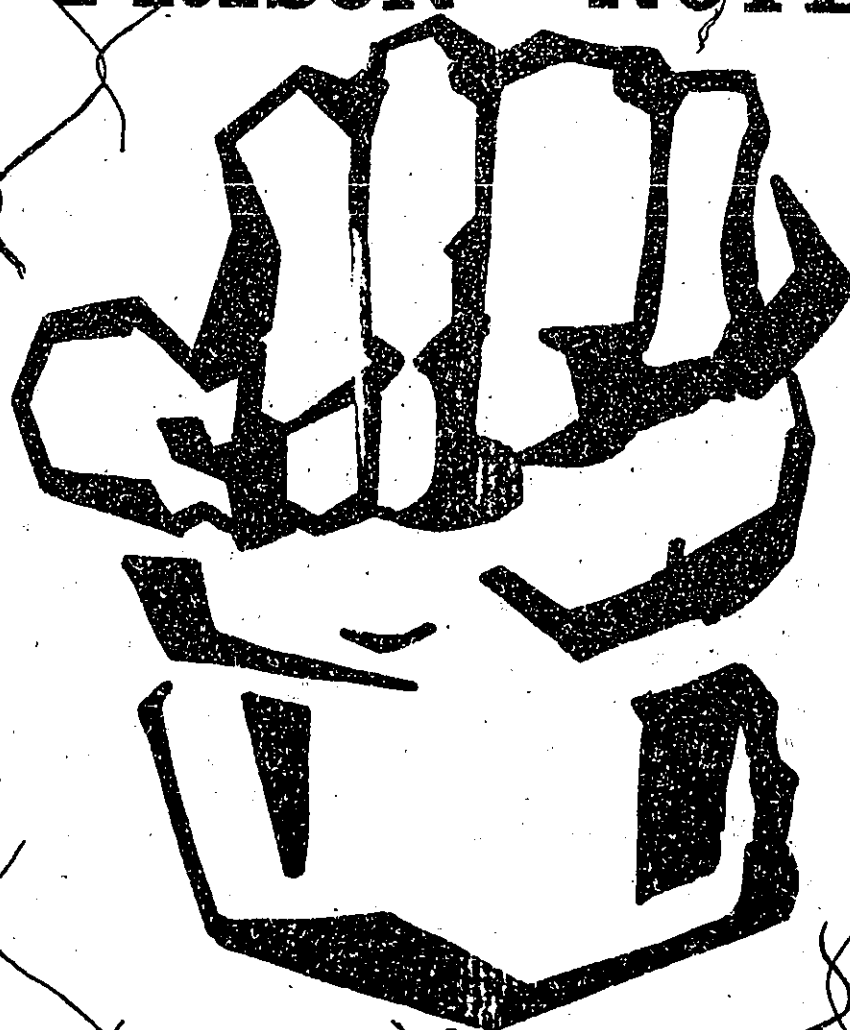


**8 TO 3 : HIGH SCHOOL
PRISON NOTES**



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Union

INTRODUCTION

As this introduction is being written, teachers in the Los Angeles schools are out on strike. If the strike is a step toward ending the prison-like conditions of the schools, ending the system of tracking that forces black people and Chicanos into manual trades only, and is the beginning of an education which will give us an undistorted history of all our peoples' continuing fight for freedom, then we support it. If the teachers are ready to stop forcing us into the slots American society has ready for us, we say right on! But we will not wait on them to do what we as high school students must be doing.

Some who write for this pamphlet are members of the Radical Student Union (RSU), an organization of high school students with chapters in various Los Angeles city schools. We stand for changing this corrupt society and are out to win more rights for students now. Though most of our members are white high school students, we see ourselves as part of a larger movement involving all oppressed peoples and groups in America and in the world--working class, black people, Chicanos, and all other Third World peoples. The contents of this pamphlet are an indication of that fact.

Some who write for this pamphlet are also members of News & Letters, a Marxist-Humanist organization of blacks and whites, workers and students. They feel that the sixties have demonstrated that though youth are not directly involved in production, their serious activity in the black struggle and the anti-Vietnam War movement has brought them alongside the workers as builders of the new society.

We feel that student oppression is a very real form of the oppression upon which this racist, class-divided society is based, and that high school students have very real common interests. High school students are channeled into the molds American industry wants them forced into, including the army; high school students are denied their constitutional rights on campus. We aren't allowed to develop freely, to become what we want to be, and we aren't allowed to express ourselves, either. We're suppose to do what we're told, to sit back and let ourselves be channeled into the molds of a society we didn't create--and the school system has a whole set of rules to stop us from complaining. Well, we're complaining, and we intend to get together to take action now.

Because of the oppression experienced by all high school students though it comes down most heavily on poor and non-white students, we feel that students at one school have much to learn from the ideas and the experiences of other students. The purpose of this pamphlet is to give all kinds of students--black, white, and Chicano, working class and middle class, ghetto and suburban--a chance to

exchange these ideas and experiences. These articles include analyses of the school system as a whole, and articles on conditions of student struggles at individual high schools, including reports about student activities--strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations--during the teachers' strike. We hope to give students at each high school in Los Angeles an idea of the great variety of activities that other students are involved in. We do not have a completed program for changing our schools. We realize that this kind of communication is more important and more revolutionary than a thousand programs.

We naturally hope that this pamphlet will help expand groups like the RSU. But we don't consider ourselves to be the "great leaders" that everyone else must follow. We want new groups of high school students to get involved in organizing a powerful city-wide movement; to contribute their ideas so that we can really get ourselves together. We hope this pamphlet will generate an exchange of ideas that will get many more students involved as activists in the deepest sense--as thinkers and doers.

May, 1970

8 TO 3: HIGH SCHOOL PRISON NOTES

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ROOSEVELT HIGH. I

During lunch period on Thursday, March 5, Jorge Rodriguez, head of UMAS (United Mexican-American Students) at Roosevelt High, was speaking at our free speech area. Supposedly because he said "I don't give a damn" (an "obscenity"), but actually because of the way he was attacking the rotten quality of education at Roosevelt, the administration tried to close the free speech area.

