AN EXPERIMENT IN THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Descriptions of the contemporary student radical movement
in North America by writers in the social sciences have varied enor-
mously. Some have described the movement as a relatively unified en-
tity opposed to the dominant social and cultural order,while others
have found a collection of rival political groups and styles which
will not give one another support. My thesis will attempt to uphold
the second assertion, i.e. that there exist irreconcilable rifts
within what is commonly called "the student movement".

Two radical political groups who held meetings at a large
western Canadian university in 1968 will be examined with the aid of
transcript data taken from tape-recordings. Evidence of tension and
conflict between the differing political orientations adhered to by
these two groups will then be presented.

Kenneth Keniston's description of "political activist"
and "culturally alienated" poles within the student movement provides
a loose set of categories in terms of which the two groups may be
viewed. The group calling itself SDS is seen to resemble Keniston's
"political activists" who follow more traditional means of organizing
political protest. Members of SDU, the group which preceded SDS
chronologically, fit into Keniston's category of "culturally alien-
ated" by being involved in a search for intensified subjective ex-
perience. They depart from his description, however, by emphasizing
intersubjective encounter in a public group setting rather than re-
maining alienated social isolates.

While SDS, with its goal of confrontation politics, resembles many other New Left groups described by writers on the Movement, SDU, with its goal of achieving a sense of community, remains unique. It is because of SDU's unique character that the problem of recruiting new members is explored in the final portion of the thesis. Newcomers to SDU had a difficult time understanding what was taking place as the meeting situation departed so greatly from their expectations of what a radical political meeting should look like.

Problems with newcomers and the appearance of SDS as a rival political group led to the abandonment of SDU as an unusual attempt to create a communal experience of interpersonal encounter on campus instead of the more usual tactics of confrontation politics.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Student Movement in North American society
has been a subject of particular interest to social scientists, many
of whom have found themselves embroiled in university turmoil they
had never expected. Some consensus has been achieved among such
social scientists over themes which seem to persist in the broad spec-
trum of the Movement, including both the New Left and the beat-hip
bohemian sub-culture. The consensus breaks down, however, when par-
ticular poles in the Movement are described with any specificity or
attempt to guage their importance. Some writers, such as Jacobs
and Landau,[1] underplay tensions within the Movement. Others, such
as Kenniston,[2] emphasize the importance of irresolveable rifts be-
tween political activists and the culturally alienated hip.

Jacobs and Landau make general statements about the Move-
ment, despite their awareness of the divergent directions and ten-
dencies which exist. For example, they describe what those in the
Movement are opposed to (i.e. a held-in-common enemy):

> "The Movement rejects the careers and life styles of the
> American liberal...for to The Movement it is the liberal
> way of life and frame of mind that represent the evil of
> America. Those in the Movement feel that modern American
> liberals have substituted empty rhetoric for significant
> content, obscured the principles of justice by administra-
> tive bureaucracy, sacrificed human values for efficiency
> ....

1. Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, The New Radicals; Penguin Books Ltd.;
   Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; 1967.
2. Kenneth Keniston, "The Sources of Student Dissent", Journal of
   Social Issues, 1967, XXIII, No. 3, 108-137.

> So, those in the Movement see not only the openly author-
> itarian or totalitarian society as an enemy but the admin-
> istered, bureaucratic, dehumanized, rhetorical-liberal
> one as well. They reject liberal authority....The brain
> machines and the translation of human qualities into holes
> punched into a card are viewed as devices that break down
> communication and destroy community in the interests of
> efficiency."
>
> 3

Theodore Roszak also speaks in general terms when he con-

trasts the "counter-culture" with the dominant technocracy in the Uni-

ted States. He recognizes a "class consciousness" which is held in

common by all those in the counter culture. Roszak declares that

the trip inward towards deeper levels of self-examination is something

understandable to both the New Left and beat-hip bohemianism. The

counter-culture asserts the essence of human sociability to be the

communal opening up of man to man and it rejects politics which single-

mindedly attempt to overthrow a government, ruling class or economic

system (i.e. a rejection of Old Left ideological strategies). Roszak

admits tension does exist between the "mind-blown bohemianism of the

Hippies and Beats" who are copping out of the system and the "hard-

headed political activism of the student New Left" which seeks to

"penetrate and revolutionize political life." Like Jacobs and Landau,

however, Roszak finds that these two extreme poles of the Movement

recognize a common enemy and see one another as allies. He finds it

hopeful that, until recently, even a political group such as SDS

(Students for a Democratic Society) tended to keep some human tender-

ness in its politics instead of reifying theory at the expense of

human community.

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3. Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture, Doubleday and
   Company; Garden City, N.Y.; 1969.

It is understandable that writers such as Jacobs and Landau and Roszak would hold out hope for unity and alliance in the Movement when early documents such as the 1962 Port Huron Statement of SDS are examined. Often taken as the founding statement of SDS, the Port Huron Statement provides a clear phrasing of general principle which reveals much about the Movement as a whole. It demonstrates the importance of individual self-expression and development to all parts of the Movement at that historical point in its development.

> "...A first task of any social movement is to convince people that the search for orienting theories and the creation of human values is complex but worthwhile. We are aware that to avoid platitudes we must analyze the concrete conditions of social order. But to direct such an analysis we must use the guideposts of basic principles. Our own social values involve conceptions of human beings, human relationships, and social systems....
>
> ...The goal of man and society should be human independence: a concern not with image of popularity but with finding a meaning in life that is personally authentic; a quality of mind not compulsively driven by a sense of powerlessness, nor one which unthinkingly adopts status values....
>
> ...As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation."

It is Kenneth Keniston who draws out the tension between poles in the Movement the most sharply. He insists that the split between political activists and the culturally alienated must be borne in mind at all times. While he admits there is an overlapping of perspectives, Keniston claims there generally exists no alliance between the two orientations in opposition to the dominant cultural Establishment.

In his 1967 article in the Journal of Social Issues, Keniston describes the political activist as an individual who believes group action or demonstration concerned with political, social or ethical principle to be more effective than solitary activity. Activist concerns are immediate and ad hoc and most often refer to injustice done to others (i.e. identification with the oppressed). New Left activists are hostile to Old Left ideological stances and instead invoke ancient American credal values such as free speech and citizen's participation in decision making in their attacks on contemporary American institutions.

The culturally alienated, instead of joining groups, drop out of society into an apolitical, aesthetic, and romantic attempt to intensify their own subjective experience. They use hallucinogenic drugs which promise withdrawal from ordinary life combined with intensified subjective experience. The emphasis is on immediacy rather than involvement in long-range activist endeavours like community organizing. Being too pessimistic to demonstrate publicly, the culturally alienated instead are non-conformist in ideology, behavior and dress. Keniston claims it is the tension between the politically active and the culturally alienated which continues to be the central tension in the Movement.

In a 1965 working paper for the SDS convention Richard[4] Flacks also takes care to point out the tension which exists between a personal striving for community on one hand and political goals and

4. Op. cit. Jacobs and Landau, "Some Problems, Issues, and Proposals", Richard Flacks, p. 167.

priorities on the other. He feels a constant balance must be maintained between the two orientations, for while they may be temporarily linked in a group such as SDS, individuals usually tend more towards one pole or the other. In a later article[5] Flacks again characterizes the Student Movement as very heterogeneous politically. He elaborates certain values of the Movement, but stresses they are adhered to in varying amounts by individuals of different political leanings in the Movement spectrum. Anti-authoritarianism (antipathy to centralized decision-making), egalitarianism (participatory democracy), anti-dogmatism (reaction against strong ideological statements), moral purity (living up to professed ideals) and anti-institutionalism (distrust of conventional roles) are characteristics he points out which are similar to those discovered by other researchers. He also mentions the romanticism (a quest of self-expression and experience) and the emphasis on community (achieving of interpersonal intimacy) which he had noted in his 1965 working paper.

It is the tension between organized political action and a striving for a sense of interpersonal community which is the central concern of my thesis. I will be examining two radical political groups which came into conflict over differing orientations such as these.

The first of the two groups to form at Province University termed itself SDU (Students for a Democratic University). This group met as individuals coming together to encounter and share experiences

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5. Richard Flacks, "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest", JSI, 1967, XXXIII, No. 3, pp. 52-75.

with one another. Striving for community and intense interpersonal relationships was considered political activity in the highest form by many of the individuals attending SDU meetings.

SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) emerged later at Province University, partly as an alternative to the SDU orientation. It proposed organized group confrontations of institutions, and felt affinity with SDS in the United States and revolutionary struggles in the Third World, even as it remained a distinct entity hoping to develop a political style suited to the Western Canadian context.

SDS adherents felt the SDU attempt to justify interpersonal encounter as political action was useless and irrelevant at a time when the "real political action" of institutional confrontation must be engaged in. SDU adherents felt SDS members to be guilty of the same interpersonal weaknesses as characterized those in power, and predicted that a New Left victory by SDS oriented radicals would result in a society qualitatively no different than the present one.

Province University, located since 1925 in extensive grounds on the edge of Province City, is attended by twenty thousand students. Administration of the University is controlled by the Chancellor, Board of Governors, Senate, Faculty Council and the Faculties. The Senate is composed of the Deans of Faculties, members elected from Faculties and various other members appointed or elected from specified organizations. It is presided over by the President of the University and is ultimately responsible in its decisions to the eleven members of the Board of Governors (many of whom are prominent in industry and/or government in the Province).

The main administrative structure is a system of Faculties (each headed by a Dean) which are further divided into Departments of academic study. Incoming students are initially assigned to Faculties (such as Faculty of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Engineering, etc.) and have little contact with coursework or members of Faculties other than their own.

The significance of the Department as a social base for student relations depends on the student's level of advancement. For graduate students, the Department is of great importance, the Faculty of Graduate Studies being largely an administrative structure. For students still in their first two years of university the Department level is of little importance since their coursework may be selected from a wide range of choices within the Faculty. After a student selects a major, his involvement with one particular Department increases, although there is variation from Department to Department in how much commitment is expected and required from students carrying its major.

Students are distributed among a very large number of courses and this, combined with class size, tends to minimize opportunities for establishing social relations in the classroom. Also there are few opportunities outside of the classroom situation where students may meet. Some Faculties attempt to counteract this atomization through student associations, which may involve a uniform and occasional public demonstrations of solidarity (a good example being the Engineering Association). There also exists a large new Student Union Building

which provides facilities for many different types of activities (e.g. social events and clubs), but it has not yet developed into a base for establishing social relations independent of the Faculty and Departmental structure.

While housing units and Fraternities provide some opportunities for contact to a small minority of students, the vast majority commute out to the university for the day and return home that evening. Due to this fact, nightlife and weekend life is quite undeveloped, with the exception of a few special occasions.

No more than seventy-five students at any one time were involved in radical activities or appeared likely candidates for radical groups. It was a primary concern of first SDU, and later SDS, to recruit and involve more than this small number of potential radicals out of a total student population of twenty thousand. Since my interest centers primarily on the SDU orientation, an exploration of the SDU 'newcomer problem' will be one of my primary tasks. It is interesting to see how a radical group with a completely novel approach to New Left politics attempted to involve students.

SDU met from the early summer until October 3 of 1968. SDS began meeting October 1 and continued meeting regularly until the end of November, 1968. The period of time covered in the present study ranges from the July 25 meeting of SDU to the October 22 meeting of SDS.

SDU AND SDS AT PROVINCE UNIVERSITY IN 1968

ORGANIZATION	DATE	TAPE #
SDU	July 25	1
SDU	August 1	2
SDU	August 8	3
SDS	August 15	4
SDU	September 5	5
SDU	September 19	6 & 7
SDU	September 26	8
SDU (Senate)	September 17	9
SDS	October 1	10 & 11
SDU	October 3	12
SDS	October 8	13
SDS (Rubin)	October 22	14

Note: A number will follow quotations taken from meetings listed above. The tape number (on the far right above) will be listed first, followed by the side of the tape (1 or 2) and then, in parentheses, the footage along the side. This listing will make it possible to place quotations in relation to one another by time (i.e. footage) in meetings as well as by date.

