the gutter, on the grass, etc.
- B. Set up the equivalent of a Salvation Army soup kitchen
- C. Have stores where everything is free

IV. Law and Order

- A. Use of drugs such as LSD and Speed
- B. Talk things out with people
- C. Stage protests, such as the Golden Gate Park "strip-in"
- D. Combine efforts to prevent leadership from emerging
- E. Live in coop apartments, 20 to 30 in each apartment

The organized protest groups such as the SDS make full use of tried and proven communist tactics including the use of popular social reforms as a means of attracting "fellow travelers," "opportunists," and "dupes" to their programs of subversion, revolution, and violence.¹

The student who walks into an SDS meeting today hears Marxist rhetoric which is virtually indistinguishable from Radio Moscow. SDS organizers denounce "oppressors," "exploiters," and the "Al Capones who run this country." Goal orientations of the different "New Left" groups as given in their newspapers such as the *SDS New Left Notes*, *The Black Panther*, and *The Berkeley Barb* show remarkable similarities. Favoritism is shown to Peking communist styles rather than Moscow.

In *SDS New Left Notes* of October 7, 1968, they give a prescription for violence which has been closely followed:

Our strategy therefore must be an attack on the entire institution of the university, a challenge to its purpose and to its right to exist. Wherever possible, we must strive to shut it down—shut it down rather than "reform" it, because as long as the society exists in its present form the university can only function to achieve the ends we have just discussed.

The "ends" referred to happen to be the perpetuation of our society as we know it.

These tactics and concerns of the American student movement parallel those of student movements around the world. On the issue of university reform, the two major world confederations of student unions agree. The International Union of Students headquartered in Prague, Czechoslovakia, and the International Student Conference with offices in Leiden, Holland, have issued official statements urging their member national unions to engage aggressively in university reform.

University reform refers to greater participation by students in university governance, to reduction of control over students' private lives, and to the guarantee of freedom to criticize society and activate reforms without fear of penalty by the institution. Students in the countries where these student unions are powerful believe that the university should protect their groups from laws and prosecution when they do engage in "reform" activity which takes a revolutionary turn. In some

¹J. Edgar Hoover, *Masters of Deceit* (New York, 1958), pp. 81-96, 99-100.

Latin American universities where student power is unrestricted, we have the situation in which professors are afraid to assign grades which reflect students' actual performance for fear of personal harm.

These students strongly advocate that the university should be a sanctuary from the laws and authorized law agents. In many foreign countries they have virtually achieved this goal, and in our own country they are pushing toward this by demanding that university administrators keep "outside" law officers from entering the campus and give them amnesty during campus protests.

As important a factor in student protests as are the communist related and supported New Left activists organizations, they are not the only factors responsible for the protest movements. There are many other important contributing factors to the phenomena of student protests. These include concerns and frustrations which make it possible for students to be organized and activated on issues of local and nonlocal concern.

In the words of Dr. Robert H. Shaffer, former Dean of Students at Indiana University,

Society would be making a grave mistake if it were to dismiss current student unrest and student militancy as the work of a few troublemakers, political leftists, or disturbed individuals. While it is important not to exaggerate the total number involved, the fact is that many students are genuinely disturbed at a society which seems to them to be hypocritical, rigid, unresponsive, and incompetent in meeting its problems. (A paper presented at the 25th Annual Utah Conference on Higher Education, Dixie College, September 12, 1968)

Much of the tension which results in student protests arises from an awareness of the inconsistency, or, as they put it, hypocrisy existing in society. They have been taught that two and two make four, and this simple logic is appealing, even when applied to the most complex problems. They see a contradiction in the Judeo-Christian ethic which most accept in the United States and our treatment of one another. This contradiction has to do with the majority's espousal of, but non-practice of, values which emphasize the good of loving neighbors as ourselves, and of sharing our "all" with the poor. These young people maintain that our society has the capability of caring for its own, its sick and indigent, but does not ade-

quately do so, contrary to its own professed values. It is overly materialistic and refuses to share its wealth and energy. While this explanation is too simple to fully explain the economics of poverty in our complex society, there is truth in it.