Jorge kept talking, and 40 or 50 of us stayed past lunch to listen to him. Mr. Siegel, the so-called "assistant principal" threatened us with suspension and arrest if we didn't disperse. We didn't disperse. Five cops came on campus and declared our gathering an "unlawful assembly" But no one was arrested because of a "question of jurisdiction" that Siegel mentioned.

The administration offered to negotiate with us, and 20 students volunteered to talk to Mr. Holguin, the Boys' Vice Principal, about our grievances. We were promised that we wouldn't be suspended. That night Jorge and others were called by the school and told they were suspended.

Friday morning we all came to school anyway. Before third period we rallied near the school auditorium to raise our demands, which included getting the cops off campus, open campus, better food, and a voice for the students in what goes on at school.

Siegel refused to talk to us, saying he "refused to deal with a mob." There were 300 of us, and when Siegel told us 15 minutes later that we were all suspended, we all cheered.

When Siegel tried to shut the press out, we moved forward to the Eleanor Roosevelt lawn, the old free speech area, so that the community would know what was happening. Other students in the buildings joined us. The cops declared our assembly illegal and threatened to attack.

About nine girls linked arms to stop the cops from breaking them up, but the cops pulled them apart. Roosevelt's coconut administrators (brown on the outside but white on the inside) had 37 of us busted. The cops were as brutal as usual, pulling girls' hair and twisting their arms.

Saturday at 12:30 a commission met to discuss what had happened at Roosevelt. It was disgusting. Mr. Sullivan, a school superintendent, tried to run the meeting. He accused us of "disrupting the academic process." Some teachers had the guts to get up and speak on our behalf, for which they'll probably be fired or transferred. There were about 100 people there altogether.

including teachers, students, and parents. One lady who spoke was furious about the cops being called on campus.

Then Sullivan started taking up the time allotted to the students with a long speech. We booed and shouted, demanding our time. Sullivan finally shut up when a parent got up and told him to sit down. By 3:30 the administration was tired of "listening to the students" and announced they were leaving.

Monday, March 9, between 200 and 300 of us picketed outside the school. Our signs demanded amnesty for all who had been arrested, attacked police brutality, and announced that "Hitler is alive and living at Roosevelt High." The students still in school couldn't join us for a very simple reason: all the gates had three or four locks on them and were guarded by teachers, cops, and narcs. So we cut a hole in the mesh fence and went on campus anyway.

In the following days there was more picketing, more arrests, and more beatings. Despite the arrests, the movement is still going strong.

What happened at Roosevelt is very understandable if you know anything about the quality of education it offers. It isn't education, it's indoctrination. Of the 3,200 students, at least 80 per cent are Chicano. The school produces graduates who can hardly read or write. There aren't enough desks or equipment or teachers. The system of tracking forces 75 per cent of the students into an industrial arts major. There is just no way to get college preparatory classes at Roosevelt. White students will never be bussed to Roosevelt; their parents wouldn't put up with the kind of education they'd get here.

The school is very restrictive. Most of the restrictions that the radical students who graduated in January got rid of last semester have been brought back this semester by Siegel and his coconut puppet, Principal Perez. Last year Siegel and the way the school operates were denounced in the class graduation speech. Now the administration has limited what students can say in the free speech area to the point that we can't say anything at all.

Classroom doors are locked as soon as the tardy bell rings at the beginning of the period. The bathrooms are almost always locked, and the buildings are locked during lunch to keep the students out even if it's raining. And this is in a school that's a fire hazard!

If the education Roosevelt offers us is so good, why do they try to force it down our throats?

From Roosevelt Students

ROOSEVELT HIGH, II--A BROWN VIEW

Training for Roosevelt begins before you even enter. In the ninth grade just before you graduate to Roosevelt the counselor comes and asks the kids what things they would like. He asks, will do you like wood? And the kids say yes. And do you like electricity? Drafting? Again, yes. "Well I think you ought to take a shop major."

They never give you a math major or a science major if you want one. Only if they think you are exceptional do you get this type of major. There are a lot of smart kids there, but they are all in business majors and stuff like that. From the beginning they tell you that you are not going to college anyway. So you are programmed into not going to college.

To those who run Roosevelt we are dumb. But to us many of the teachers don't know what they are doing. I visited a class called Algebra S. The kids are smart, but they are stuck in Algebra S which means slow learner. The guy teaches the class like it was a kindergarten. "This is a new word. The lowest common factor." Stuff like that. Talking to the kids like they were third graders. They even had to read aloud. There are a lot of teachers like that. We don't have too many Chicano teachers, most of them are white.

The school in many ways is like a prison. It is about 80 per cent Chicano. They have "sweeps" at Roosevelt. There are two tardy bells. As soon as teachers hear the bells they lock the doors and if you were inbetween the hall and the classroom they would push you out and shut the door. Then other teachers would be patrolling the halls. They would make everyone out in the hall go to the cafeteria and sign a sheet that they were late. Then you could go back to class, but by that time fifteen minutes of the class was gone. The first two times you were tardy you got warned. The third time they call in your parents and have a conference. The fourth time they suspend you.

The teachers are always watching you like cattle. Especially at nutrition and lunch when you have a little time to talk with your friends, there is always someone not too far away.

The classes, besides being run at a low level, are distorted. We had a California history class which should have begun with the Indian's history; then the Chicano's history. But the only thing they did was to mention Indians in the beginning, then told about the Spaniards very briefly and then the Americans came. And that was it except for a short thing at the end of one chapter where they said Mexican-Americans are living in LA and in the 1940s they had zoot-suit riots; most Mexicans came for farm labor, wetbacks, etc. Out of the whole book there were about two pages on this. All the rest is white history.