In Chapter Two and Chapter Three the orientations of SDU and SDS will be described with the aid of quotations taken from tape-recordings. Chapter Four will deal with conflicts between the SDU and SDS orientations, and will demonstrate the incompatibility of interpersonal encounter action with issue-oriented action. Finally the problem of bringing newcovers into SDU will be analyzed in Chapter Five. Chapters Four and Five are related in that some newcomers were SDS oriented activists, and often other newcomers were strongly influenced by the more standard leftist approach of such radicals.

Transcript Legend

M-I: Male speaker, numbered by voice.

F-I: Female speaker, numbered by voice.

M-?:   Male, voice unrecognized.

F-?:   Female, voice unrecognized.

(single): Single parentheses contain researcher's comment.

((probable)): Contain doubtful transcription.
  wording

((   )):   Empty double parentheses contain information that
               something was said but unclear and not transcribed.

CHAPTER TWO

SDU

Most SDU meetings at Province University were held on cam-
pus in the old Student Union Building. Announcements and articles
referring to SDU activity appeared in the student newspaper and in-
formation was exchanged among students by word of mouth. While stu-
dents who attended represented a wide range of majors study areas (e.g.
Engineering, Science, Education), the largest number were from the
Arts Programme, i.e. the Humanities, Creative Arts, and especially
the Social Sciences. The presence of fifteen to twenty people at
meetings was usual, although on three occasions more people attended.

SDU began meeting in the early summer of 1968. At the
time the initial tape recording was made, people were still in the
process of deciding on organization, long-range planning and SDU's
relationship with the student body. About ten people attended regu-
larly throughout the summer and represented a core group within each
meeting which pressed for procedures they had come to agree upon among
themselves. The most consistent formulator and spokesman for what an
SDU meeting might ideally consist of was Paul, who was well known
publicly from radical projects both on campus and in the city. Stu-
dents concede Paul to be the originator and founder of SDU, but such
an opinion cannot be verified or denied here. Members of the core
group who gave support to Paul were Leo, Stephan and Natasha. Peter
supported the notions behind SDU meetings, but his focus was more on

a restructuring of Student Government. Nick also should be counted as a supporter within the core group when he became an active participant in September. SDU had at least one constant critic in Ivan. He would participate in a meeting situation as defined by the core group but would all the while criticize procedures used to run the meeting. During the August 15 meeting when most of the regular core group did not attend, Ivan successfully focused conversation on concrete action around some issue which could be developed on campus to mobilize the student body. The meeting evolved similar to that of SDS meetings held by Ivan and Joseph later in October, so the August 15 meeting fits better with the SDS chapter rather than here as an SDU gathering. Seven SDU meetings other than the August 15 meeting were taped between July 25 and October 3 where most core members were present and a serious attempt was made to follow guidelines agreed upon in the early summer.

The approach to meetings agreed upon by the SDU core group characterizes the orientation of SDU. The orientation can be characterized as anti-bureaucratic, anti-organizational, individualistic and interpersonal in a Here and Now encounter group setting. Emphasis is placed on the shared experience of the moment with individuals relating interpersonally in as many ways as possible. The group only exists for the duration of the meeting and when people leave they do so not as SDU members but as individuals with their own projects around the city and campus. Since emphasis is placed on the emerging moment as it is experienced by the individuals in the room, there is

no planning of future acts or setting of future goals for the group,
nor is there any reason to decide anything or get anything specific
accomplished. The meeting itself is the end rather than being the
means for planning some future end. Organization is opposed, includ-
ing typical meeting procedures such as agendas and chairmen. Everyone
stops their past-present-future flow through time and is at every
moment in the room experiencing the presence of everyone else. Every
person is free to speak about anything on their mind. The only goal
of SDU is to experience and maintain mutual awareness of Self and
Other, i.e. to experience a sense of community.

The location and intent of SDU meetings   cause proce-
dures to appear unusual. The group was open to all students at the
university, and no preliminary instructions were given to newcomers.
They had to make sense out of an occasion which violated all expec-
tations about meetings as political events. Experienced SDU members
felt that to explain procedures verbally to newcomers would destroy
the ongoing spontaneity of the occasion since it would provide guide-
lines where ideally there would be no structure at all. Newcomers
must experience the meeting and try to come to conclusions on their
own. The SDU orientation was only verbalized when people continually
demanded that explicit sense be made of what was happening. The argu-
ments which raged in some SDU meetings between the core members and
opposing political activists, and the problems which newcomers to
meetings posed for older members will be discussed in two later chap-
ters. The present chapter will continue explicating the SDU orienta-
tion, using quotations drawn from recorded meetings as an aid.

SDU core members claimed that interpersonal confrontation
represented a very political activity. Politics included any activity
which might bear on the way people lived their lives. It became much
more than the "political sphere" of society or the academic domain of
Political Science.

> Paul: I think that also this business of doing moral phil-
> osophy, of being a social critic, convincing other people,
> that is essentially what it is to do political activity.
> And I would say again for clarity, that I don't separate
> political activity from any of the other kinds of things
> that I talk about as activities. I see them as pervasive,
> as interconnected as whatever. I want to try to remove
> as much of what I see as fake language as possible and say
> that doing politics is talking with other people about how
> to live your life, how to live your lives together, what-
> ever kind of things you have, and what kind of things we
> have are cities. 2-2 (440-444).

Anything that one person shared with another in a spontaneous manner
could change the people involved. The activity did not have to be
conceptual and abstract, or be action resulting from prior planning.
Genuine co-presence with the Other meant activity which was a meaning-
ful political expression.

> Peter: It ties in with community and structure and that
> was the question what is this kind of thing supposed to
> be. Is it supposed to be a community or is it supposed
> to be a political kind of thing or what. And one of the
> suggestions that was made by a number of people was that
> there should be things other than strictly political things
> going on. And I don't know, I think in the terms in which
> it was put to me the ideal of the individual people that
> are also doing other things, being able to bring in things
> like that, like poetry, or camping, or buggering off to-
> gether for a weekend or something like that as a kind of
> balance for the political thing.

> Paul: One thing that I wanted to do was say for example,
> like do a paper or a lecture or something that could be
> responded to that would say argue for the poetry of Charles

Olsen in the United States as presenting a real politics,
that no political person I know seems to have paid atten-
tion to. 1-1 (98-108).

The crucial concept concerning the SDU orientation is that political

action need not be a category of experience restricted to its own spe-

cial time and appropriate place. Action is happening continually

when people get together. It is necessary that people see political

action as something other than joining together to confront a common

enemy.

Paul: Again the usage of this word action as though ac-
tion were something other than what you're doing now. I
know you're going to deny, make a statement about the value
of what we're doing, at the same time you're going to keep
saying that there is something in the world called action
and this is somehow not action. And what I want to say is,
this is human interaction, what's happening now, and in
terms of what XXXX talks about in social communism, this
is making social communism, doing this action. 1-2 (320-
324).

Interaction experienced fully as action results from continual self-

awareness of doing and being in every situation. Intensity in inter-

action then leads to greater self-awareness.

Nick: What we are looking for is the process that we are
going through. What we would really like to see is for this
process to be expanded into all spheres of the university,
but in fact for us (( )) simply the process of being here
and being involved in this or being at any other meeting is
simply the goal in itself, as far as I'm concerned. 7-1 (423-
426).

Paul: ...I would build into the idea of community that the
process itself would be revealed as you were going along
trying to make such an impossible thing, since you can't
know what it would be like. 1-1 (547-550).

The quality of interpersonal relations is the measure of action happen-

ing in the room. Quality subjectively experienced as part of a process

cannot be preplanned, so what the action will consist of cannot be predicted. People at a SDU meeting must be exceptionally open to whatever direction the group experience takes. The goal is not so much what is done, but how intensive the mutual doing of the activity is.

> Paul: SDU as an organization is going to continue to meet from now on until we break up or become community or whatever happens to people individually. 1-1 (16-18).

> Paul: Everybody in the room would be terribly disappointed if in X number of meetings from now, say twenty meetings from now in the middle of winter, if we were still somehow discussing the same question that had occurred at the first meeting. I think everyone would be very disappointed if that were the case, I wouldn't be disappointed if that were the case. 1-1.

The process of attending a meeting involved following an informal set of rules so that spontaneity in interpersonal action (hopefully leading to a feeling of community) could be created and maintained. Many could be termed anti-rules in that they were rules against using regular meeting procedures such as chairmen, agendas and group memberships. The idea of individual initiative was constantly stressed. Each person attending an SDU meeting remained a separate and unique individual even as he joined in the group experience. There were to be no leaders or followers, and when someone had something to say, they could say it. Given that everyone present was a leader, no need was felt for a chairman to maintain order in the meeting situation.

> Peter: A couple of weeks ago we had a very hard time even thinking about having a meeting without a chairman. We went through a whole thing about we got to have a rotating chairman, that's only fair. Then the next thing was we got to go without a chairman, can't do that, (cause look how we're behaving)....You're dividing yourself then I think some people feel they are divided up; there's a statement here that

has got this whole thing as I see it here right in a nut-
shell. This is in 1906 by Malatesca. "Our belief is that
the only way of emancipation and of progress is that all
shall have the liberty and means of advocating and putting
into practice their ideas, that is to say, anarchy." That
we want the emancipation, we keep talking about the nega-
tive things, we want the emancipation and the progress,
that the only way of emancipation and of progress is that
all shall have the liberty and the means of advocating and
putting into practice their ideas.

Stephan: That was the basic premise of SDU, that any mem-
ber, like we do not have any spokesmen, anybody at any time
or any place will be able to express the situation....
2-2 (86-98).

SDU was considered a learning process whose interpersonal lessons

could be applied outside the meeting situation. People attending

meetings ideally would be involved in projects around campus or in the

city on their own initiative. If people who attended SDU meetings

worked together on such projects, they would do so for their own rea-

sons and not out of affinity felt as fellow members of SDU. There

was no group identity, and SDU existed only so interested individuals

could communicate with one another.

Leo: We have had conflict and I believe we will continue
to have conflicts. I don't know whether this group will
stay the same or change but I believe as a result of it
some of us have found it much more possible in the things
that we do on campus in our goings to classes and our deal-
ings with the various people we have to deal with to deal
with them in a way that is politically much more aware
and much more useful than we were able to before we did
this. This is true for me but I'm just speaking for my-
self. Most of the political action in which I'm engaged
is action that I'm at this point doing by myself and at
some point if an issue arises I suspect that organization
may focus around that issue if a lot of people feel the
same way about it, but in fact there are a lot of things
that I have to do myself that no one can help me with and
these are the things that occur as I walk around the campus

and I can't see a group like SDU with fifty people doing
the same thing all the time so they'll be organized. 6-2
(101-116).

M-2: I don't want to sound defensive, I think what does
happen though with groups of people often is that people
learn how to become more effective in what they are doing,
in other words, I think people were active in quite a few
different fields, ah, doing all sorts of projects, not
only connected with the university, in the city too, and
they've sort of decided that they could perhaps be more
effective after clearing away some barriers to, to working
together....

M-3: I'd like to comment a bit further because I've been
to several of these meetings and I've never heard, ah,
whenever anybody's proposed that the group, that people
here do anything as a group, that kind of thing is rejec-
ted, alright, you know what I mean, there's no group iden-
tity in the sense of this group as a whole taking action
outside of this room. However most of the people here
are involved, very involved, in what they're doing outside
this room as individuals, and with maybe parts of this
group and other people they know. And what they're con-
cerned about here, and what they're concerned about gen-
erally is, maybe, the validity of what they're doing out-
side this room already. They're not concerned with getting
together to do something, but get together to talk about,
ah, what is happening. 3-1 (473-486).

