

# INTRODUCTION

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## **“You Didn’t Have to Be There”: Revisiting the New Left Consensus**

*John McMillian*

Look carefully enough, and you’ll find that nearly each day’s newspaper bears some further testimony to the enduring power of the Culture War. It’s happening everywhere, and the debates on abortion, homosexuality, multiculturalism, public schools, and gun control are only the most obvious fronts. Moreover, it is commonly accepted that behind the conservative position on all of these issues is a deeply rooted animus against the 1960s. Indeed, the majority of today’s social conservatives hold as a central article of their faith that most of our pressing problems have their origins in the Great Society, the New Left, and the hippie counterculture—all of which are conflated in their understanding of “the sixties.”<sup>1</sup>

Conservatives are surely correct to argue that something momentous happened during the 1960s. But at the same time, we can scarcely afford to rely on pundits or politicians for judicious historical perspective. Years from now, when social historians begin to examine the *Kulturkampf* of the 1990s, they may well conclude that the ruthless right-wing parody of the 1960s was largely shaped by their anxiety over a changing social order. Increased religious tolerance and secular humanism, the changing roles of women, the rising social status of homosexuals, the institutionalization of multicultural ideals, and the exploration of cultural taboos in the arts and media are all (in their own fashion) promoting new systems of moral understanding.

Perhaps this helps explain why the “sixties-as-catastrophe” critique is almost always sloppily argued. As Thomas Frank has noted, the conservatives’ historical vision “is undermined by their insistence on understanding ‘the sixties’ as a causal force in and of itself and their curious blurring of the lines between various historical actors: counter-culture equals Great Society equals new left equals ‘the sixties generation,’ all of them driven by some mysterious impulse to tear down Western Civilization.”<sup>2</sup> Put another

way, the conservatives have taken the New Left both too seriously and not seriously enough. Too seriously, it seems, by attributing virtually all of today's social problems to the excesses of student radicals, and not seriously enough to acknowledge the real gains the movement accomplished. Listening only to the fusillade of anti-1960s rhetoric from Republican politicians and their hacks on cable television and AM radio, one might never know that the 1960s was also a time when students stood up for civil rights and interracial solidarity, achieved reforms in badly outdated college curricula, protested a war now commonly regarded as a mistake, demonstrated civic initiative and democratic participation, and liberalized American culture in countless salutary ways.

Much of the scholarship on the 1960s offers little more understanding than do the mainstream media. In spite of what conservatives believe about "tenured radicals" running roughshod over the academy, the ivory towers are hardly an asylum for 1960s sympathizers. In fact, as Bruce Schulman has demonstrated, a careful survey of popular college textbooks suggests that the New Left and the counterculture "receive almost no sympathetic treatment" in the classroom. Instead, campus protestors are frequently cast as childish and starry-eyed, and the New Left is depicted as a short-lived episode of white protest, a mere intermediary between the civil rights movement and "the emerging movements for women's liberation, gay rights, and multiculturalism." Although the *Port Huron Statement* and the 1964 Free Speech Movement at Berkeley typically receive a few paragraphs, many other key events in the New Left's history are ignored. Likewise, the political implications of the counterculture cosmology and West Coast hippiedom receive such superficial treatment that even the most charitable accounts, "which credit the counterculture with lasting innovations in sexual mores, cuisine, and popular culture, focus entirely on sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll."<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, many of the leading monographs on the New Left were written by those who participated in the student movement, especially in its early, formative stage. Building on Kirkpatrick Sale's impressive *SDS* (1973), in the late 1980s—just in time for a predictable wave of *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today* nostalgia—the most influential body of writing on the 1960s suddenly appeared on the scene: Allen Matusow's *The Unraveling of America* (1984), Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987), James Miller's "*Democracy Is in the Streets*": *From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (1987), and Maurice Isserman's *If I Had a Hammer . . . : The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (1987).<sup>4</sup> These landmark studies are generally considered "authoritative" and remain staples of graduate student reading lists. By some coincidence, these authors are all first-rate stylists as well. But, as they say, "each generation must rewrite the history of its predecessors."<sup>5</sup>