In response to these conditions there is a movement at Roosevelt which had been putting forward a number of demands. One thing we don't want is cops on campus. Cops are always on campus, without uniforms. They patrol the campus especially during lunch time, when they are at the gates.

We want bilingual teaching. They don't like the fact that a lot of students speak Spanish. They say you are in America and you should speak English. For those kids who don't speak English they stick them in English Second Language and make them use third grade books, even though the kids are in high school.

We are trying to get Chicano studies on campus. Right now there is only one class. This out of the whole curriculum, and you have to ask for it.

The movement is having a hard time. The administration at the school says the doors are always open. But we go in there and they are closed. Everytime there is a meeting they will have the principal, all the v.p.s and maybe five students. They don't even want to have ten students. They want only a few so they can jump on them. And their only answer is to go and talk it over in student council. But if you try and get someone into the student government who thinks Roosevelt is no good they always seem to have some requirements which eliminate the person.

We have started a freedom school in response to the cops and administration busting our demonstration and arresting people. There was a need for the school when the students were demonstrating and had to have a place to go. They are going to have a lot of Chicano studies and help Chicanos not so much to get into college, but to have a chance to go to college if they want to.

I am for freedom, for stopping the suppression of every people. I know the Chicanos are a suppressed people. As I grew up I went only to the schools here in the Chicano areas, and then I went to a white school for a summer and I saw the tremendous difference in teaching and facilities. I don't consider their teaching better. In terms of their view of teaching it is better. But in terms of any kind of education I think the whole system is all messed up.

The whole government is running the system. You can see that when they force the pledge of allegiance on you. The whole system, the administration, the teachers. And they tell you if you don't follow it, how are you going to get a good job. I think the whole thing is stupid. The Chicano movement is against the government because it is suppressing people. I am not sure the Chicano movement as a whole wants to go as far as I do, because the Chicano movement has older people in it and a lot of them don't want to be as free.

Roosevelt is so messed up I want out. I don't want to drop out completely, but I want to do something different. Maybe this freedom school will do something. I was a math science major. I like it, but I want to do a lot of things. I don't want to be restricted and specified. When you are at Roosevelt they just want to put you in a little channel.

I am just waiting to do something. I am tired of going to Roosevelt because once you really come into contact with how bad it is--when it really comes out in the open like it did when we demonstrated--it just turns you off to go back again. You just can't get back into it. If you did your spirit is broken. I am not even going to really go back.

People's minds at Roosevelt have already dropped out. That is why all those percentages on how many finish school, how many go to college are meaningless. They just have a bunch of numbers and names, but we have contact with people.

--Chicana Student

ROOSEVELT HIGH, III -- A BLACK VIEW

High school is something to do during the day. They don't teach you that much. They will tell you that you have got to know this or that. Like in history they tell you about who died. I don't want to know who died. I want to find out what is happening now. Today.

I don't want nothing out of high school, all I know is that I am just going there. They have got me in classes I don't want to know about like drafting and woodshop. I have had woodshop all the time since the 6th grade. I don't need it any more. We really don't do anything.

But that is what I got put in. I went to the counselor and he asked me what I wanted to take. I told him a business course as I was interested in opening a men's store. He said I would have to take typing and I said I didn't think I wanted to. He said well I can't take a business course and proceeded to assign me into industrial arts. He said you take drafting, woodshop, history, basic math and gym. And that was it. I had to leave because there was a whole line of people behind me. The whole thing took 5 minutes.

He mentioned college in that interview. The way he brought up college was he told me to play basketball and I could make it to college.

When I first came to school the people in physical education tried to get me to run track. I said no I didn't want to. They asked if I wanted to play baseball and I said I did not want to. Next they asked if I wanted to play football. I said no. I said I wasn't interested in sports and to leave me alone. But everyday they would bother me about sports.

Lately I thought about cutting school; just to go back to NY, just go by street life. I am really mixed up because every time I get to a school there is some kind of trouble. In NY they had plainclothesmen in the hall. At lunchtime you had to stay in the cafeteria the whole time. You couldn't leave school. Then they had a strike in NY. Afterwards I came out here and they had a whole bunch of trouble at Roosevelt where I am going. I was out during the demonstrations at Roosevelt and I tried to get people to come out.

Roosevelt is like the NY school. On the first day I walked across the street at lunchtime. When I came back there was a guard and he asked if I went to the school. I said yes and he said let me see your lunch pass. I said what lunch pass and he began asking

how long I had been going to school. I said this was my first day. He demanded my name and after I gave it to him he said I had to have a lunch pass to go off campus. I asked him what was this a prison? All he said was that was the rules.

That's what the atmosphere is like. You will be walking down the hall and someone will come and give you some smart question about where are you suppose to be. Or they will say don't you know you are suppose to be over here. You answer back that you are going where you want to go. They act like somebody is going to do something to them. People are getting busted just for having a rolled match cover in their pocket. Or you wait for the bus and they will come up and check you out. You get tired of it.

The principal at the school does not say a thing. All he does is stand up with his hands behind his back and talk. But he doesn't say anything.

I went to a school up north which makes Roosevelt look like a junk yard. It was a predominately black school. If you wanted to build up your reading they had special reading classes. They had machines to help you build up your reading. At Roosevelt all they say is read your book.

One counselor at Roosevelt was trying to tell me why the tax override hadn't passed. He said it wasn't helping us by making all the noise because the people don't have much money anyhow and when they see us doing all that demonstrating, they wouldn't want to give money because they think we will tear it right back down. But Roosevelt is a prison. When I heard about Roosevelt being burned I thought they had got the whole school. I wished they had got the whole school.

I was interested in the Black Panthers, but they are getting shot. I think Martin King was really together. I heard a record of his. At Roosevelt there was a Black Student Union on campus but it wasn't going together. They talked about black culture. That's all right, but what good is it doing now? The blacks and Chicanos get along all right at Roosevelt. There is some fighting outside of school, but they see the school is the enemy of both of them. Lately I forget about most groups and just go for myself. I just don't like the idea of somebody leading somebody. I just get tired of it. I just go for myself. I think many people feel the same way.