Considerable talk about the desireability of joining committees ap-

peared in the first two SDU meetings. The Student Government and the

University Administration both used a committee structure to administer

within their respective spheres of influence. The Administration

allowed some student representation on minor policy committees such

as Housing and Parking, and was offering token representation in the

Senate (the main decision-making body after the Board of Governors).

The Student Government had standing and ad hoc committees offering

positions to students at large, and recruited Student Councillors from

each of the major academic Programmes to sit on Student Council (its

major decision-making body).

Talk about committees was soon dropped as being irrelevant to the purposes of SDU. Paul repeatedly denied the value of sitting on committees or even discussing them as a tactic available to student radicals. If someone wanted to join a committee as an individual, they were free to do so.

> Paul: I don't feel the least bit gloomy about committees or no committees or being on them or not being on them, because what's interesting in the whole matter is talking to students about what things mean, and committees are just another one of the things that are objects in the world for describing what's going on. 2-1 (221-225).

> Paul: I can imagine a university in which students are very well represented in every kind of committee and legislative body in the university, and all the politics could be as dull and dispirited and as filled with aggressiveness as I generally characterize politics now. (12-1 near beginning of meeting).

A critical awareness of what was happening in the room was considered more important than questions such as serving or not serving on a committee. Criticism was constantly being directed towards the quality of interaction shown in previous utterances or meetings. SDU core members were very self-conscious about what was happening interactionally. They felt that people should be responsive to other people, even if the cues given off were not verbal. Attention should be paid to gesture, facial expression, attitude, body position and environment to determine whether someone might be uncomfortable, withdrawn, insincere or frustrated. Experienced participants might interrupt the meeting at any point, stating they felt people present were either cut off from the group or were not being aware of or responding to cues they should be sensitive to.

Natasha: We didn't look at what we were doing while we
were doing it. We continued talking like that without
stopping and saying, just like Paul has now, there's some-
thing wrong with this talk, let's find out what's wrong
with it and let's find out what we're talking about before
we try and talk about it. And there were other little
problems that came up continually in the group, of people
not responding to each other and people not watching other
people around them to see if somebody was still frustrated
or wanted to talk and couldn't, we go on pretty well without
a chairman, but we certainly didn't do as good a job as we
could of, we got to develop a hell of a lot more awareness
of each other.... 2-1 (333-337).

Leo: I think we spend a lot of time talking and very lit-
tle time paying attention to the kinds of gestures, facial
expressions and things that people who are not talking
are putting on us....I think we're doing far too little
of that and we're really not conscious of the people and
what they're doing and I think that maybe this was some-
thing for which the group was a little large today. In
smaller groups I think it's a lot easier. 7-2 (193-197).

In summary, SDU meeting rules stress individuality foremost.

Every person attending a meeting remains an individual and is the

equal of every other. There need be no chairman because that would

imply leadership. There need be no agenda, that would mean planning

of what was to happen. Talk should be kept in the room (i.e. refer-

ring to what is happening in the Here and Now) rather than concern

future tactics or goals such as sitting on committees. Each indivi-

dual is responsible to every other individual in the room. Awareness

of Self and Other through all possible communication channels must be

constantly maintained. It is only when individuals are mutually ex-

periencing every other person in the room as unique entities, and give

themselves wholly to the emerging moment, that a sense of community

can be achieved. Community implies a feeling of reality where there

is no doubting of existence because there is no questioning of it.

It means a complete acceptance of the present moment and the present

situation.

> Paul: Say, what would it mean to be in this room in such
> a circumstance that you wouldn't leave. All the times that
> we've talked about community it would be that if things
> were good enough in this room, outside the fact that there
> is food and all that stuff available around here, there
> would be no reason to leave. 2-1 (433-435).

> Paul: This over assumption that we really know what is
> happening at all times, each one of us obviously knowing
> what's going on and not believing that anyone else really
> knows...one thing I'm interested in having happening is
> this thing of really believing that all of you are out
> there, you're not in my head, I don't know what's going
> on, but I do believe that you're there, that you're your
> own entity.... 7-2 (316-322).

CHAPTER THREE

SDS

The beginning of the academic school year in September 1968 brought a number of students to campus who wished to commit themselves to radical action projects. Many of these students attended SDU meetings in September and were disappointed in SDU as a group which might do radical action on campus. On October 1, Ivan and Joseph, two students unhappy with SDU, called a meeting of SDS as an alternative to the SDU orientation. Ivan had been pressing for concrete action in SDU meetings throughout the summer. Joseph had attended the September 26 meeting of SDU and vigorously debated with core members over the 'non-action' of their group. As chairman of the Cultural Activities Committee of Student Government, Joseph was planning on bringing to campus speakers such as Jerry Rubin, Mark Rudd and Jerry Farber to politicize the student body. Statements made by Joseph and Ivan will be used as examples of the SDS orientation in order that a clear comparison may be made with the SDU orientation.

The name SDS was used for meetings held in October. Meetings often lasting three hours or more were held in the new Student Union Building about one night each school week. Attendance averaged thirty students, although occasionally many more people were present. Quotations from the August 15, October 1, October 8 and October 22 meetings will be used in the present chapter. Jerry Rubin was guest speaker at the October 22 meeting of SDS and his introduction by Joseph will be examined.

Students attending SDS meetings were encouraged to join as
a member. They were told SDS members working together as a group to-
wards common goals would achieve more than any individual could ever
hope to. Consensus had to be reached within the group before any
effective action could take place on campus. In order that consensus
be achieved, the group must agree on an analysis which explained in
rational terms what the problems in society were and what action must
be taken to solve them. Rational discussion and debate (i.e. a pro-
cess of infra-education) would allow the collectivity to formulate
mutually agreed upon programs of action which could involve and poli-
ticize students on campus. Once the SDS political philosophy became
consistent and explicit, issues on campus could be related to the
corporate structure of the university and society, and students
could be involved through massive publicity campaigns, educational
meetings and mass confrontation of institutions.

Meetings focused on organization and planning. Arriving
at consensual agreement required that ordering of discussion somehow
be maintained. Eventually a steering committee evolved to plan out
agendas for each weekly meeting so that specific topics could be thor-
oughly discussed and some solution or course of action agreed upon
by the members present. A rotating chairman also established order
by assigning participants their turns at speaking. Communication re-
mained verbal within the restrictions set by agenda and turn at speak-
ing. Planning for future action which would involve persons not pre-
sent in the room was the dominant conceptual orientation for talk.

The value of meeting talk could be measured by whether it resulted in such concrete action on campus at some future time. Issues had to be discovered which could mobilize the students behind SDS demands for change of the corporate nature of society. Priorities among issues and projects had to be determined, and members of the steering committee stressed those things they felt to be important. Students had to be made aware of what was happening politically in the rest of the world so they could break free of their usual student mentality and demand a part in the decision-making processes of the university. All issues had to be connected to overriding problems in the university, society and the world. Mobilization around an issue would allow SDS to confront the institutions of society and educate the student body. The goal of SDS was to make students on campus politically sensitive towards problems confronting them and capable of taking immediate concrete action towards solution of those problems.

The need to act immediately without prolonged discussion was often expressed in SDS meetings. Discussion was useful only until people could become unified enough to act together as a group.

> M-2: Is there a consensus that we do need some organiza-
> tion on this campus that is going to try and do things or
> do you all want to try and figure out where we're at and
> why we're there and where we aren't; and if we need some
> organization, let's get one, get a few people we ((have))
> a consensus around it. You people here, ((if you have con-
> sensus)) are a group, the SDS, an active organized political
> organization. Or do we want to sit around and just discuss.
> 13-2 (92-109).

Issues were seen as the means of unifying first SDS, and then a majority of the student body. Possible issues were constantly

suggested and then discussed. Which issue would have priority over which other issue often became the subject of heated debate. The value of any issue was ultimately decided by the consideration of how many people would respond to it.

> Ivan: ...our concern with academic appointments is secondary in priority to our concern with the grade system.

> M-1: Choose what would be the most effective issue to begin with, and then once you've pointed out that issue, you also have to point out that everything else is involved in it.

> Ivan: Very practically speaking I think we could get more people aligned with the destruction of the grading system than with about academic appointments. 4-1 (46-50).

The goal of SDS was not just resolution of issues taken before the student body. Issues were seen as vehicles for carrying the SDS analysis of society to the students. Specific problems raised through issues could be explained by examining and questioning the institutional structure of the university and society. Issues were the catalyst which would cause people to see the world around them through a different perspective.

> Ivan: Yeah, you orient yourself not just to the concept that it is just the grades that are bad, the grading system, or it's just the large classes, there's the whole corporate identity of this university. The university is run as a corporate identity and our society is run as a corporate identity, let alone this university. 4-1 (82-86).

> Ivan: We're talking about the whole orientation of courses that we go through, we're not talking about just dropping a course here or changing a framework of a course here, we're talking about changing the framework of a person's mind, and resultantly changing the framework of our whole society. 4-1 (44-46).

> Ivan: This is fundamentally inherent to everything we talk
> about. Everything we talk about in our society is talking
> about the spiritual, moral sterility of this society. 4-1
> (480-482).

It was considered important that potential SDS members use political

analysis as a formula for explaining any specific problem as an under-

standable part within the political construction of the world as a

whole. Members must be instructed in how to make an analytical tran-

sition from the big to the little in doing analysis of a concrete

situation and making moral judgements in regard to it. The base of

SDS political philosophy resided in the big, i.e. the structural level

of society.

> Joseph: ...Senate is only one aspect of the whole democra-
> tization of the whole campus, and I think the democratiza-
> tion of the whole campus is only one aspect of the totality
> of what we are trying to achieve and I certainly think that
> whenever we can we should try to somehow work towards the
> present structure of the university and of society and di-
> rect ourselves either against or for that structure. Try
> to break down the structure or change the structure. 10-1
> (149-159).

The emphasis, however, remained more on action than on theory. Only

general agreement on principles of political philosophy was required

to achieve enough unity to work on specific issues. Confrontation of

institutions was felt to be the foremost necessity, even if it meant

personal risk.

> M-1: I mean you have to take chances of being shot at,
> that doesn't mean you're being violent....You'll get plenty
> of hatred if you stand up and try to do something the admin-
> istration doesn't want you to do, or the government, or
> whatever....
>
> M-2: You're just precipitating the violence, you're not
> being violent yourself.

> Ivan: One thing I think SDS stands for if nothing else,
> and that is social change, and I think most people are aware
> of the consequences of trying to change this stable society
> which doesn't want to change, which has got built in mechan-
> isms to prevent change. 4-2 (233-240)

Joseph spoke frequently at SDS meetings, often summarizing previous discussion and announcing activities that SDS was planning. He pushed very strongly for a transition from talk to concrete action on issues. He constantly attempted to show how the gap from talk to action could be crossed by use of procedures such as petitions, publicity campaigns or standing up in class to confront the instructor and students. SDS planning should lead to immediate action, and even as action was taking place, plans should be made for more action to follow.

Joseph's summary of discussion at the end of the October 8 SDS meeting and his introduction of Jerry Rubin at the beginning of the October 22 meeting are included here as examples of the SDS orientation to political action. These two excerpts contain nearly all the themes mentioned in the present chapter. Planning immediate action around issues which will involve as many students as possible is given as the means of spreading the SDS analysis of social problems and confronting the institutions which structure society.