In recent years, a critique of these books has steadily been growing among younger historians, who feel that the reigning narrative of the New Left too closely reflects the idiosyncratic experiences and perspectives of its architects. Some writers—including 1960s historian David Farber—also believe that scholarship on the 1960s has been hindered by "generational politics" within the academy, where "too many professional gatekeepers . . . have resisted letting young scholars challenge their memories, criticize their generation, or simply explain their experiences in unfamiliar contexts."<sup>6</sup> Seeking

a greater degree of critical detachment and a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the New Left, these younger writers have already begun to plow through a mountain of primary source material relating to the 1960s, including oral history archives, manuscript collections, municipal and federal government documents, leaflets, underground newspapers, and FBI records. To make sense of this material, they have also begun employing new interpretative paradigms. According to Farber, "the New Left . . . has captured the interest of some of the best young scholars."<sup>7</sup> This still developing work suggests that the insider accounts published in the 1980s represent only the first fruits, not the final word, on the student movements of the 1960s.

Allowing for a few variations and shifts of emphasis, the reigning narrative of the 1960s—we can safely call it the "New Left consensus"—proceeds accordingly: In 1962, with Kennedyesque optimism and youthful enthusiasm, a cadre of student activists began the New Left when they gathered at Port Huron under the somewhat impertinent notion that they might set forth "an agenda for a generation." They were influenced by a wide array of sources, including the critical sociology of C. Wright Mills, French existentialism, and theories of participatory democracy derived from the civil rights movement, as well as less obviously political sources—*Mad* magazine, Beat poetry, the hipster ethos of the "White Negro," and left-wing folk music. Although they were not communist sympathizers, they refused to declare themselves *anticommunist*, thereby distinguishing themselves from parts of the Old Left. Precocious intellectuals like Tom Hayden, Al Haber, and others led lives of "principled nonconformity," devoted themselves to "secular ideals of social justice," and (like all good liberal reformers) exhibited great faith in the transforming potential of marches, meetings, and mimeograph machines.

But even at its vigorous origins, a serious of "unavoidable dilemmas" threatened the New Left's project. As Todd Gitlin put it, "the internal frailties that were to undo [Students for a Democratic Society] were already built in at the moment of its greatest growth and vigor."<sup>8</sup> Rather than seeing themselves as radical agents, student activists were constantly on the lookout for another "revolutionary vanguard" that would facilitate meaningful social change. The concept of "participatory democracy," the leading theoretical light for the New Left, proved to be a "stick of conceptual dynamite" that degenerated into a "catchword" and a "cliché" as the student movement developed.<sup>9</sup> In addition, activists underestimated the dangers of provoking opposition from the Right. They were unprepared for the sudden growth of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the wake of their successful protests against the Vietnam War, and they never found a way to reconcile the divergence, by the mid-1960s, between one wing of the movement, which emphasized "militancy" and immediate "action," and another that valued "critical reflection" and long-term strategy. The New Left suffered the difficulty of wanting to "be both strategic and expressive, political and cultural: to change the world (end the war, win civil rights) while freeing life in the here and now."<sup>10</sup>

Having already sown the seeds of its destruction, the movement's decline was predictable: Activists were ill prepared to cope with the intransigence of the war, government repression, internal differences, unresolved cultural contradictions, and a political

backlash from the established culture. By the end of the decade, some students were using outlandish revolutionary rhetoric that bore little relation to reality, while others retreated into hedonism and drug abuse, fell prey to sectarian arrogance, and, at the extreme, descended into violence. Then—to make absolutely sure that everyone understood the movement was *over*—they sounded its death knell at a series of symbolic end-points: the 1968 Democratic National Convention, the “Days of Rage,” the Rolling Stones concert at Altamont, the Manson Gang murders, or the Manhattan townhouse explosion that killed three members of the ultra-militant Weather Underground. With all this, the movement that had promised to change society “collapsed, plummeting into cultural oblivion as if it had been some kind of political Hula-Hoop.”<sup>11</sup>

Although the 1960s are often associated with a scholarly view which holds that our understanding of the world can be enriched from a “bottom-up” perspective, most chroniclers of the New Left have been disappointingly “top-down” in their approach. Far too many historians dwell on the institutional history of SDS and the powerful personalities of (admittedly fascinating) movement leaders. Although the activities of New Left luminaries were surely important, the New Left was clearly a broad-based, grass-roots movement. Ironically, even during the 1960s, some activists anticipated that future scholars might do damage to their history by looking at the wrong types of sources. As Jesse Lemisch observed in 1967, “We need hardly contend that the peace movement is on the brink of power today to note that a future historian who studies it from the top down . . . will seriously underestimate its numbers and diversity of activities.”<sup>12</sup> Wini Breines has likewise noted that “there were many centers of action in the movement, many interpretations, many visions, many experiences.”<sup>13</sup> Even if we allow that the student movement of the 1960s is a large subject, not easily suited to comprehensive description, we still need to ask what the New Left consensus leaves out, and why?