The way I am going now I might be a gangster. I know that I am trying not to end up going to Vietnam. I had a cousin who acted crazy and he made it. Maybe I will do that. Maybe I will try and join the merchant marine. Every since I was small I thought, when is the war going to come to an end. They just keep going.

This summer I am leaving for NY, then maybe up north. It's going to be messy at Roosevelt for the rest of the year. Maybe I might just leave now.

TAFT HIGH

It is that time at Taft High School when once again students get to participate in the democratic process by electing their student cabinet officials. Last week some friends of mine urged me to seek political office, preferably Student Body President. The idea wasn't so much for me to win the election, but to simply provide an opportunity for radical views to be expressed in front of a large audience. Also, as far as I know, the office of President was the only one considered worthy of allotting speech time to. Being one who will follow rules if it means politicizing people, I went to the office of the Girls' Vice Principal to obtain the form necessary for all candidates.

It didn't take too long to figure out that I was going to have some problems. First of all I discovered that the office of Student Body President was unattainable because I failed to meet the requirement of having been born one year earlier. Yes, you guessed it--- I was not a senior, but only a junior, and therefore not yet qualified for that most esteemed office.

The argument for this rule is based on the ridiculous premise that one should have at least one semester experience in the Student Cabinet before running for President. It is true that a prospective President should be familiar with the rules of parliamentary procedure which govern all the ineffective political institutions of the United States. But what is the real purpose of learning the proper procedures? It is to prepare young Americans to accept the same type of trappings disguised as democracy when they graduate from high school. Democracy should not be something which goes through the motions in some perfectly secure ivory tower. It shouldn't waste people's time with trivial regulations, but should function as an instrument of the people, acting on their needs without any consideration for monopoly capitalists or any other of society's criminals. American "democracy" doesn't work the way I said it should, but just the opposite. Since the school system is only a reflection of the overall society, it is clear that "high school democracy" does not and cannot function for the students. It is there to reinforce the illusion of democracy by means of a seemingly "democratic ballot."

So far I've only illustrated one particular requirement and that specifically for the office of President. Let's say then that I wanted to run for another office, which did not have a "seniority requirement". There are still other little goodies that we can't overlook. One is that a student must have a 2.5 grade point average and another is that he must not have more than one U (unsatisfactory) in conduct.

UNIVERSITY HIGH

University High is a mainly middle-class school with a small but significant working class population comprised of whites, Orientals, Chicanos and blacks, in that order. Despite these facts which would seem to indicate a quiet, conservative school, Uni has had a fairly radical movement going since 1967.

The radicalism of 1967 was touched off by a conservative, disliked principal by the name of Foley. What happened was that at a student body election assembly, a student running for the office of president gave a speech that said in effect that the whole administration had to be replaced. At this Foley went up onto the speakers' platform and pulled the student off. When the audience saw this, they all got up and walked out. The event was on television and in the newspapers despite the administration's efforts to keep this thing quiet. The walkout at Uni was one of the first to hit the West Los Angeles schools, and touched off a whole wave of radicalism that swept the high schools in the area.

After the walkout an SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) chapter was formed. It organized demonstrations and printed two underground papers. But there was one problem. The movement at Uni was started because of an unpopular principal and some restrictive rules. This was not a sufficient basis for a movement. The effect of this was that when Foley was transferred to another school and some restrictive rules like the dress code were abolished, the movement at Uni began to wither away. Also most of the radicals and activists were concentrated in one grade, so that in Spring, 1969, most of them graduated out of Uni.

In the fall of 1969 I came to Uni and helped to start a Radical Student Union (RSU) chapter. In my organizing and other activities I have found that the greatest opposition to the RSU doesn't come from the conservatives but from the left liberals on campus. Their argument against the RSU is that "the name Radical turns people off." So organizing here at Uni is pretty frustrating, but I still have confidence that a new movement can be started here, not on the basis of a few penny-anti rules or a rotten administrator, but on the basis of opposition to the school system itself and linking up with other movements. All power to the people!

CULVER CITY HIGH

I came into the 10th grade at Culver High as a student who was aware and concerned about the problems of the world. The McCarthy campaign was still in full swing and the school atmosphere was slightly political. Some of the more aware students decided to do something about the inability of Student Council to direct its attention away from school spirit. The Student Issues Club developed out of these concerned students. It didn't last too long because of the "do your own thing" attitude expressed by its members.

There were some more serious students on campus who proved to be a much greater challenge to the administration. They organized the Student Union by writing a constitution and submitting it to the proper authorities. The administration thought it would be a good idea for a club to be formed, especially one that would seek to improve the quality of education. This organization managed to pull off one successful action on an incorrect position. The taxpayers, who were already overburdened, were given the opportunity to vote on an 86¢ increase in their school taxes.

* * *

The Culver City Student Union was a school club formed to help students take a more active part in educational affairs. It cannot be assessed as either a totally good or a totally bad organization. The idea was to get as many students to become members as possible. Then, it was thought, Student Union could become more powerful than Student Council and begin to really improve conditions at the school.

The political composition of the group was diverse, although the leftwing of the group was popular enough to get elected to leadership positions. This may sound a little on the opportunist side, but most people felt that it would be more effective than a smaller more radical group.

Student Union had a constitution (this was required of all school clubs) that layed out the structure of the organization. Volunteers took delegate sheets and got their friends to sign them. We weren't lacking signatures, but the active participation of those students was to become a future problem. The people who went out and asked for signatures were later to become the elitist executive board.

Our meetings were strenuous exercises in parliamentary procedure. There were times when I was so confused about motions and amendments that I'd forget what I was suppose to vote on. Many times the members would get bored and the meetings would turn into a big social hour.