> Joseph: One of the things that was thrown around is the
> athletic referendum and ((we think)) that the money is
> being mismanaged by the Student Government and I think SDS
> should be instrumental in trying to get that five dollars
> away from athletics and reallocated properly in the univer-
> sity. Another concrete thing is educating the students to
> break out of their mentality as it is right now and to break
> up the larger classes by students teaching students, by grad-
> uate students teaching students, you have to stand up in

class and ask the students whether they are happy in the
size of classes that they are in. And if they say no then
you have to suggest to them that they break up the classes
into smaller classes and you want to work like that. (( ))
the professors say are going to have seminars instead of
large classes, I think most professors would be rather sym-
pathetic to such an idea and I don't believe that most of
my professors can really communicate the way they would
like to communicate with too many people. So here are two
concrete things that we can work on right now. I think
the first one is a lot more immediate problem. I think
they're both important, but I think we should work towards
that. The third thing that SDS has to move towards is
just to create a more political awareness among the stu-
dents towards things that are happening , the Mexican stu-
dents are being massacred and so on. ((And don't forget))
that we have a project to get a referendum going to get
the five dollars away from the athletic students, then that
means we have to petition again to get 500 signatures on
the referendum, and put on a large publicity campaign on
this and then secondly we plan out a proper campaign on
how to break up the classes. 13-2 (at end of meeting).

Joseph: ...New members in SDS. Our work has been fruitful
and we are growing in numbers. Some of the things that
might happen on this campus. I would just like to know
just by a show of hands how many people just came to see
Jerry Rubin and how many came because this is SDS. (gen-
eral laughter) How many came to just see Jerry Rubin?
(general laughter and commotion) The point is that I hope
you will come also in the future when Jerry Rubin and other
sideshow attractions are not around. Next Tuesday Mark
Rudd will be meeting with SDS. Mark Rudd is the one who
led the Columbia rebellion. In case you are just here for
the attraction you will be able to see the show on Thursday
noon, but if you want to stay, go ahead and stay. The
thing is we are going to do other things besides listen to
Jerry, there are other things SDS is involved in. And if
you are not interested in them then either leave or pay
attention. The steering committee of SDS met about two
weeks ago and we discussed a number of things. One was how
should SDS meet, what should the format be, some of the
things we came up with were, one, should have organized
meeting at the beginning, and then break down into smaller
groups, into small workshops where we can go and discuss
the issues so there is a lot of personal communication
amongst the people and then at the end meet again to find
some form of common path that we would like to take. Most
people agreed at the steering committee meeting that SDS is

a group trying to get some action done on campus, namely
democratization on the campus, student participation in
decision making, and of course just from the title you
know SDS stands For Students for a Democratic Society and
campus is only one tiny tiny little part of society and so
we are very much involved with everything that goes on in
the world and everything that goes on in Vancouver and in
B.C. and the rest of the world. SDS is trying to work to-
wards a sort of universal outlook, I guess. Now I don't
think we can get into a discussion on this. Another thing
from the steering committee meeting was the way student funds
are allocated on this campus....Now we're going to pass
these petitions around here. At the end I hope some of you
will come and take some of these petitions and take them to
your classes. So far we have about 150 names signed up,
we had more but somebody lost sheets and we'd like to get
500 to go to the next student council meeting to ask for
this referendum. After that we hope you will go out and
help us pass this referendum so we can do some proper cul-
tural programming on this campus. 14-1 (0-67)

CHAPTER FOUR

CONFLICT

As a novel experiment in radical politics, the SDU orienta-
tion was usually not very well received. Newcomers to meetings were
often at a loss to understand what was happening in the room since
SDU core members resisted verbalizing their orientation (i.e. it had
to be experienced). Among the newcomers were a number of radical
activists who had been involved in New Left groups before. The ac-
tivists tended to react in a much more direct and hostile manner to
SDU meeting procedures than did politically inexperienced newcomers.
In this chapter, clashes will be examined between radical activists
pushing for issue oriented action on campus and SDU members support-
ing interpersonal encounter as worthy political action in its own
right. The SDU newcomer problem as a general issue will be investi-
gated in the next chapter.

The SDU emphasis on interpersonal relations was a reaction
to the standard political approach of most New Left groups. In its
turn, SDU was viewed by those of more usual radical persuasion as an
aberration of New Left politics as it had developed in the 1960's.
Each orientation (SDU and SDS) reacted very strongly to the other. SDU
and SDS adherents could not agree on what constituted political action,
nor could they participate in one another's activities in a mutually
supportive way.

Throughout SDU meetings of the summer, a vocal minority of
students attended who represented a more SDS type of orientation.

Criticism of SDS tactics by SDU members, and criticism of SDU proce-

dures by those of SDS leanings occurred in every meeting in July and

August.

Paul, primary spokesman of the SDU orientation, stated at

the beginning of the first recorded meeting in July that group organ-

ization was something to be avoided because of tensions which it cre-

ated within the group.

> Paul: Talking in terms of organizing, you're going to
> start organizing a group and you are going to have those
> things happening. Pretty soon you're going to exclude
> people because they don't have the correct analysis and
> meanwhile three people are developing the correct analysis
> and then ((general laughter)) you get group loyalties to
> that person and all sorts of strange things happen and I'm
> not sure it's necessary to do that. 1-1 (0-5).

SDU would try to avoid inequality and factionalism through an un-

structured approach. Devices such as agendas could be discarded as

unnecessary restrictions on the free interchange of communications

within the meeting. Discarding agendas and chairmen bothered parti-

cipants with SDS leanings, who saw such devices as useful tools for

managing discussion.

> M-1: It seems to me that people can keep these things in
> mind and whoever feels it's important to talk about them
> will bring them up so we don't really, it seems to me, need
> a formalized agenda either.

> M-2: Well it's nice to have an agenda just to know what's
> in the air.

> M-1: But you hear that when people say what they're going
> to talk about.

> Ivan: What's the fear of an agenda, though. Are we running
> an agenda or is an agenda running us. I mean an agenda is
> a control of the group. I'm not afraid of an agenda at all,

in fact it's a good little guide paper, I look at it that way. I think it a very useful thing to have. 1-1 (242-246).

SDS proponents skeptically questioned that what was happening in SDU meetings was politically relevant to things happening in the world outside the meeting room. Yet proposals that politics could be relegated to any particular sphere of human activity were rejected by those supporting the SDU orientation.

> M-1: Supposedly we call it Students for a Democratic University.
>
> Paul: For, or against? (general laughter)
>
> M-1: which is a takeoff on Students for a Democratic Society, I would suspect, Students for a Democratic this that, ah, you know, we pick up the name of a group which does tackle what in our society we call political problems, in other words, how are we going to get the bread to the bellies of the people, basically what the whole thing is about is getting bread to the bellies without having to sell souls, right.
>
> Several people: No!! 2-1 (525-535)

When Ivan directed the August 15 meeting away from SDU ideas of political action through interpersonal relations, he was challenged for attempting to set university students up as an elite group which could lead others. Statements proposing organization and leadership directly contradicted SDU ideas regarding individuality and equality in interaction and political action.

> M-1: Last time I was here the thing was called SDU, you know, which was Students for a Democratic University, now the name has been changed to SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, and we're working on certain ideas here, effectively we're still working as SDU, we're more ((in)) the university, and you say well somehow that relates to this corporate structure in society, what I suspect is

happening is that somehow a change would occur at the uni-
versity somehow, eventually in some mysterious way, changes
would result in society, doesn't that sort of presuppose
that the university people are some sort of elite group.
4-1 (254-257).

The priority of the SDS orientation always remained the concrete

action of confrontation, regardless of the importance accorded to

relations within the group. Group dialogue was a means to SDS ac-

tion, while to SDU, interaction was the end in itself.

> M-1: This whole thing seems to be going nowhere, I mean
> this idea ((of relating)) to one another is a very nice
> thing and I think in your speech today (speaking to Paul)
> you gave sort of a similar idea, let's relate to people,
> and only when we can relate to people can we perhaps change
> the world. If we start talking about developing ourselves
> and sort of finding ourselves, Christ we could go on from
> now until eternity and the world would still be (( ))
> ...I think it's an important part but I don't think that it
> ((should be)) a priority. You have to have sort of a com-
> bination. You have to develop sort of a dialogue in the
> group and at the same time you have to find an object and
> then either confront it if you use a Marxist analysis or
> try to evolve some change within this given structure....
> 6-1 (246-252)

Differing conceptions of what constituted political action made mean-

ingful communication between the two orientations nearly impossible.

SDU core members were well aware of the difficulties their orientation

presented to the uninitiated. Their awareness of communication as a

natural experiential process set them apart from activists who used

discussion as the taken for granted means to future action.

> Nick: It's very easy to relate in action, very easy in-
> deed, and I think there's much more difficulty in relat-
> ing at the interpersonal level and this is probably why
> we're here and the others there. 7-2 (166-169)

In September there were major confrontations between SDU

core members and SDS oriented political activists (many of whom had

just arrived for the new academic year). At the September 26 meeting

of SDU there occurred the most heated and direct confrontation between

SDU and SDS adherents. Most of the rough transcript of this meeting

follows next and will be analyzed to show how irrevocable the split

between the two approaches was.

<p style="text-align:center">September 26
(SDU)</p>

SDU: <u>Leo</u>, <u>Natasha</u> and **Paul**   were founding members of SDU. <u>Lothar</u>

and <u>M-4</u> began attending in September. Lothar supports the SDU

orientation more strongly here than he would have had no con-

frontation with activists occurred.

SDS: <u>Joseph</u>, a primary advocate of the SDS **orientation**,was attend-

ing his first and only SDU meeting. <u>Julius</u>, a member of Young

Socialists, was also aligned with the SDS position, but was bas-

ically interested in recruiting for the Young Socialist Club.

1   M-1: I want to push everyone around, would anybody mind,
2   I mean like literally, I wish this meeting was in Peter's
3   office, that's all.

4   M-?: Why don't you get in the circle?

5   Lothar: That's it. Why don't you go down to the cafeteria
6   and start educating people about Young Socialists just
7   the same way you are educating us.

8   Julius: I have to look for those people who are prepared
9   to be receptive to these ideas therefore I go to those
10 areas where I think they're going to be receptive. I come
11 to Students for a Democratic Society because I think
12 they might be receptive, this is why I go to NDP, I'm
13 not going to go to the Conservative or the Liberal Club.

14 Lothar: Why not?

15 Julius: Because I want to convince them.

16 M-2: Why don't we put the university in order first before
17 we try society.

18 Leo: Why do you think people will be unreceptive?

19 Julius: Some people don't know about these things.

20 Leo: My own feeling is that it isn't much more of a problem
21 than our own political analysis. A lot of own personal
22 things, I am looking to be free and many things at uni-
23 versity don't allow me that freedom. Rules to get rid of,
24 one of them being the chairman rule, end up experimenting
25 with new ideas.

26 Julius: Chairman rules is less important than the fact
27 that 80% of Vancouver workers....These rules of our society
28 are more important than concern with chairman because he
29 might abuse his power. The role of the chairman is quite
30 clear, i.e. identifying people who wish to speak and so
31 on. If you believe in democracy then a chairman is
32 understandable, if you're an anarchist then I can under-
33 stand your position (general laughter).

34 Leo: I don't feel like an anarchist.

35 Julius: I didn't say that, if you were then your position
36 is logical.

37 M-3: You're saying that you're either an anarchist or you
38 want a chairman. I think we got to start building some
39 ground support among students.

40 Leo: I guess the reason I come here is one of the things I
41 find really difficult to learn and that is how to relate
42 to people and how to listen to people and how to stay
43 away from the things I consider very stupid
44 (political theory arguments where nobody learns a thing).
45 I want to share what I am with these people here and
46 build up some kind of trust. I don't feel that this
47 group at this point should make any political decision.
48 The biggest problem is how people relate to one another
49 and become aware of one another.

50 Lothar: Can I just make a suggestion. You think the admin-
51 istration is like channeling down information to you and
52 what you are suggesting is a group that channels down
53 information. We tell the students what the issues are,
54 I don't feel it's my thing to go around and tell twenty
55 thousand other people what the issues are, most of them

56 are fairly intelligent. Like what Leo is saying is what
57 I am saying.