These are the questions that the contributors to this volume attempt to answer. The essays are divided into two sections. Those in Part I, *Local Studies, Local Stories*, fill in some of the gaps created by the participant-observer studies of the late 1980s. The essays in Part II, *Reconsiderations*, suggest new ways of thinking about well-worn issues. But readers should be advised that none of these essays conforms rigidly to either of these categories; rather, each displays some measure of cross-pollination. Just as the authors of the local studies underscore the larger significance of their findings, those in Part II have grounded their studies in archival research, often at the local level.

The essays do, however, share a few traits in common. First (with the exception of Paul Buhle’s afterword), they are all written by scholars too young to have had any first-hand engagement with the social movements of the 1960s. Our reason for structuring the book this way is simple: library shelves already groan with textbooks, monographs, document collections, memoirs, and biographies that tell us about the 1960s from the perspectives of those who lived through them. We felt it was time to showcase the talents of a younger generation that is already beginning to reconfigure the landscape of New Left historiography.

Second, each of these essays could be fairly described as iconoclastic. None in itself poses a sweeping new paradigm or hypothesis that might completely transform our understanding of the New Left. But taken as a whole they offer testimony in support of Andrew Hunt's proclamation that "the Sixties—and the early Seventies—were full of surprises. Much happened outside the cramped SDS National Office, and the myriad layers of Sixties history still beg for research."<sup>14</sup> Although New Left historiography is still in its infancy, the writers of this volume are keenly aware of the shortcomings in the existing literature, and each of them challenges or revises the current orthodoxy of historical writing on the 1960s. Furthermore, these essays collectively describe a "New Left" that is considerably more diverse, inclusive, nuanced, complicated, fractious, fluid, and (dare I say) *interesting* than that which has been constructed by the architects of the New Left consensus.

A few more themes run through this book. One is the affinity that many of these young scholars have for social history. Although some of them draw on intellectual history, sociology, and cultural criticism, many also seem to agree with Maurice Isserman's trenchant 1989 *American Historical Review* essay, "The Not-So-Dark and Bloody Ground," which suggested that "The history of the 1960s . . . must move beyond the boundaries of organizational history and leadership biography toward something like the 'history from the bottom up' that an earlier generation of New Left historians demanded in other fields."<sup>15</sup>

These writers have also highlighted the striking regional differences that marked the New Left, and have recovered the voices of compelling local personalities that contributed to these variations. Until recently most historians of the 1960s have focused on the San Francisco Bay, New York City, and a few hip enclaves in between. Accordingly, they have drawn their conclusions from a fairly homogeneous cross-section of activists and, collectively, have painted canonical portraits of "typical" 1960s radicals. By contrast, we offer a *mélange*. This book features politicized hippies on Hollywood's Sunset Strip, party-going protestors in Illinois, African American community activists in Maryland, white students clearing space for dissent in the "harsh, repressive atmosphere" of the South, radicalized welfare mothers in Cleveland and Chicago, and more—all part of a larger "movement to change America."

In addition, the writers in this collection tend toward a somewhat less circumscribed definition of the New Left than many other scholars have. However useful it may be to disentangle the different protest tendencies of the 1960s in order to hold them up for examination, revisionist historians are addressing the astonishing level of fluidity between the civil rights movement and the college-based protestors of SDS, between New Left "politicos" and countercultural hippie types, and even between the New Left and the Old Left. Yet, at the same time, we think it is important to draw a distinction—for the sake of both clarity and accuracy—between the New Left and what is sometimes called "the movement."