Was this club completely useless? No, and I can list three worthwhile things that were possible for an on-campus organization to do. We got 80 people to see the Newsreel film Columbia Revolt and an interesting rap session ensued after. Two draft counselors were allowed on campus under the sponsorship of the Student Union. Last but not least was our most successful event, the Student Union Dance, where we combined music with political speakers. There were raps on People's Park, the Santa Monica City College Black Student Union and Cliff Fried spoke about Valley State. What some thought was a disadvantage was turned into an advantage when a YAFer (Young Americans for Freedom) was allowed some time to speak. The audience almost drowned him out and were very antagonistic.

The worst position taken by Student Union was its support of the tax override. This would have added another \$6¢ to the already heavy load of the overburdened taxpayer. Nevertheless, Student Union worked hard for the passage of the override and was mainly responsible for jamming two hundred students into the Board of Education meeting to show that students really cared. And when it was defeated by Culver City voters, Student Union held its only protest by sitting-in around the flag pole. There is no better way to alienate a community than by making them pay for something they cannot afford. Instead of raising the revolutionary demand of "Tax the Corporations" we attempted to serve the people shit.

I wouldn't suggest that anyone start a Student Union like the one in Culver City. This can leave you incapable of making a radical critique of society.

Here is some idea of how the administration viewed us. They allowed Student Union's reps into each class to explain the organization. We even tied Human Relations for the club of the year award. I think we can safely say that Student Union was co-opted, or perhaps there was never anything to co-opt to begin with.

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH, I

Beverly Hills High School actually has a fairly extensive history of radical activity. Unfortunately, most of this activity never led anywhere, and the various movements that organized it faded away or were diverted from their original purposes. Two basic factors are responsible for this failure to sustain radical activity. First there are the great difficulties inherent in organizing at a rich, almost lilly-white high school; it's really hard to get students at a school like this to do anything. The other thing that's held us back is the general irresponsibility and unwillingness to accept organization that has plagued our movement from the beginning. There's been too much ego-tripping and not enough serious work.

Beverly High had a widely-distributed underground paper two years ago (1967-68). The Daily Son, as it was called, was a good idea, but, in typical Beverly Hills fashion, the "liberal radicals" who founded the paper didn't see it as a weapon of the entire movement at Beverly, but as a toy, a mere forum for radical ego-tripping. Not only was there no attempt to select articles on the basis of overall political effect, but worse, the sosh-oriented editors never tried to involve other students in writing the paper. That would have lowered its "intellectual level." Even though the paper printed some good articles (like a censored version of "School vs. Education"--I wasn't allowed to use the word "capitalist"), it never became the focal point of a movement; it never broke out of its isolation. As a result, its effectiveness was almost nil, and it fell apart. This year it was even resurrected for one issue by some liberals who printed it as a student government-funded "literary journal".

Last year (1968-69) there were many large, spontaneous student demonstrations at our school in reaction to various abuses. For example, one student lived outside of Beverly Hills and was only allowed to go to the school as a favor to his parents. After being the biggest freak on campus for almost three years, he was only "discovered" to live out of district when he tried to organize an SDS chapter. He was transferred, and a large demonstration was organized against this hypocritical administration attack on the radicals. Last year's biggest action, however, took place in May when the cops came on campus and busted a student for drugs. In protest, 300 students sat-in on the front lawn, and for a few minutes it looked like real action would be taken. But then the demonstrators were lured into "negotiations" and the movement dissolved.

In March, 1969, during the first wave of student "blooms" in East Los Angeles, a few radical students from Beverly, myself included, went to the rally at the L.A. Board of Education to

demonstrate and speak in support of the Chicano students. In the spring of 1969, we tried to organize a support rally at our school for the second great wave of student walkouts in East L.A., a rally that would also raise our own demands. For a number of reasons we were unable to pull off an action. For one thing, the liberals overran our temporary organization and confused it politically. Also, the more "moderate" radicals and the liberals had racist attitudes toward the Chicano students. Many of the 'radicals' also shared the provincial 'Beverly first' attitude that has retarded every attempt to organize at this school. And finally, the temporary organization was controlled by 'charismatic leaders' who were excellent speakers but were entirely lacking in political consistency and responsibility. So, after more than a week of meetings, no action came off. The biggest activity on campus this year (1969-1970) was the October Moratorium against the war in Vietnam. It was also the largest and most successful activity that the radicals have ever organized at Beverly. We conducted a teach-in of at least 100 students before, and then pulled another 200 students out of school for a march on the Beverly Hills city hall. Once we got there, the liberals from the Westside Committee of Concern tried to shut us up and take over our action, and a 'liberal' member of the Board of Education tried to send us back to school to attend the administration-sponsored "peace rally." We walked out and continued our teach-in across the street from the liberals, who were reciting the names of the war dead. Later most of us went to the rally at the new Federal building in West L.A. The overall effect of the Moratorium can be seen from the following figures: out of 2300 Beverly students, 800, or over one-third, were out of school that day.

This March, when the students of Roosevelt High School went out on strike, a support action was quickly organized at Beverly. Two hundred students boycotted classes for an hour and we collected about \$25 for the Roosevelt bail fund. Many of the students also went off campus hoping to be able to go to Roosevelt and join the picket line. Unfortunately, the students who had organized the rally (they weren't in Radical Student Union, though they agreed to work with us after the boycott) hadn't called anyone at Roosevelt to find out if we could be used, and as a result most went back to class. However, we did win one significant concession from the administration: school was going to be dismissed early in a few days, and we were going to have an assembly with student speakers from Roosevelt to tell Beverly students what was going on. But the administration ruined the assembly by changing its time at the last minute, and as a result of this plus the racism of many of the students at Beverly, only 50 students, only one-fourth of those who had rallied, showed up to hear the Roosevelt speakers. Some good thing came out of the assembly; we had a good informal rap session on the front lawn and we collected \$25 more for the Roosevelt bail fund.