58 (several talk at once)

59 Lothar: Making friends is really of supreme importance.
60 The purpose of all political things in the long run is
61 making it easier for people to relate to one another.
62 People talk about the university being depersonalized, if
63 you're relating to other people, you're not going to be
64 depersonalized any more. I don't feel depersonalized
65 this year. It's a label, it's a hangup.

66 Joseph: Communication will come anyway. Must keep in mind
67 that we live in a social context within which decisions
68 are made. We are here because we want to change the social
69 context. I would agree with most of what Julius said
70 except for one thing in which he said that students don't
71 cause revolutions, in history most revolutions were
72 caused by students. In France and in Mexico and in the
73 States today a lot of leadership comes from students
74 because are in a privileged position to read and discuss.

75 Paul: I feel right now in the room the conversation is
76 becoming particularly difficult. We should spend five
77 seconds to reorganize ourselves in the room so we can
78 pay attention to one another. Second, in response to
79 Joseph, that's another abstract political statement; in
80 response to Julius I would like to present the position
81 of the Martian Communist Party, I find Julius's position
82 hopelessly bourgeois. The recurrent feature of the two
83 meetings since school has started is two tendencies, one
84 tendency is the standard leftist student response repre-
85 senting the things Bob said, a body of people who quickly
86 decide on projects in engaging in to convince the student
87 body, that tendency is present here. Second tendency
88 is from a smaller group of people among the student left
89 essentially like what Leo had to say, consisting of
90 imagining a Left success producing a society as boring
91 and meaningless as the people proposing it now feel this
92 one to be, instead they propose techniques for personal
93 revolution and psychotherapeutic remarks. The argument is
94 (and I am in the second group of people) that the trans-
95 actions that people engage in are essentially aggressive,
96 jealous, hysterical, self-defensive and violent; simply
97 political change founded on the same emotions may produce
98 no qualitative change at all. This group is interested
99 in continuing discussing what I would describe as community
100 or freaky talk. I sense that these two groups exist here

101 in this room at this very minute. Last week several people
102 recognized the situation and those people interested in
103 organization made several efforts to organize around a
104 particular issue or simply to organize and these were
105 unsuccessful efforts and many people felt frustrated.
106 The proposal was that those people who wanted to
107 organize had to go into another room to do this.
108 A better proposal might have been that everybody might have
109 left the room (since it is hard for those who wanted to
110 organize to leave with the others staying) and two places
111 be designated for the two groups. I am not going to pro-
112 pose it at this point but I will propose it prospec-
113 tively in case you continue to feel frustrated at this
114 meeting. This might be one solution, as a Martian Communist
115 might envisage, the possibility of two groups of people in
116 the university both of whom could appear under the same
117 name; one the SDU interested in community and freaky talk
118 and the other the SDU interested in organizing around issues.
119 Make it clear what it is that people are there for. This
120 might be an interesting experiment in student politics. I
121 see the student movement moving towards increased repre-
122 sentation within the corporate structure and while this
123 is useful, it isn't as interesting as what I would hope
124 to do.

125 M-2: Let's take five seconds and reorganize.

126 Joseph: Let's get some opinion as to what you are trying
127 to do. Paul is right, there are different elements
128 within this group. I thought this group would be one for
129 action to change society. I see some kind of action that
130 will involve the students that we can get involved in
131 that will have certain results in increasing awareness
132 among the students.

133 M-?: How do you go about creating awareness in someone else?

134 Paul: I do my best to create awareness.

135 M-?: Gee, that's really great.

136 Natasha: Either change the name or have SDU #1 and SDU #2
137 and when you advertise say that SDU #1 is action and SDU #2
138 is freaky and you can go to both of them or you can go
139 to one of them but don't make them the same day.

140 Paul: Julius, I feel the power of your political
141 convictions and this proposal may be difficult for you
142 and make an effort to understand this because it may

143 not be in the context of ordinary political reality
144 as you have experienced it.

145 Julius: First, you said from the position of the Martian
146 that I was essentially bourgeois.

147 Paul: I thought that would get a rise out of you.

148 (general laughter)

149 Julius: You're the bourgeois because you don't have any
150 idea of what you're talking about. (laughter) You use it
151 in a meaningless sense. The position you hold is apolitical
152 because when I talk about politics I mean groups of people
153 attempting change. Your apolitical position is essential-
154 ly the product of a bourgeois society. It seems
155 to me that we should be here for action. As soon as any
156 sort of discussion is proposed, you want to split into
157 two groups. I really don't know what you're doing here
158 at all. If you want a psycho-therapy class, why don't
159 you go down to the Psych. labs and get on with it.

160 M-?: Why not here?

161 (several talk)

162 Paul: Julius, we are not faced with the ecological
163 problem this evening, my comments refer more to the
164 problems of last week.

165 Julius: Let's take another point about SDU #1 and SDU #2.
166 I actually don't see too much of an objection to that
167 although it's confusing. I suggest that if people want to
168 have a psychotherapy group and an action group that the
169 latter instead of forming an SDU #2 instead come along
170 to our Young Socialist's Club.

171 Leo: You seem to have all the problems and all the solutions
172 set out, but I guess I neither want to be converted nor
173 to convert anybody else.

174 Joseph: I think there is one common basis for both of
175 you and that is that you are both trying to change the
176 existing status quo.

177 Leo: I guess at this point that Julius and I can't agree
178 on the means.

179 M-4: I had an experience at an SDU meeting at which
180 I proposed the same sort of things as Bob that we need

181 to organize and send out feelers to know to whom we
182 are opposed. We have to know our enemy before we will
183 be able to fight. Will have to organize even though
184 don't like a power structure. I was swayed from this
185 point of view. I had split the political arena from
186 interpersonal relationships, and I was convinced out of
187 that by Leo, Lothar, and some others. All organizations
188 which have tried to organize like the group they are
189 fighting have not succeeded so far, instead we should
190 get into our own heads and relate better to people.

191 Joseph: Relationships result from something in the environ-
192 ment. That doesn't mean you can't have relationships.
193 A group like this which is a movement and is heading in
194 a direction has to have an understanding of ideology,
195 and it can consist of just knowing what we are against
196 so we can move against it. It is not enough to come here
197 and just discuss things just for the sake of discussion.

198 M-4: How can you expect us as a group to relate to another
199 group if we can't relate as persons?

200 Joseph: Who says we aren't relating by just talking to
201 each other.

202 Lothar: I got this feeling when you, ah we were talking
203 before that it was like a war and I got the feeling of
204 anger and hate coming out of you and it was just frighten-
205 ing.

206 Julius: I have a feeling about my position, I'm fairly
207 certain of it.

208 Natasha: Julius, you said something about how you didn't
209 want people interrupting you. Then you interrupted me,
210 and I was going to propose some action, this idea of
211 sitting in in this place. What do you do, you interrupt
212 me and I never get any farther.

213 Julius: I'm sorry, I apologize.

214 Lothar: Julius, I wasn't through with what I was going to
215 say. The end purpose of all political action is because
216 you want a better society. If you keep carrying this
217 back, it would be so people would be better able to relate
218 to one another. I wonder if I could be able to relate
219 to anyone any better under a socialist society than
220 I could under society now. We've been creating societies
221 and are we relating any better than we did five thousand

222 years ago. We have to start getting better as human
223 beings.

224 (Lothar and Julius both talk at same time)

225 M-4: I guess what's more important than what this group
226 can do as a power group is what I can do politically
227 by myself. I spend most of my time not with this group
228 and there are a lot of things that have to be done.
229 I want to be aware of situations and be more effective.
230 Only by improving our own lives are we going to improve
231 our society.

232 Paul: People who are very interested in interrelations
233 are very interested in the political meanings of this.
234 Somehow with the two group thing we seem to be polarizing
235 everything here and getting into two opposite camps.
236 There should be some room for people in the middle. I've
237 been involved in this argument three or four times now
238 since the early summer. I just wonder how much longer
239 we can go on talking about this. 8-1 (first 3/4 of meeting)
                                     (not a word for word transcription)

The SDU and SDS orientations crystallized into clear and simple positions and no one changed their stand.

In lines 30-33, Julius (referring to Leo's comment of 24-25 about not needing a chairman) defends the usefulness of a chairman. He assigns positions for and against a chairman into logical types, and labels each position. The SDU resistance against a chairman can be understood as an 'anarchist' position. When Leo says he "doesn't feel like an anarchist", Julius clarifies that Leo may not be an anarchist, but that if he were then his position would make rational sense. Understanding and sense are viewed as solely intellectual attributes.

The SDS orientation proposes doing the same thing as the administration, according to Lothar (50-57). Like the administration,

SDS proponents would set themselves up as leaders and tell other people what to do. SDU proponents try to speak only for themselves and don't feel anyone has the right to direct other people.

Joseph and Paul show disinterest in each other's positions in lines 66-79. Communication, the essence of SDU political action, is passed aside by Joseph as something which will come naturally. He sees communication as the medium of discussion which leads to getting things done, i.e. a taken for granted part of working in groups. Everybody knows how to communicate. What is more important to Joseph is relating problems to analysis (at the level of social context), and discussing the role of students as a leadership group in international struggles. Paul (75-78)directs talk back to the people interactionally together at that moment in the room. He considers quality of interaction more important than content and interrupts the process of talk to inquire into its intensity and depth. People must be aware of one another for anything to be worth saying, and Joseph's utterance on social context and student leadership is "another abstract political statement". Abstract statements are useless in SDU meetings because they restrict communication to the intellectual level and limit mutual awareness between individuals. Verbalizations are only one form of communication among many others, and abstract political discussion is just one variety of verbal communication.

The interchange between Paul and Julius in lines 140-159 provides a clear example of different concepts which define 'political'

and 'action'. Paul asks Julius to break free from his usual concep-
tion of political reality in order that he might understand the

need for two different types of political groups on campus, each

equally useful and each offering different things to prospective

participants. Julius, speaking next (beginning 145), refers back

to Paul's comment of 80-82 (a pun on conflicts of ideological theory)

to state that what Paul has to say is meaningless politically. Paul

is apolitical because politics means groups of people attempting

change. The purpose of meeting is to plan action, yet every time

action is proposed, the SDU counter-proposal is made that two dif-

ferent groups be formed. Julius claims SDU meetings might better

be conducted in the Psychology labs since they have no recognizable

political purpose. SDU seems a total failure when judged intellec-

tually in traditional Left categories.

SDU members judge the SDS orientation over the quality of

relationships between individuals, the SDU orientation being a re-

action to the standard politics of most Left groups. Paul defines

the standard student leftist approach as 'quickly engaging in pro-

jects to involve the student body' (85-98), and foresees a Left suc-

cess producing a society no different from the status quo. Politi-

cal change based on the same violent, hysterical and aggressive emo-

tions which mark the order overthrown cannot result in something

qualitatively different. Essentially the same argument appears in

lines 187-190, i.e. that organizations which resemble their enemy

don't succeed in changing anything. Joseph replies by stating SDU

should be a group which is part of a movement heading in a direction. At least enough consensus on ideology must be attained to identify the enemy. Discussion by itself is not enough and relating to people per se is not the issue; more importantly, it is the context within which relations occur that must be altered. Following on Joseph's comments, Lothar applies the SDU criticism of traditional Left groups very pointedly (202-205). He asserts that Julius demonstrates all those feelings which make meaningful transactions (i.e. interpersonal trust and closeness) between individuals impossible. Natasha brings discussion back to the Here and Now by criticizing Julius for having interrupted her earlier. She does SDU political action in questioning Julius' conduct as an individual towards other individuals.

Paul is fearful of the sharp polarization between the two orientations in the meeting (232-239). People who might not hold either position are forced into one camp or the other. Neither orientation can conduct business as it would prefer. Both are forced into a confrontory verbal mode which does not allow for discussion between followers of the same orientation. SDU would ideally be operating through non-verbal modes and trying to engender a spirit of mutuality. SDS would ideally be planning for later action and trying to arrive at group consensus to that end.