Briefly, the New Left can be defined as a loosely organized, mostly white student movement that promoted participatory democracy, crusaded for civil rights and various types of university reforms, and protested against the Vietnam War. It first began to crystal-

lize in the early 1960s and then picked up steam toward the middle of the decade, following the Free Speech Movement and the escalating U.S. invasion of Vietnam, only to dwindle away in the early 1970s—several years after the evaporation of SDS. “The movement,” on the other hand, was a much larger constellation of social protest activity that either grew out of the New Left (e.g., gay liberation, radical feminism, and the hippie counterculture), or influenced and inspired the New Left (e.g., the civil rights and black power movements.) Indeed, throughout the 1960s New Left radicals often made this distinction themselves, defining their movement as mostly white and concerned with pragmatic political goals. Although it would certainly be worthwhile to publish a collection with greater breadth, addressing feminism and gay liberation, the counterculture, black power, and Latino and Native American activism, we have chosen a more limited focus on the white New Left; nevertheless we do not treat the activity of white radicals as hermetically sealed off from other types of protest activity.

The New Left’s relation to the feminist and multicultural revolutions demands special comment here. These essays leave no doubt that activists of color were potent sources of inspiration for the New Left, and that combating racism was a central component of New Left politics. However, the United States in the 1960s was (and it still is) culturally and politically segregated to an enormous degree. As the 1960s unfolded, black and white radicals operated more on parallel tracks than on the same track. Whites acknowledged and at times lamented the exclusivity of their activism, and they sometimes expressed frustration over their inability to win the trust of activists of color. And although radical feminism was one of the most important protest traditions to emerge from the 1960s, strictly speaking, it was not part of the New Left. Very few male radicals developed progressive gender politics in the 1960s; as a result, the women’s liberation movement emerged largely as a *response* to sexism within SDS and the civil rights movement. That is, women deliberately seceded from the male-dominated New Left to launch their own social and intellectual revolution. The challenge for historians, then, is to present the New Left accurately, as a mostly white and largely patriarchal movement, without writing women and African Americans out of this history and reinforcing the forms of segregation that plagued the New Left. We think we have succeeded in this.

As wide-ranging as these essays are, it is not too difficult to see where the new scholarship is headed. Previous studies have told the history of the New Left as a tragic rise-and-fall story; from “Port Huron” to the “Siege of Chicago,” from “Years of Hope” to “Days of Rage,” it was the “Unraveling of America.” Even though writers like Sale, Gitlin, Miller, and Matusow have tried to show that the New Left was vital, serious, and world-historical, their works ultimately marginalize the movement as a faddish aberration—a *dernier cri* that left the scene as quickly as it came. This is a tidy, convenient framework, and there are elements of it that ring true. (Indeed, the rightward-looking countermovement that emerged in response to the New Left, and that continues to be a dominant force in politics, should serve as a reminder of this.)

But in their own way the historians of the New Left consensus inadvertently fueled the sober, jaundiced critiques of the 1960s we have seen in such films as *Forrest Gump*, in books like *The Closing of the American Mind*, and in the intolerant rhetoric of the far Right. In painting a more panoramic portrait of the movement, even as they pay attention to the fine details, the revisionist historians of the New Left have made a vital contribution to an already mammoth body of literature.

And think how much more there is still to do! So action-packed were the 1960s that, as Geoffrey O'Brien recalled, in 1966 two writers wearily suggested in *Esquire* magazine that someone should just *cancel the rest of the decade* because enough had happened already.<sup>16</sup> (One can only imagine what they might have been howling by the end of 1968!) Although we need to keep in mind just how new the field of 1960s scholarship is, it is clear enough that the New Left consensus is on its way out. Just as surely as historians of previous generations have been influenced by the social and political milieus in which they wrote, the standard works on the New Left owe much—indeed, too much—to the particular experiences of their authors, to the values and assumptions that fueled their activism, and to the intemperate climate of the Culture War.

## Notes

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1. I write this on Tuesday, 18 September 2001—one week after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. In today's *New York Times* is a story reporting that "The Rev. Jerry Falwell apologized last night for saying that last week's terrorist attacks reflected God's judgment on a nation spiritually weakened by the American Civil Liberties Union, providers of abortion, supporters of gay rights and federal court rulings on school prayer" ("Falwell Apologizes for Saying An Angry God Allowed Attacks," *New York Times*, 2 Sept. 2001, B4). I also received by E-mail an article by David Horowitz titled "Allies in War," in which Horowitz draws a demented parallel between 1960s radicals and Al Qaeda. According to Horowitz, Bill Ayers's recent memoir of the 1960s, *Fugitive Days*, is "a text that the bombers of the World Trade Center could have packed in their flight bags alongside the Koran, as they embarked on their sinister mission." Left-wing academics and politicians, he continues, "have been busy at work for the last two decades seeding our educational culture with anti-American poisons that could one day destroy us" (David Horowitz, "Allies in War," <<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=1021>>).

2. Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 3.

3. Bruce J. Schulman, "Out of the Streets and into the Classroom? The New Left and the Counterculture in United States History Textbooks," *Journal of American History* 85 (1999): 1529, 1531.

4. Derek Taylor, *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973); Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Todd Gitlin, *The Six-*

ties: *Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); James Miller, "Democracy Is in the Streets": *From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Maurice Isserman, "If I Had a Hammer . . .": *The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). Isserman's book, as the title indicates, discusses only the early history of the New Left.

5. Peter Gay, *Style in History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 212.

6. David Farber, "The 60s: Myth and Reality," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (7 Dec. 1994), B2. Also see Rick Perlstein's splendid article, "Who Owns the Sixties? The Opening of a Scholarly Generation Gap," *Lingua Franca* (May-June 1996): 30-37.

7. David Farber, "New Wave Sixties Historiography," *Reviews in American History* 27 (1999): 298.

8. Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media and the Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 31.

9. Miller, "Democracy Is in the Streets," 152.

10. Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 5-6.

11. Miller, "Democracy Is in the Streets," 311.

12. Jesse Lemisch, "New Left Elitism: A Rejoinder," *Radical America* 1 (1967): 37.

13. Wini Breines, "Whose New Left?" *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 543.

14. Andrew Hunt, "When Did the Sixties Happen? Searching for New Directions," *Journal of Social History* 33 (Sept. 1999): 157.

15. Maurice Isserman, "The Not-So-Dark and Bloody Ground: New Works on the 1960s," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 991, 999.

16. Geoffrey O'Brien, *Dream Time: Chapters from the Sixties* (New York: Viking, 1988).



## CHAPTER I

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# **“It Seemed a Very Local Affair”: The Student Movement at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**

*Robbie Lieberman and David Cochran*

In late February 1970, Southern Illinois University's Carbondale campus was in an uproar. More than a thousand students were engaged in a campaign of civil disobedience, and the dean of students responded by suspending six leaders of the student government, including Dwight Campbell, the first African American president of the student body in SIU's history, and student body vice president Richard Wallace. Student leaders reacted by calling for a boycott of classes, while Campbell proclaimed, “Students are niggers and it's time to break the chains.”<sup>1</sup>

On the surface, these events appear fairly typical of the student movement of the late sixties and early seventies in terms of tactics and rhetoric. But a closer look reveals a much more complicated and paradoxical picture. In the first place, we have a black leader defining himself as a “nigger” —not because he is African American but because he's a student.<sup>2</sup> Second, the issue that provoked such upheaval concerned the university's *in loco parentis* policies, specifically restrictions on the hours that men and women could study together in women's dormitories. Led by Campbell and Wallace's Unity Party, the student senate had passed a bill extending these hours from 9:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. on weeknights and from 11:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. on weekends. When the bill was vetoed by the board of trustees, students began defying the administration *en masse*.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience over the issue of dorm hours stands out when placed against the backdrop of increasing violence nationally and events at SIU over the previous two years. In 1968 SIU had witnessed numerous bomb threats and several bombings, including one in May that caused \$50,000 worth of damage to the Agriculture Building. In June 1969 the Old Main Building—the campus's

most recognizable landmark—burned to the ground. All such acts were attributed to anti-Vietnam War radicals.<sup>4</sup> In the first two months of 1970, antiwar students had engaged in a series of demonstrations against the Center for Vietnamese Studies on campus, including an occupation of the center that had been forcibly put down by campus and city police.<sup>5</sup> Student leaders had responded to police violence with an explicit rejection of nonviolence. Terming the event a “police riot,” Campbell said, “there is a crisis on this campus and this is just the beginning. Going up against a club with a flower will never work.”<sup>6</sup> It thus seems jarring that a few weeks after defending the occupation of buildings and urging self-defense in antiwar activities, Campbell would be engaged in leading something so quaintly anachronistic as an integrated, nonviolent protest over dorm hours.