As in much of the country, there's been a lot of talk about ecology this year at Beverly. The ecology action group generally hasn't done much more than wear green armbands and plant an apricot tree. There was also a very stupid ecology assembly and, just recently an all day teach-in on Ecology Day, April 22 (also Lenin's hundredth birthday). Unfortunately, the speakers weren't very good: GM sent a service manager who claimed smog was on the way out and couldn't answer most of our questions. Astronaut Scott Carpenter wouldn't talk about the F-310 scandal (and this was supposed to be Ecology Day!), etc. The day was so lame that many students couldn't relate to it seriously if they tried. So much for ecology.

Now we are busy organizing a chapter of the Radical Student Union of Los Angeles. High School SIS never really got off the ground on our campus; RSU has. More action at Beverly, organized by a broad-based student group that is part of a city-wide organization, can be expected soon.

BEVERLY HILLS HIGH, III. A BLACK VIEW

Beverly Hills High School is a dull school. There's never anything to do--no sports, nothing. At least at black schools like Carver Junior High there are things to do. This place is like a private school full of a bunch of little kids who haven't seen anything and don't know what's going on. I think my parents sent me here to keep me dumb.

Most of the thirty or so black students who're bussed here came from middle class schools like Emerson Junior High. Why aren't students from Watts allowed to go here? The administration is probably afraid they'd burn the school up. The Vice Principal never listens to the students and my parents are always telling me, "Be a nice boy, don't talk back."

The black security guard here is harder on the few blacks than on the whites, probably so he can't be accused of favoritism by the majority. I think he's a "Tom" or an "Oreo" (black on the outside but white on the inside.)

A lot of teachers don't treat us like white students. Some always try to be nicer to us but others obviously dislike us. You should see the way they look when they notice me reading black literature. One of the library assistants is always coming over to us and asking, "Can I help you, boys? Do you want a paper, boys?" We've even been asked to "please move, boys" because we were blocking a non-existent door. When will we be treated as "students"?

DOMINGUEZ HIGH

Manuel Dominguez High School is in Compton, California. But since my first year of attending Dominguez, I feel it would be better located in Nazi, Germany. My first encounter with the school administrators came about when I tried to bring about a change in the present dress code.

Last January I and two other girls were suspended for wearing pants in 50° weather. Before we were sent home, the girls' Vice Principal called us into her office to give us a lecture on how we must cooperate with the system even if we disagree with it. I asked her how we could go about changing the dress code, and she said we could come in the following Monday morning before school and discuss it with her.

The final outcome of that meeting was that we would have to wait three weeks until new second semester officers were elected. This was because at our school you're only allowed to bring one issue up at a time per semester. (How can this be a democratic school if after you have brought an issue up once, you must wait months until it's heard of again.)

February 17, we finally met with the handpicked group, the highest student body officers. Surprisingly, everyone there agreed to the abolishment of our dress code. So the next step was to take our proposition to our principal. The Student Body President, Cherly Bradshaw, the girls' Vice Principal, and I were to meet with the Principal and the district supervisor to discuss our feeling on the Dress Code.

Everyday, for the next month Cherly and I hasselled the administration for the meeting, and finally, a month later we got it. First off, the principal told us we couldn't abolish the Dress Code because "I don't want the students to get too much control."

Next he said the only change he'd even consider was allowing the girls to wear pants. This meeting was so strange to me. All of my life I've been told the wonders of our Democracy, and at this meeting it was a dictatorship. The school administrators were controlling the students whom they were supposed to help, guide, and solve.

At the end of the meeting, we were told the plans that this triumvirate had already made: first off, it really wasn't up to the students what they wore to school, but actually it was up to the teachers. At a teacher's meeting the next day he announced that there would be a meeting to discuss allowing the girls to wear pants. Naturally, the only teachers to show up were those opposed to any change in the system.

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Any hope for changing the Dress Code legally has been shelved until the next school year. But already I'm getting the students together to try and have a protest over this discrimination. There is so much wrong with Dominguez, and the Dress Code is just one of the many changes that need to be made. I am so disillusioned in our present school system, I wonder when more students will become more aware of all the BS handed out to them.

I'm not really worried about this educational system as it now stands, because a revolution is coming. And when it does, the present system will fall, and then we'll be free.

CRENSHAW HIGH SCHOOL

This past semester we were going to have a junior prom at Crenshaw High and the girls' vice principal came and told us that we couldn't have one. Her reason was that our parents would be spending so much money for us when we got to be seniors, that they wouldn't want to pay for a junior prom too.

After she told us that, we held a rally at lunch and about 200 students went and sat in the girls' v.p.'s office (the principal of the school always locks his door so we can't go there). After we crowded in, the v.p. told us she would just speak to a few students. Three girls went in and spoke to her. One of the girls was suspended from school after the meeting.

So the next day we held a rally about the suspension with more students coming out. We crowded into the boys' gym. Almost the whole school was there. The rally was run by some students in the eleventh grade council.

We said we weren't going to leave until the girls' v.p. came down and spoke with us and gave us what we wanted. All we asked for was the Junior Prom and to get the girl back who was suspended. The girls' v.p. came down and told us we had the wrong information, the girl was not really suspended. Then she told us we would have a vote on the junior prom. We voted to have the prom.

But nobody bought the bids to have the prom. So it really wasn't the prom at all. It was the idea that the school was saying to us, "Oh, you are too poor, so we don't think you should be able to have it."

They were helping us to spend our money. You know, directing how we were supposed to spend it. That was their whole attitude. Nobody really wanted to go to the prom. They just want to have the right to go, to decide themselves.

SCHOOL VS. EDUCATION

The saying, "I don't let school interfere with my education," is really no paradox. School as it exists is the exact opposite of education.

School is essentially an industrial training system, a component part of the capitalist system which strives to perpetuate the existing social, racial, and sexual division of labor by means of tracking and other methods. Besides trying to turn out obedient workers, it also attempts to produce docile citizens and terror-stricken conformists, and to reproduce this society's values--greed and love of consumption.