Joseph and Ivan called the first meeting of SDS on October 1, partly as a result of frustrations with the SDU meeting of the previous week. The last SDU meeting occurred two days later on

October 3. Comments about the opposing orientation were made in
each of these meetings. The following excerpts from taperecordings
of the two meetings demonstrate once again the deep and permanent bar-
riers which separated the SDU and SDS approaches to radical student
politics.

FIRST FORMAL SDS MEETING - OCTOBER 1, 1968

Ivan: I don't know I, ah Joseph (( )) can't speak for
him, for my myself I have (( )) feeling of frustration
and dissatisfaction with the way the SDU has been going in
the last couple of weeks. Personal, ah not personal frus-
tration in that having been there all summer I enjoyed
that kind of thing except that I didn't really believe for
myself or for the majority of the people who were coming to
the meetings it was effective or desireable and this is why
I go along with Joseph on, ah, proposing a more SDS type
of (( )) ((as evolved in)) the States, oriented structure.
What do you say about that, Joseph?

Joseph: I just came to one meeting and I was very disap-
pointed. I found it very (( )). I came here expecting a
lot more political views, a much more active (( ))... I
thought that this group could come up with certain sugges-
tions that would better ((exercise)) the thinking of this
group and that's why I think we should either split off
from SDU, leave all the psychological hangups behind, or I
would just try to continue just working on speech areas and
Cultural Events. I certainly think that (( )) group work
and group action rather than individuals doing their thing
and doing what's in their bag and so on, we can come up
with a lot clearer, deeper analysis of the situation to-
gether and can speak a lot better. I think that Julius
who's coming tonight ah, he made one very logical thing,
logical statement last time in which he said that what we
have to do is sit down and figure out a course of action,
a set of goals that we want to achieve, and I think that,
that's personally my idea, that's the type of group that I
would like to be in.

Ivan: But, I think that, I would share everything Joseph
said there, and I personally would like to see the name
SDS changed, to avoid this kind of confusion in case SDU

wishes to continue, which is something which we all under-
stand. And also for the cultural effect of the United
States, I would like to make it a viable thing here, that's
just my own personal belief, I would like, maybe somehow,
in the course of the meeting tonight, or in the course
of future meetings, we can come up with something which
identifies ourself, our programs, our policy, our analysis.
10-1 (0-95).

LAST SDU MEETING - OCTOBER 3, 1968

Paul: ...At the Tuesday meeting of SDS, if I understand
it, there was, I find there was enough discomfort about
the absence of a chairman that finally a chairman devel-
oped and immediately, immediately the whole notion of what
the chairman was for got lost, and at least by contradic-
tory reports, as I understand it, immediately the meeting
fell into the procedures of instead of having a chairman
for the purpose of just presenting some order for speakers
such that they wouldn't be talking on top of each other,
the chairman became a kind of political arbitrator who had
to deal with motions, amendments, points of order, and all
the paraphernalia that essentially radical students have
opposed as being like the very defeating mechanisms of
bureaucratic kind of government which characterized the
university. 12-1 (near beginning of meeting).

Lothar: (referring to October 1 SDS meeting): It was
very weird because we had a waiting list of people to speak
and we all had to raise our hands when we wanted to speak
and ten minutes later after you've wanted to speak and you
really felt this big emotional urge to speak at something
cause you got sort of emotionally violent and then ten min-
utes later you get to speak and you didn't even want to
speak, you sort of felt dead after waiting around for ten
minutes, and every time it just seems to me that well
the thing about the education, anybody as far as I'm con-
cerned could have stood up, said they should have a peti-
tion, have a boycott, and we could have printed one up and
I don't see that that was four hours of haranguing about
that.

Paul: I think it should be recognized, it may take a
great variety of ways to do these things but the process of
doing them are informative for the people who are engaged
in the process, but the more important point that you make,
is that like in my own observation has been that for radical
groupings it's just as likely that they form elitist bodies

and I've heard endlessly people who have come to Marxist-
Leninist conclusions and essentially are mouthed phrases
about the masses and participation with the masses, have
essentially shown absolute contempt for the very people
who they propose to address. Like if somebody comes up
with something just the most incredible contemptuous put-
down of that person as a person, and yet those are pur-
portedly the very people who are being addressed. Anyone
in this kind of politics that, who proposes democratic
structures and ends up adopting that kind of personal stance
towards other people strikes me as being in an incredibly
bad space, I don't see what the value of their politics
is, that they devalue the politics that quickly. 12-1
(456-467).

CHAPTER FIVE

NEWCOMERS TO SDU

Any group which expects to grow in size and influence must make provisions for recruiting new members and educating a body of people into the philosophy under which the group operates. Newcomers to SDU posed peculiar problems. SDU differed from meetings with a chairman, agenda, and explicit formalized structure with established meeting rules. SDU was not considered a decision-making body, nor did it plan anything, so there was no need felt for a structure which would facilitate those kinds of activities. Ideally any person should be able to say whatever was on his mind. Other individuals present should be aware of what was being communicated by this person, even if it were something as subtle as a mood or impression.

Not only did newcomers have to be brought into an intimate situation which relied only on interpersonal ties to make a group out of unique individuals; they had to be brought in without verbal explanation. To verbally explain what happened in a SDU meeting would at least for the length of the explanation keep community experience from happening in the room. Operating in the abstract verbal mode would prevent those present from being experientially aware of one another. In addition, any explanation would provide conceptual structure for future occasions experienced by the newcomer, a fact quite contrary to the SDU ideal of a spontaneous, structureless interpersonal encounter in the Here and Now. When pressed continually to make

sense of what was happening, experienced SDU members had to decide whether to risk a verbal explanation rather than lose the person altogether as a prospective member. Many newcomers left soon after the start of meetings, a phenomena which worried core members. Although the meeting only began to work successfully when many newcomers had departed, the core members were faced with the realization that they were not involving even a small part of the student body.

The crux of the problem was that experienced members viewed the meeting as a collection of unique individuals together as a 'group' only by virtue of their mutual presence, while newcomers viewed the situation as a meeting of the group SDU (a radical political entity). Old members saw the individual as the basic unit, the 'group' being produced only out of the complete participation and awareness of all the individuals present. Prospective members, on the other hand, seemed to expect a group meeting where individuals worked together as parts of some greater whole. Newcomers were judging SDU activities at the conceptual level of 'group entity', but SDU core members were totally unwilling to be robbed of their individuality. The only way newcomers could understand what was happening was to participate in the experience of the meeting. If they demanded a verbal explanation first, there was little possibility of experiential understanding. It could be said 'a willing suspension of disbelief' was needed. Only by 'letting things happen' could newcomers hope to become part of the 'community', and this was impossible once the split between newcomers and oldtimers was made verbal.

Older members came to question whether someone who had not shared in the experiences of the core group could ever hope to merge into the social community. The core group held so many shared understandings that a newcomer could never achieve mutuality, even if past history of the group were verbalized. A tremendous barrier was seen to exist in the non-verbal shared experiences of those who somehow knew what was happening in the meeting, but 'weren't telling' those who didn't know. Yet attempts to limit the size of the group were opposed as leading to the formation of a clique. Everyone must be allowed to come, even if they were to leave with an unclear picture of what was happening and spread false stories about the activities of the group. Bringing new members into the group remained the greatest single problem SDU faced while it was open to the general student body at Province University. Later confrontations with student radicals demanding concrete action would not have presented such a threat had SDU been more successful in recruiting new members during the summer.

SDU was initially seen as an educational process which could expose students on campus to the opportunity to engage individually in a variety of activities and communicate their experiences to other people. In early meetings there was speculation as to what would happen when the academic year began again in September and many newcomers would be attending.

> Paul: Come September, there's going to be hundreds of students who want to be in SDU, I don't know whether you believe that or not, there will just be loads of students who want

to be in SDU, that's just going to be a great thing to be
in this year. Student politics is okay suddenly, it's res-
pectable, student power is to be taken seriously, it's no
longer a joke...so it's not a task distribution problem
or anything like that, so that it seems to me as an edu-
cational outfit, how is it going to be possible for fifty
or a hundred or more people to feel free to talk on the
campus and to write on the campus publicly for each other,
and to act individually wherever they are in such a way
that it makes some sense in terms of how they think the
world ought to be, which is what it is to have a politics.
2-2 (42-47).

Even if hundreds of students could be expected to come to meetings,

a certain degree of commitment need be demanded of them. Meetings

could become an intense flux of interpersonal encounter, and people

had to be very much "in the room" (i.e. aware of other people at each

succeeding moment in time) in order to participate in the process.

Without participating, newcomers would become confused and interfere

with the ongoing spontaneity of activities.

Paul: Do you feel funny about XXXX being in and out?...

Peter: It seems to me if we're going to have open meetings,
we either invite these people in to take part or fuck off...

Stephan: I don't want people to see an SDU meeting, I want
people to be in an SDU meeting or out of an SDU meeting.
1-2 (310-311).

SDU need not be what students attending for the first time

expected it to be, nor need it adapt to the many different political

interests brought into the room. Experiencing an SDU meeting would

hopefully be so involving and novel that these original expectations

and interests could be changed without use of verbal debate and ex-

planation.

Stephan: Obviously everybody who comes in here is going to
come in here with a different set of presupposed expecta-

tions, and obviously it would probably be best if none of
them were ever ((fulfilled)) because then you would be chal-
lenged to change all your expectations and come around to
realizing where we were at. The hardest thing, like in a
few weeks from now somebody will come in and say I'm a
Marxist-Leninist and where are all your heads at, and they
won't have gone through everything that we went through,
but hopefully we will be somewhere sufficiently different
from them and somewhere sufficiently interesting that
their expectations will change. 2-1 (562-565).

By August 8 the core group had been meeting long enough to

develop some shared understandings on meeting procedures, but there

as yet had been no trouble with large numbers of confused newcomers.

August 8 was the first occasion where a clear division was felt be-

tween core members and newcomers who had no idea of what was happen-

ing in the meeting situation. Core members attempted to use tech-

niques to instruct newcomers. Examples were made or taken from ex-

periences happening in the room. Verbalizations then had a referent

in the Here and Now rather than being abstractions distant from ex-

periential reality. Newcomers rarely understood such examples.

They instead continued to press for a rational explanation which

would make the meeting fit with their expectations of what a radical

political meeting ought to look like.

The excerpts from the August 8th tape transcript which

follow demonstrate interchanges which occurred between newcomers

and SDU core members.

AUGUST 8 SDU

Transcript

An example of what can happen, i.e. anything can happen in an SDU meeting. Half of the people have shared experiences which unified them, and feel confused in a constrained situation.

Paul: This weekend about half of us who are in the room were in what started out as a student radical meeting, supposedly, and developed into a non-directed or unleadered encounter group for about forty-eight hours. And about eight or nine of us in the room were present during most of it, and feel puzzled about what it is we're doing here at this moment. 3-1 (205-211).

Natasha won't allow herself to be forced into an abstract verbal statement about what is supposed to happen in an SDU meeting.

Natasha: I also think it's very silly of us to sit here and try and tell you what we do.
Peter: Yeah, but we're doing it (( ))
Natasha: (( )) Actually I feel a little uncomfortable trying being put in that position, because I feel like I have to say something that I have to come up with something, and I don't particularly feel that there is anything that I can come up with.
M-1: Or would you rather engage in reflective contemplation for a while.

SDU requires some commitment. One must either participate or stay outside.

Natasha: No (murmur from several people), no, like we said once that we didn't want anyone to be able to come and see, that no one could just sort of pass by in the hall and say, well I went by and saw the SDU meeting last night, that people you know were either at an SDU meeting or they weren't at an SDU meeting. By sitting here trying to explain to you what we do at SDU meetings, you're about to become an observer.

Explanation takes away the spontaneity in the room.

