

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

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

-John Lennon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **RADICAL STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

## **STUDENT PROTESTS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **VIETNAMIZATION LEADS TO BRANCHING OUT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **LARGE STUDENT POWER MOVEMENT EMERGES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **RACISM DIVIDES SHAFT**

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

1) tokenistic use of MAYO,

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

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

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

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

## **SHAFT CONTINUES PROTEST ACTIVITIES**

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

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

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

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

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