Many students also find it difficult to understand why the U.S., a first-rate military power, should be challenged by a third-rate power, accept the challenge, and then not win the war. Moreover, they are disturbed by our professed commitment to racial equality and the fact that massive segregation still exists in public schools. They are repelled by what they see as pure hypocrisy in society's prohibition of marijuana, LSD, and other hallucinogenic drugs, and, at the same time, its toleration and even encouragement of drug use and abuse on a vast scale.

They know that the average family in the United States uses five "psycho-active" drugs a day and that many mothers' medicine cabinets contain diet pills, sleeping pills, sedatives, and tranquilizers; not to speak of other drugs and "pep" pills. In addition, caffeine is used to get parents off to a good start in the morning, nicotine and caffeine keep them going during the day, and a cocktail is their evening reward for standing on their own two feet and successfully fighting the battles of life. All this means that attitudes toward drug usage are learned from the family at a very early age. These young people tend to believe that alcohol and cigarettes are just as harmful as, if not more harmful than, marijuana. When we recall that there are over seven million alcoholics in the U.S., that alcohol is a factor in more than half of the fatal highway accidents, and that over 58,000 people died of lung cancer last year, they have a point.

When Dr. David Smith, medical director of the Haight-Ashbury Medical Clinic, visited the BYU campus in 1968, he pointed out this inconsistency. He spoke of a TV program on which he participated which was designed to give a message against drug usage. But, in giving the one anti-drug message, they gave five pro-drug messages through the "commercials" which "sponsored" the program.

Students are perplexed by the inconsistency of a society whose ideal standard of morality is so far removed from its actual standard. A song satirizing this theme has recently been very popular with teenagers: "The Harper Valley P.T.A."

Another factor which contributes to student unrest is the changed orientation of higher education. Students come to col-

lege expecting to learn answers to most of life's perplexing problems through personal contacts with men and women of wisdom, compassion, and breadth, but are often bitterly disappointed. Instead, they find themselves identified not by name, but by number, in large classes, memorizing information, with most of their actual learning coming through interaction with other students. In Riesman and Jencks' terms (*The Academic Revolution*, Doubleday and Company, Inc.) they are too often faced with "pendantry and alienated erudition," by a faculty member who is narrow in his field and getting narrower, being led in his search for status to sacrifice his teaching for an overbalanced emphasis on research and/or consulting. A double tragedy is that the direction of his research is more often dictated by government support agencies rather than the needs of his discipline .

Owing to their relatively great contact with national and world events, their limited experience with history, their ideas concerning society's hypocrisy, disillusionment with their learning experience in colleges, and other factors, some students will be fair game to be organized by their dedicated, revolutionary-prone peers. Activist leaders need only find a focus which will draw attention and sympathy of these and other students to foment a protest.

If a protest is organized by the SDS or some similar organization—and certainly not all are—it will be designed to accomplish both the majority's goals and also those of the minority organizers. In the violent confrontations, you can be quite sure that the trained agitator will only rarely be in a position which may result in his being arrested or being seen as the instigator. He, like the pyromaniac, will be back in the crowd eagerly watching the result of his carefully-planned work.

Now, finally what are some recommendations for handling and preventing student protests? The general approach ought to be one of eliminating as far as possible the issues which activists can use to foment campus disturbances. And then, through establishing communication channels and involvement of representative student leaders, keep all informed as to the work involved in solving the issues that remain. At the same time efforts must be made to preserve the integrity of the

campus from any and all threats. More specifically, we should accept the point of view of the activists that the university "is a most important" institution in our society. It is a source of supply for trained, contributing manpower. But it is much more than that: it is a factor in the shaping of public opinion, attitudes, and values. The universities play a large part in determining not only the quality of training our young people receive, but also the quality of the young people themselves.