M-?: Oh, okay.
M-1: I think part of what's being said is that, it's more than just social structure and political structure that's people, and maybe if we can't just change structures and change our culture and our ·society outside but we have to change ourselves inside as well, because we're a product of

SDU action occurs in the Here and Now.

Don't limit the group. Instead when number gets too large, break up into several smaller groups. There is a point at which there are too many people, but limiting the group is no solution.

An abstract conceptual statement when judged by SDU standards.

The referent of talk must be in immediate experience in the Here and Now.

An example drawn from immediate experience and made verbal.

SDU can be anything. People must make it something.

this structure that we're trying to change, and a lot of us have been batting our heads against walls all aummer trying to change bureaucracies using bureaucratic methods, it isn't going to work too well.
M-2: What's the alternative, missionary work?
Peter: Right here, right now is the alternative!!
M-2: How large can this group get before/ (( ))
Peter: /Well, this is what I said before, is the fact that when certian people came in there was one reaction like that the people for some bureaucratic reasoning in someone's head shouldn't be there but I just think in terms of we'd better get a bigger room, and then sooner or later it's going to get a little bit too big and then everybody (( )) break up and people will have smaller groups, I think that's another thing. 3-1 (301-314).

M-L: I'm just asking a question about, you know, it seems to me that there is a conflict of philosophy between the idea that you can make everybody else (( )) or you can do it, as, you know, in terms of a function.
Peter: But, let's keep it right here though in the room, and only talk about things which are relevant right now. It's awful hard to do, but.
Natasha: Ah, like right now I'm really bothered because I think at least three people are really uncomfortable.
F-2: Yeah...
M-1: What is the SDU meeting...
Natasha: Exactly, yes, it's whatever we think
(phone rings and several talk)
Paul: I don't know, I'm willing to play any game you want to play, everyone can say where they are, or we can do group sex, or smoke dope or talk

The outside world must not be allowed to interfere with what is happening.
If people don't do anything, nothing will happen in the meeting.

Verbalizing a split between newcomers and older members.

Old members are uncomfortable with so many newcomers present.

Newcomers come in with expectations which aren't fulfilled. There appears to be no structure or meaning at all. They are confused about how to act and what to do.

about philosophy, or answer the telephone.
(laughter, phone rings)
Peter: No, don't answer the phone.
(phone rings again)
Paul: If you want to sit around, it'll produce just sitting around.
M-2: Ah, it seems to me that this is sort of just a cleaning out process and getting rid of garbage so that what people start ((from)) it's like working out all this reflective hopes or whatever and because we don't have someone to tell us go there and go here but it starts coming from within but we can't go from within if we're still thinking of somebody saying go there go there go there.
M-?: That's good stuff.
Natasha: I see the problem that we're having right now as that there's a lot of people who have never been here before and you people that have been here before have done/
(several talk at once)
Natasha: No, I don't think so.
(babble of voices continues)
M-?: I don't see anyone so far discussing the problem.
Natasha: Yeah, I do.
F-2: You see what? I don't see a problem.
Paul: Well, I see a problem that the people who have been here before seem confused now and the people who haven't been here before must feel confused because this is like when you go to something, like go to the Varsity Theater, I know the movie is always going on and the guy runs the movie, and if I got there and there wasn't any movie going I'd feel confused and I think that that must be a reasonable feeling that you know there's no movie going on and this is a movie theater.
M-3: I'm going to get confused if you keep arguing that way.

Old members must try to re-
late to newcomers and make
them feel a part of the com-
munity.

Verbalizing the split.

Proposal for relating to
newcomers, i.e. have them
tell their experience in
the room.
Objection to forcing or
constructing anything to
happen. Must happen spon-
taneously.

Split verbalized as newcomers
and old members being physi-
cally divided, distant, and
in exclusive groups.

Trying to relate to newcomers.

Introduction proposed, but
seen as too difficult with
so many people present.

Joking about having a chair-
man to produce order.

(general laughter)
Paul: And ah/
M-3: /No ah, I figure I'm not in a
movie, I'm here.
Paul: No, that's, I think that's
that may be fine for you, but frankly,
ah, I feel that those of us who have
been at meetings before are not being
particularly helpful in making any
explanation or effort to talk to
people who haven't been here before
and maybe it's just as simple as
people who have been here before
and people who haven't, I don't think
that we're doing anything about mak-
ing, we're not making anything parti-
cularly clear. Because and ah.
M-1: Well, let's let the people who
have been who haven't been here be-
fore say what they feel and maybe
instead of projecting.
Natasha: Well, what do we do to one
each one as though to turn our finger
on them. I mean
M-?: Well, how did this all start
in the first place
(murmur)
M-4: (( )) it's all divided right
there, all those people who have
been here before on one side and only
a very few of us who have been here
before are on this side, and I think
that means something...
(small talk and then silence)
M-5: There's four people on the couch
that I don't know.
Natasha: Yeah.
M-1: Let's let's introduce each
other, can we?
M-?: Is that alright?
(mutterings and no's)
Natasha: There's too many.
(several talk)
M-?: Let's have a chair.
(laughter)
M-6: Sure man, have a chair.
(small talk)

Joking about style of meeting most contrary to SDU procedures.

Need to see people and be close to them to relate.

Physical presence is not leading to relating between individuals. No sense of unity between individuals, and people are not responsive and open.

Newcomer feels left out of group which seems unified and unwilling to bring new people in.

'Group' is a unity of unique individuals. Everyone must participate to create unity. When new people come it is hard to recreate this feeling.

The group must, however, remain open to all interested newcomers.

Every individual is important to the meeting because the meeting consists of interaction between individuals. So many new people are attending that people cannot know each other and relate intimately.

M-6: Hey, this is like a fucking Faculty meeting.
(laughter)
Natasha: Well, you're hidden, you know that, totally hidden.
M-?: I can't even see who you are. Who are you?
(several people engage in small talk)
Peter: (with a loud exhale of breath) This is the same malaise that came the other time, remember, We're at the point where we can say fine, we're a community, great, and there's this once a week thing again and there's got to be another stage we haven't even seen yet.
M-7: If you're a community it's typical I figure of every other community that's ever existed, cause you can't accept outsiders or intruders in your situation, so
Peter: You can't?
M-7: You're just perpetuating what's been going on in the past and you're not changing anything.
Natasha: No, ah, what's difficult/
Peter: Explain that.
Natasha: /here is that this group does not work, without everynody in the group working; right?
M-7: Okay.
Natasha: So that everytime the membership of the group changes, it becomes very difficult for it to get started.
Ivan: Just like a seance, man. If everybody isn't holding hands, it just doesn't work.
Natasha: Alright, so that different meetings every time
M-?: So do you close the group?
Peter and others: No!!
(many talk at once)
Natasha: It's just that it's a different meeting every time because the complement, like even one person, changes it very much, because the interactions are all altered, and tonight it's so so really different, it's almost equally old and new people.
3-1 (between 340-390).

Questioning the quality of interaction in the room. People aren't being open and responsive.

Natasha: We're really not talking to each other. Most of us aren't responding to each other and not listening.

M-1: Nobody's really interested in what the last person said, last person makes a comment and somebody exercises their wit on that (referring to an earlier argument between Ivan and Leo).

(silence)

People are leaving without having communicated or having felt a part of the group.

Natasha: Like we've already lost, a whole bunch of people left already and we didn't stop them and ask them why they were going. 3-1 (411-414)

M-3: Well I think that there's a large group of people who are a group of people here who have a number of shared common experiences of community in specific, and its only natural that people who don't share those same experiences are going to have a tough time orienting, like and so the group that has been here before can't react together totally as if there's no one here.

Natasha: Why not?

Spontaneity and unity are very difficult with newcomers present who are onlookers and remain strangers as individuals.

M-3: Because there are presences, ah you know it's just those people who haven't been here before that they haven't shared the same thing and therefore don't have the same reference points.

Newcomers cannot share in the activities of the group because they haven't shared in past experiences of community.

M-4: Yeah, but isn't that something for us to worry about?

M-5: Yeah, I don't think we have to make an effort to teach new people.

Natasha: The only, no ah (( ))

M-3: No, I'm not saying that it's any effort to teach

M-5: That that as I mentioned before, should we not explain what's happening, ah

Problem of how to inform newcomers about what is happening. Is teaching possible?

Natasha: I think the only thing that bothers me is the thought that ah perhaps these people, I didn't want people to come in and then to leave

Anybody is free to come, but
newcomers must give themselves
to what is happening in the
room. People must be recep-
tive and stay for long enough
to understand the idea of
community.

The quality of interaction is
more important than the con-
tent of whatever business is
going on. Must be aware of
and respond to one another as
people first of all.

Non-verbal communication, even
silence, can be meaningful.
Don't speak just because feel
something should be talked
about to justify everybody's
being together.

People need not feel con-
strained. They should say
what they want to say. In
school people have learned
to keep silent.

and think the hell with that they're
just doing crazy things there, I don't
know what's going on. And I don't
think we can restrict our community
just to what we have now and that it's
natural for us to get bigger, or
well that should be the that's kind
of where we should sort of go, or we
should get bigger, I would kind of
think, that is my own personal feel-
ing. And I don't particularly want
to have people come in here and when
they leave they go, well I guess I
don't know (gives laugh); I guess I
want people to join the community.
3-1 (447-453).

Natasha: Okay, I can bring it in. I
don't think we can talk about any-
thing, until we're all aware of
each other, here. Like we get into
the situation of getting on with the
business and not stopping when we
don't even talk to each other.
M-1: It might be valid that if you
don't have anything to say that it's
just a feeling that you wanted that
something should be said, maybe it's
best left unsaid, and maybe that
means you sit in silence for ten
minutes. (short pause) That's cool.
3-1 (536-540).

Paul: One of the things that it seems
to me that I want to have happen now
at meetings is that anybody feels
free to speak. I felt that the uni-
versity as such, that people don't
feel free to speak anything that's
on their mind and I've always as-
sumed that one of the reasons was
because what people got when they
went through high school and through
the grammar schools, ((for instance))
they learned that they were not sup-
posed to speak but to listen all the
time, they weren't to say what was
on their minds, so I'm happy for
that and in, directly in answer, what

A sense of community is needed. The end goal is a genuine experiencing of the Self and Other, a real co-presence and awareness of what is actually happening.

People in the university don't respond to one another. There is no mutual awareness between individuals. Everyone is oriented towards the future and not experiencing the present moment and the present environment. They have no sense of reality or immediacy in their lives.

Must find techniques to spread a feeling of community to students in the classrooms so people are genuinely together in the Here and Now.

I do is, I myself am interested in doing two things, I'm interested certainly in the structural nature of the university which is essentially seems as corporate structure, and I'm interested in the reform of that corporate structure. But I'm interested no longer as the primary focus of what concerns me in that I think that <u>there could be some kind of structure that we keep very hazily calling perhaps community structure which would simply which would literally entail all of us here living together for quite a long period of time, sleeping together and eating together and talking and reading books together and finding out all those things that we want to find out with each other. So that would be one other kind of thing that would never require a chairman or decision making</u> (( )); But I am interested in the structural reform, and then on the other level, I'm interested in sort of what I would call the occasioned kind of activity, and the occasioned activity at university seem to take place largely in classrooms, and, what goes on in there seems to me that most people don't believe what's going on in the room, they just believe there's never any sense of immediacy in the room, nobody ever says of we're all in the room together, everybody seems to feel that they're passing through the room on the way to a degree on the way to making it that night, on the way to eating dinner, but <u>I'm interested in techniques,</u> literally techniques, for how it is you can stop that hideous flow, that hideous stopless ((chairless)) flow, <u>so that everybody stops and is in the room together, in the classroom, and that anyone can talk and if that's say what they want to about whatever it is that's being discussed.</u> So those are two kinds of things that I'm interested in. 3-1 (555-569).