It is a passive, hammer-forced process, in which the student is compelled to digest the information and values that will allow him to carry out his particular social function efficiently and accept the existing society. In the black, Chicano, Oriental and Indian communities, school also means that the individual must be alienated from his own culture and forced to mimic the white civilization that oppresses him.

Education, on the other hand, is an active, questioning process in which the individual develops his ideas about himself, about life in general, and about his society in particular. Accumulation of information is entirely subordinate to the development of knowledge and understanding.

School, therefore, is a very safe thing; education is dangerous and highly subversive to the existing society, for it leads beyond accumulation of knowledge and "pure thought." It compels action; it is the unity of theory and practice.

It includes what Marx called "practical-critical" activity: coming to your conclusions about society and then acting on them. The very thought of a generation of student activists that once chilled the defenders of this crazy society has become a reality.

Three key, intertwining elements of school are discipline, memorization, and grades. Discipline, externally imposed, is the key to obedience; therefore, the student must be disciplined. The student lives in an unfree world, and he must be forced to accept it. He must become so used to being ordered about that the very idea of independence seems contrary to "human nature." Youthful idealism, a feature of human nature held in great disdain by all apologists, just be either totally suppressed, or so perverted that it can be made to fit into the framework of this society. Meaningless requirements and meaningless assignments are incidental; they teach obedience in general rather than obedience to anything in particular, except perhaps to the teacher, the symbol of authority.

Memorization is both a form of discipline and an independent category in that the student acquires the information that will allow him to carry out his simple social function. This is where breaking comes in, mutilating the individual in order to force him into the mold that American imperialism has chosen for him. Memorization teaches acceptance, for the material assigned is to be memorized without question. Material is memorized for a test, and most of it is quickly forgotten. Memorization is not only a bore, but an inefficient waste. But it is the only way that students can be fed at least part of what this society wants them fed; their own interests are almost entirely ignored.

Grades are the byword of school, the ultimate weapon to keep dissenters in line, to keep the students on the treadmill and to buy off those more adept at memorization and acceptance. Grades are an external, impersonal standard arbitrarily applied to individuals with different capacities and interests. Grades are an introduction to the society as a whole; they correspond to school as the money scale corresponds to capitalism as a whole.

Education, therefore, must be pursued largely independently of school, in opposition to the administration and the ruling class. However, realizing what school is and fighting against it provide some understanding of what American capitalism is really like at an early age. This is truer than ever today, when large segments of American students are moving against the system.

Obviously, an attack on the school system is not enough: it acquires its full meaning only within the context of an attack on the entire society. Only in the destruction of capitalism and the construction of a truly new, socialist society can the contradiction between school and education be resolved.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

If the student is a convict, then surely the role of the teacher in capitalist society is that of a brain policeman. The teacher, while technically transmitting to the student knowledge necessary to his education, in reality merely programs him with the schizoid values of the decaying capitalist society, while training him for his role in that society. As almost everyone admits, this programming is done in a sterile and alienating way that makes true education almost impossible.

Whether the teacher wants to or not, he is forced by the system to take this role of an intellectual policeman. Pressured by vicious and incompetent administrators from above and by resentful students from below, he easily turns to emotional sadism based upon his small morsels of superior knowledge.

This rule, however, is modified along race and class lines depending upon the community in which the student-teacher relationship takes place.

In upper middle-class white schools, the teacher drills the student in the intellectual and managerial skills he needs to take his place in the elite. At the same time, students are taught the ethic of cut-throat competition, and to look down on lower class kids.

In schools in working class communities, students are fitted for jobs in low level administration and in production, while being constantly supplied with a hate object by racist teachers and textbooks.

This racist element is used on black schools, where the teacher is most actively despised, to deprive the black child of his heritage, while only giving him a chance to enter the most menial and unimportant jobs.

The brain police are underpaid by the oppressor and reviled by those they oppress. Hence it is no surprise that there have been teachers on strike recently. This new teacher militancy has positive aspects as well as a simple motive of asking better pay for oppression. Striking teachers have come out for progressive goals in classroom education and in opposition to stultifying bureaucratic control.

The experience of the strike has been instrumental in breaking down the illusions of "professionalism" that teachers have had of themselves, and has made them more amenable to organization as members of the "new working class." Unlike policemen, the individual

teacher is usually a basically decent person, not a confirmed racist, and so can be reached both on the level of his own liberation from the oppression and insecurity of being a cop in the capitalist system.

Strikes can break down certain barriers separating the brain police from the average worker, and strikes dealing with improved education, while their goals are usually reformist, can serve to radicalize teachers in their work and its purpose.

However, there is another aspect of the new teacher militancy that is obviously negative. This considers teachers' strikes, such as one in New York, concerned with black control of ghetto schools and the veiled racism of the "disruptive child" issue. The willingness of teachers to take unfair and shortsighted stands on these things shows that their new militancy, like that of the police can become, rather than a device to change the oppressive system in which they operate, a justification for their Present role within that system.

The issue of black control of black schools is the watershed. If teachers can see why such control is necessary even at the cost of a few racist or incompetent teachers' jobs, then their movement, with the added impetus lent by struggle, can help to change their role. If not, they cannot hope but retreat into their previous status in capitalist society, and a teacher strike, like a cop strike, will become just another squabble among our enemies, in which the petty oppressors, will hopefully stay off their jobs as long as possible.

SUSPENSION

At many high schools it is close to impossible to do the entire trip without being suspended or "sent home" at least once. The vast majority of these schools are in working class and poverty areas. Schools in these areas are attended for the following reasons (in order of importance): 1) the student has to stay in school, 2) to get a decent job, 3) for something to do during the day, 4) to get out of the house, or 5) to get into college. In high schools like these only the last group of students have a good chance of escaping suspension. I belong to the first and second groups.

I attended a working class/poverty area school for five months. In four short months I was suspended twice, unofficially suspended twice, and "sent home" without suspension twice. My record has (besides the above) two suspensions for smoking, even though it is common knowledge I don't smoke, and about seven dress code violations (I actually have four).