With the university viewed and declared to be a "vital national resource," we would not permit a threat to its operation to go unchallenged any more than we would permit a disruptive attack to be made on the White House, the San Francisco Mint, or a SAC missile base. We would meet all such threats with all resources available. We should commend rather than condemn university administrators who immediately call for help from outside law agencies when their campus security forces fail to stop destruction. To do otherwise is to invite appeasement by those overly concerned for their careers rather than principles. The universities cannot be permitted to be sanctuaries for those who are not willing to abide by the laws of the land. In dealing with less serious offenses, college officials should quickly impose penalties commensurate with the seriousness of the infractions, including expulsion. To do this, however, a system of due process acceptable to constitutional law should be established on every campus. Serious violations should be referred to civil authorities immediately.

Now what can we recommend about prevention? First, hypocrisy, poverty, segregation, unemployment, and other of society's ills could be reduced with better laws and more efficient administration of them. Legislation and enforcement concerning drug usage and other dysfunctional behavior should be updated and made more consistent. In some states, for example, the punishment for marijuana use is about the same as that for second-degree murder, punishment for drunken driving is minimal, and no laws exist concerning use of "speed—methamphetamines.

Law enforcement and court practices need to be made more consistent with the times and knowledge we have about militant protest movements. For example, the October 7, 1968, *SDS New Left Notes*, quotes J. Edgar Hoover as follows:

The New Left is composed of radicals, anarchists, pacifists, crusaders, socialists, Communists, idealists, and malcontents. This movement, best typified by SDS, has an almost passionate desire to destroy the traditional values of our democratic society and the existing social order.

Beneath this quotation is a description of six protest demonstrations. The thrust of the article is that despite what Hoover has said, you can break the laws in protests and get away with it.

Parents may wish to evaluate their own behavior to determine whether it is inconsistent with their professed value system. Violations of highway speed limits, hunting or fishing laws, income tax regulations, and gossip are the kinds of norm evasions from which children learn and use as rationalizations for their own behavior. Parents might create a strong subculture within their families by presenting and discussing their own value systems with their children on a regular basis, so that any misunderstandings the children have about their parents' values and behavior may be eliminated.

Now, very briefly, following are a few preventative measures that might be applied to the university scene:

1. Insure that student government organizations are a powerful, democratic, important, functioning part of the university. Student governments can portray the best of our democratic ideals if permitted to do so. Most universities, however, in Samuel D. Gould's words,

. . . put the student leaders out to pasture in some remote corner of the institutional ranch where, with adequate fencing, they can graze peacefully and wax fat and docile. They will then always be properly deferent, will be grateful for any little attention tendered them, and will never ask embarrassing or challenging questions.

Last year through the efforts of BYU's dynamic student body president, Paul Gilbert, we saw student government working within the framework of law to solve the off-street parking conflict with Provo city. Student leaders, acting on issues important to the students, won the support of the vast majority of the studentbody and the respect of law enforcement and city officials. Some colleges, like Eastern Oregon, are providing stipends for their elected student body officers

comparable to those received by varsity athletes. This action tends to upgrade the offices and makes it possible for the officers to devote time and energy to their positions.

2. Provide for students to be informed through elected representatives of the considerations going into decisions that are made concerning them. If students know of the many factors which must be weighed and balanced in making important decisions, they are much more likely to support the decision than if they are faced with fiats.
3. Provide for greater involvement of faculty members with students. Personal relationships must be established. This can be encouraged if both quality teaching and research are rewarded.
4. Provide preschool orientation in which all students are informed about acceptable and unacceptable conduct, and the consequences of both. If misbehavior occurs, immediate steps should be taken through due process to handle it. In a positive way, this orientation could begin the task of letting students know of their importance to the university, and the importance of the university to them, the state, nation, and the world. They could start to become identified with a cause which they as self-sufficient, trained, and dedicated young people—together with the university—can help achieve, the betterment of all mankind.

Much more could be said, but only this will be said: we have never had greater challenges presented our youth than we have today, nor have we had more able and sensitive youth. We have never had a greater threat to our universities, nor have we had finer universities. We have never had so much knowledge, but so little knowledge of our most pressing problems.

If we will listen to the message that our youth are trying to give us and have the courage to change our behavior and institutions in keeping with our finest democratic and religious principles, we will be able to respond to that message properly, and in doing so will not only preserve our youth, but our country and ourselves.