Only after most newcomers leave and a few besides the core members remain does anything resembling SDU interpersonal encounter begin. This problem is a constant one in all meetings. It takes a long time for community to happen, and it must constantly be re-established, even between those who have experienced it before.

Paul: We've gone through several times now as we go through tonight, but we start out not knowing and the not knowing creates a lot of, creates literally the uncertainty in my mind, and then there's, again and again we have this very tense opening of what is going to be talked about, like, you know, like now we're talking, so much later, and so apparently all I know is that like the process is that you start out by being in that state in order to get to what it is you're talking about, and I don't know whether that's going to change, but that's where it is right now. 3-2 (457-464).

By September SDU core members were very aware of their failure to bring new people into the group and there had been extended discussion over what ought to be done. Newcomers were also more aggressive than in August due to the influence of SDS oriented individuals who had not been present before.

Seventy-five people showed up for the beginning of the September 19 meeting of SDU, partially as a result of a speech given by Paul earlier in the day at an open, campus-wide political rally. SDS oriented newcomers initiated talk about issues on campus and experienced SDU members redirected it back towards the Here and Now. Paul tried to prevent discussion from becoming established around any topic or issue on an abstract level. He wished to involve silent newcomers rather than let conversation be monopolized by a few outspoken individuals.

Paul: Here's another conversation that I now can hear going on all night, again. Ten of us have talked so far in this room....

Peter: The same ones that talked all summer and (( )) there are a lot of people that I've never seen before and I think it's beautiful, and if Ivan and myself talk ((we're missing everyting)). 6-1 (224-226).

Paul: All this talk so far seems to be how to deal with problems structurally, and so far each time I've ever said anything about dealing with things that aren't as neat as these structural things....there seems to be some real problems...each time that I talk about something that doesn't come off as being some sort of direct proposal for structural action, seems to be puzzlement in that I'm not saying something clear enough or else what I'm saying isn't important to people now.... 6-1 (311-313).

Consistent with his resistance towards any structure being established by others in the meeting, Paul refused to provide any guidelines himself. According to the SDU orientation, all individuals were equal (there were no leaders), and a lack of structure (including established topics or guidelines) was necessary as a prerequisite for spontaneity and mutual awareness.

Nick: One of the problems of SDU as it is now formed is that we have a group of "leaders" who are non-leaders, who are assertively non-leaders, and the rest of them are possibly "followers" and haven't yet found anybody to lead them and this action and interpersonal thing is just a crystallization partly of that bind I think. That people do want answers given to them and they came here possibly expecting Paul to give them an answer. Now if they take Paul's answer, all I say is just be wary of it, because I don't think Paul would claim to have any answers any more than anybody else. 6-1 (322-325).

There existed a great deal of confusion among newcomers as to what was happening in the meeting. People who had expectations about SDU found them stripped away, only to be left in a void with no structure apparent at all. There appeared to be little meaning or

sense in the activities and arguments of SDU members. Most newcomers

sat in frustrated silence or left soon after the beginning of the

meeting.

> M-1: Well I haven't talked yet tonight, my name's Tony, and
> right now I'm really frustrated. I've been gnawing up all
> night and I don't know whether it's just within myself or
> been within the group. Perhaps the reason might be in that
> a lot of people see the initials SDU and in their mind they
> have a great myth of a great revolutionary organizing body
> and they come here and they say where's the revolution.
> (( )) The people, they want to be told when to blow up
> desks, you know, and I don't know whether I, (( )) come
> to three meetings, I don't feel I felt completely in the
> group experience and I don't know whether I know exactly
> what SDU is, I don't think you can explain what it is....
> 6-2 (66-70).

> Leo: The intensity was maybe there, but it was not there as
> a group experience and the intensity that people felt was
> not expressed. Like XXXX said his head was going around
> in circles but at no point during the night was that ever
> expressed. 7-2 (268-270).

> M-1: Yeah, I was dissatisfied. Well maybe not, the first
> meeting fine, I like to see what comes up, but ah, if you
> sat down in the room every day like this I could see it
> happening again and again and a few people dropping out and
> a few more people dropping out till you get to a suitable
> core like this and you have a great thing going. But I
> think you want more involvement than the twenty people as
> we now have.

> M-2: I think I would like to respond to that. I think a
> lot of people left tonight and I suspect that a lot of those
> people who left, left because they were disgusted, they
> came here to hear something that they didn't hear and they
> didn't find it possible for themselves to turn whatever con-
> versation it was or to turn people's heads into the direc-
> tion in which they wanted it.... 6-1 (390-402).

A definite division arose between experienced people who knew what

might happen and newcomers who found their expectations left unful-

filled.

M-1: It wasn't any particular person that scared all those
people, it was just all the people that had some knowledge,
genuine knowledge rather than just preconceptions of what
tonight was going to be like and a lot of people came here
with ideas and their ideas turned out to be not what, but
there were a few people that did know what was going to
happen because they'd experienced it before, and so one
of these people that didn't know tried to say and they got
put down and it kind of scared them off. 7-2 (475-477).

Despite the fact of people leaving, most experienced members re-

fused to provide verbal explanation about SDU. When Nick, began to

explain SDU with abstract ideas, a strong reaction was elicited from

core members who were fearful of any structure which might be built

into people's conceptions.

Leo: (speaking to Nick): What I think that what you're
doing when you do that is actually taking away the situa-
tion in the room, you know, the situation that exists,
but in fact what you're doing is people come in and say
what is this trip all about and you tell them what the
group is all about and I keep feeling that I can't pre-
tend to know what's going to happen.

Paul: If you tell them what the group is about they'll
know how to behave and they'll behave like you told them
to. 7-2 (385-390).

CONCLUSION

Summaries of the SDU and SDS orientations are provided on the next two pages. They are not independent of the chapters on each of the orientations, but are useful as a guide for comparison. The categories Space and Time, Political Action and Organization divide themes into loose divisions.

Space and Time is the most basic category and includes both of the others. Political Action deals with the meaning of political action and specific political philosophy. Organization includes conceptions of how meetings should be run to best produce political action.

SDS.

Space and Time

Involves people outside the room, plan for them; unify the group, then unify the student body, finally take struggle to society as a whole; is part of world struggle affecting all people.

Planning for action in the immediate future and continuing into the indefinite future; value of meeting is measured by concrete action which results at future time; action must come quickly because there is no time for talking.

Political Action

Political action is seen as part of world revolutionary struggles in which the university and Canada is a small part.

Groups are more effective than individuals; Consensus is necessary to unite individuals into a group; arrive at agreed upon analysis of society which explains specific problems within a political construction of the world as a whole.

Action is most important role of the group; action on campus is directed towards specific ISSUES which will involve students and confront the institutions of society.

Issues are vehicles for SDS political analysis which connects existence of issues to sterile corporate nature of university and society.

Issues are taken to students by means of petitions, referendums, publicity campaigns and confrontation o the Administration and Student Government.

Goal is to make students politically sensitive through SDS analysis to problems and capable of taking immediate concrete action against institutions to solve those problems; students must demand part in decision-making processes of university, and set example for other groups in society.

Organization

Individuals join group as a member.

Rational discussion and debate on the verbal level.
        1) Chairman assigns turns at speaking.
Ordering 2) Agenda sets topics for discussion and potential action.
  of   3) Steering Committee sets agenda and recommends course for
  talk   SDS to follow subject to approval in meeting.
        4) Talk must decide on priorities between issues and projects, leading efficiently to concrete action.

SDU

Space and Time

HERE means in the room, don't worry about people other than individuals in the room.

NOW means the experience in the room at each moment is the focus of awareness; be aware of each other at every instant; no planning of future action, the action is in the experiencing of the moment.

Political Action

Politics is any activity which bears on the way people might live their life (i.e. all things are political acts).

Interpersonal relations are the basis of political action and the goal is genuine co-presence of Self and Other and the joining of unique individuals together in a "sense of community and interpersonal trust".

Political action can happen anywhere; don't need to confront an enemy.

No group identity; people together as a group of individuals only for duration of meeting; outside have own projects.

Organization

Anti-organizational and anti-bureaucratic in meeting procedure and outlook.

No chairman -- people speak spontaneously, with other people being aware when individual wants to speak and responding to him.

No agenda -- nothing has to be accomplished specifically.

Quality of interpersonal relations is the measure of action happening in a meeting.
1) Communication channels are more than verbal (look for cues given off non-verbally).
2) Verbal talk felt to be too abstract; people don't remain aware of one another.
3) Meeting may be interrupted at any time if quality of talk is felt to be poor (i.e. #1 has precedence over #2).

To verbally explain the meeting is felt to destroy the spontaneity of what is happening, it must be experienced; only verbalized when under continual pressure that sense be made of what is happening; resist giving guidelines for an SDU meeting; people must remain open.

SDU differed from typical political meetings to such an extent that potentially receptive newcomers had a difficult time in orienting to what was happening (refer to Chapter Five). SDU core members felt newcomers must experience a meeting and be brought into a network of close-knit interrelationships with a minimum of verbal explanation. Few people could make such a transition into the group experience since modes of organization and communication common between unacquainted individuals in meeting situations were generally expected. Core members in SDU began to realize how difficult it was for newcomers to achieve mutuality, yet the group remained open to all interested students despite the fact interpersonal encounter rarely took place until most of the confused newcomers had left.

The SDU and SDS orientations reacted strongly to one another (refer to Chapter Four). Adherents to the two differing approaches would not give support to each other's activities. When SDS oriented activists attended SDU meetings, they were far more hostile about meeting procedures than other newcomers, who mostly remained confused and silent. Activists criticized SDU's disorganization and unwillingness to act as a group. They felt that unless consensus on ideology could be achieved and the enemy clearly defined, the essential confrontation of oppressive institutions within society could never begin. Concern with interpersonal relationships remained trivial unless the context within which those relationships occurred could be altered.

SDU adherents in turn castigated SDS activists for resembling
the enemy they proposed to confront. As Paul explained in an article
about SDU which appeared in a local underground newspaper late in
September 1968:

> "As a political thing, this approach which I can call the
> New Non-Violence (ya know, non-violence didn't work, vio-
> lence didn't work, now I'll try this for a while) is ag-
> gressive, but doesn't intend harm.
>
> It makes for situations of personal confrontation, which
> may be as important as the kind of institutional confron-
> tation that's so popular right now. I feel that a lot of
> my life is not what I want and so I start with myself....
> The one question I'm going to continue to investigate is:
> how can you make a different anything (community, univer-
> sity, society) built on the same aggressive, jealous, re-
> pressive, hate-choked emotions upon which this present
> world is founded?"

The conflict between SDU and an activist New Left group
such as the Province University SDS supports Keniston's claim that
there exist irreconcilable rifts within the student radical movement.
These rifts are not resolved by recognition of a common enemy, be-
cause in the case of SDU the emphasis remained on personal exper-
ience while SDS demanded group action. Characteristics of the SDS
group fit with Keniston's description of group action and demonstra-
tion oriented political activists. Many characteristics of SDU
fit Keniston's description of the culturally alienated, although
SDU contradicts his idea of a totally withdrawn and isolated search
for experience. SDU instead appears to be an attempt by those who
might be described as "culturally alienated" or "beat-hip bohemian"
to create a politically self-conscious group experience of inter-

personal encounter which could involve any interested student on campus. Great difficulties in recruiting new members into the group, and the appearance of SDS as a rival student radical group, finally led to abandonment of the attempt.

In talking about the "beat-hip bohemian" movement of which SDU must be considered a part, Roszak states:

> "...the counter culture, which draws upon a profoundly personalist sense of community rather than upon technical and industrial values, comes closer to being a radical critique of the technocracy than any of the traditional ideologies."[6]

That an interpersonal, non-intellective and communal group such as SDU might be even more radical than an activist group such as the Province University SDS is a question which remains to be investigated.

6. _Op. cit._, Roszak, p. 206.

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