The first suspension was an assembly line job. About one hundred and fifty girls were suspended for violation of dress code and disrupting the educational process. This was during an anti-dress code demonstration.

Suspensions are a weapon to silence dissent and to stop disobedience. The system of suspensions and expulsions exist for, and are used for, no other reason. The procedures are completely without even the hypocrisy of a hearing.

The majority of suspensions happen like so: Step I - The student arrives in the office. Step II - Most of the time the student waits anywhere from fifteen to sixty minutes. Occasionally he waits longer, in rare cases he's taken care of sooner. Step III - He's told he's suspended, and for how long. If they know the charge he's usually told it. Maybe they lecture him a bit. Step IV - His parents are called. Step V - He goes home.

Recently administrators have cut all this out and now they simply call the student at home and tell him he's suspended.

At no point, in either procedure, is the student allowed the basic human right to defend himself, or to deny the charges, or the right to a fair trial. The presiding dictator doesn't even have to tell the student why he's suspended. The way suspensions are carried on enables the dictatorship of any school to suspend "undesirables" on the most trivial excuses, or for no excuse at all. It turns office lines into suspension lines that are identical to assembly lines. Many other activists and I have returned from suspension to discover that we weren't really sick, we had

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been suspended.

After three suspensions (most schools wait until five) a student can be automatically "transferred" from the district. If he's suspended from the other school he can be automatically expelled from all city schools. He gets a hearing that turns into a recital of his suspensions etc., before he's expelled, once more denying him the basic human rights of due process.

The suspension/expulsion procedures are one more example of the factory ("...and the students are the raw material..". Mario Savio) process the government substitutes for education.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACTIVITY DURING TEACHERS' STRIKETaft High

When I arrived at Taft High School Monday morning, the first day of the teachers' strike I found students milling around in the senior quad. Since only 27 of the school's 127 faculty members showed up for work, most of the students had no classes to go to. The principal had just broadcast over the public address system that all students whose teachers were not present were to report to the senior quad or the cafeteria or the library. There ensued an exodus from the campus. Students, at least some of them, were not about to be babysat when the rare chance to walk out of school presented itself.

The next day it was apparent that the student population had diminished substantially. I would guess that those students who stayed away did not have any scab teachers, and that most of them were not seniors. The latter knew that a certain amount of credits is given for each class, and they weren't about to handicap their chances of graduating by being absent. Whatever else went on that second day it was clear that Taft was no longer functioning as normal.

By the third day, those students still attending school became a little disgusted at their prevailing situation. Some were in support of the UTLA demands and wanted to show their support by closing down the school. About 300 students staged a "mill-in" in the administration building. The term "mill-in" means simply that the students chose a rather peculiar place to stand and do their socializing--right in the center of administrative activity. They were asked to leave, and, having made their point sufficiently, decided to comply.

The third day's demonstration had shown student strength, but some activists wanted to do something more effective. The goal, after all, was to shut the school down. Half the students were gone, but there remained the task of persuading the rest to stay out and join the student picket line.

Leaflets were run off explaining why students should support the teachers' strike. The leaders of the movement, wearing T-shirts with the words "Teach Me" printed on them, managed to convince about fifty fellow students to join the picket line.

University High

At Uni there was a rally of student supporters in the morning of Tuesday, April 14, at which the more radical students decided to enter the school and get more students to come out. We didn't get in and two students were suspended.

Then everyone marched to Wilshire Blvd. for publicity, and then we all went to class, or at least said we would, in order to get into the school. As soon as we were in school a big crowd of us occupied three bungalows, hoping to close the school. In the end we were talked into leaving by Juhnke, an administrator, who said he agreed with us in principle but wouldn't close the school because he'd lose his job if he did. We were shafted.

Wednesday there was a lot of confusion ending in a nice big sit-in in the administration building which lasted for two hours. We were talked into leaving after much chanting when a water line broke. Shafted again.

Thursday there was another sit-in, singing, and factions. The more moderate student leaders told the sit-in to disperse after talking to the principal who said he couldn't do anything about closing the school. The moderates left. The more radical students stayed until the administrators started taking down their names, and they, too, split.

Hamilton High

By the second day of the strike a student protest was underway. Students were restless, and tired of being "babysat" by scabs and administrators. Chanting such slogans as "On strike: shut it down" and "Good schools are no schools," the students marched through every floor of the laboratory and administration buildings.

Upon reaching our destination, the main floor of the administration building (around the marble statue of Alex Hamilton), no less than 1000 students sat in.

For two hours you could only hear chants and cries of dissent from the students, along with the occasional calling for Mr. Schwartz to close the school. Even though the students were given the option of staying in school or going home, most of them stayed. There were a few reports of arson, but on the whole the students stayed pretty cool and no violence occurred.

Around 11:30 that morning, principal Schwartz declared Hamilton High officially closed. Later on it was found that the team of Schwartz and Kelley (acting superintendent) declared Tuesday a minimum day ending around 12:00. Therefore Hami would have been closed at that time anyway. Still, it was a victory for the students and teachers.

Van Nuys

At Van Nuys High School, students joined the teachers to close the school down. Chicanos, low-riders, middle class whites, athletes, and normally apathetic students came together.

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On Tuesday the students were ready to fight, and by mid-morning a spontaneous student march occupied the administration building. The march proved two things: 1) the students were together; 2) more organization and preparation was needed. So approximately 300 of us had a sit-in and a boycott of classes. (It was at this time that I was suspended. I was later expelled, and still later transferred.) After threats from the administration and plainclothes policemen, the rally dispersed with plans to come back the next day.

On Wednesday, approximately 1000 students walked out of school. The school was closed for the day.

On Thursday, our strategy was to boycott classes and have students go home. Our plan worked well, for only 500 students out of 3800 were in school.

The latest move among students now is to boycott classes and have student strikers and student picket lines. Although we can't totally support the teachers, if the strike succeeds, it will make it possible for real education to begin. United we will win.