The rapid growth of the student movement in places like Carbondale created these kinds of juxtapositions. Nationally the movement had evolved, as ideologies and tactics developed and adapted to changing situations. Integration gave way to “black power,” Gandhi to Fanon, civil disobedience to revolution, the *Port Huron Statement* to the Weathermen. But in places like Carbondale this development was telescoped into a brief period. We see then, coexisting simultaneously, rhetoric and strategies that had developed over several years nationwide. For instance, at least at the leadership level, the movement at SIU was still largely integrated, long after the national movement had fractured along racial lines.<sup>7</sup>

The contradictions in the Carbondale student movement largely grew out of the fact that it was composed of three separate strains that gradually came together in the late sixties. The first can be described as a student party culture, which developed with the rapid increase in university enrollments during the sixties. The second was the student rights movement, which began in earnest in the mid-sixties, drawing together politically active students from across the spectrum. The third student culture, and numerically the smallest, was the New Left, which had been a presence on campus since the civil rights movement of the early sixties and had developed through such organizations as the Student Non-Violent Freedom Committee (SNFC) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). These strains alternately converged and separated until, by the spring of 1970, a combination of local and national events brought them together for a series of mass demonstrations that culminated in a student strike and riot that closed the university.

In many ways, Carbondale is an unlikely place for a major university. Located on the boundary where the prosperous farmland that makes up most of Illinois gives way to rugged, forested hills, the area around Carbondale and southward differs from the rest of the state both economically and culturally. The economy of southern Illinois historically has been based on mining, and the region is marked by many small towns and a history of violent labor struggles and frequent depressions.<sup>8</sup> The nearest metropolitan area, St. Louis, lies more than a hundred miles away, while Chicago is more than three hundred miles north.<sup>9</sup> As SIU professor and novelist John Gardner wrote in 1973, “nobody arrives at and nobody escapes from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale by accident.”<sup>10</sup>

The transformation of SIU from a small teachers' college to a major multiversity occurred between the end of World War II and 1970, thanks largely to the efforts of one man, SIU president Delyte Morris. A visionary, Morris undertook a massive building campaign to accompany the expansion of the university's mission. Under his leadership, SIU attracted such luminaries as Buckminster Fuller and pioneered in a variety of fields, from handicap accessibility to the creation of the first U.S. program in ecology. Enrollment exploded, increasing from nine thousand in 1960 to eighteen thousand in 1968 to almost twenty-four thousand in 1970.<sup>11</sup> The result was an environment characterized by flux and experimentation. As one former student recalls, "When I first came to SIU in '64, the campus was raw, unfinished. . . . Temporary barracks, cheap buildings were being used, with a great many important functions—things you would think of as important in a university—carried on in these buildings which were essentially shacks."<sup>12</sup>

As SIU alumnus Dick Gregory remembers, Morris "was not just the head of the university, he was the father. . . . Delyte Morris was the first white man I knew who had both power and compassion."<sup>13</sup> He was in most respects a staunch liberal. From the beginning he strongly supported civil rights and sought to increase the black enrollment at SIU.<sup>14</sup> He was also deeply committed to using the university to combat the region's poverty and to keeping costs and admission standards low enough to ensure accessibility for the area's population.<sup>15</sup> At times Morris's liberal principles caused him to put students' right of free speech above the university's prestige. In 1962, for instance, he defended the rights of SIU students to participate in the civil rights movement in nearby Cairo, and in 1965 he allowed the campus SDS and Socialist Discussion Group to invite Communist Herbert Aptheker to speak on campus. Both actions provoked strong criticism outside the university.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, as Dick Gregory implies, Morris was a paternalistic ruler over his domain. He tried to run the university he had created as if it were still a small teachers' college where he knew the students and faculty and they deferred to his benevolent authority.<sup>17</sup> He dealt with challenges through a combination of strength of character and diversionary tactics. In 1952 he successfully faced down a crowd of one thousand male students on a panty raid with the words, "It's been fun. Now let's all go home and go to bed."<sup>18</sup> In 1965, when the student rights organization, the Rational Action Movement, presented a petition calling for greater student participation in university policy making, Morris defused the challenge by appointing a commission of students to begin meeting the following fall and issue recommendations nearly a full year later.<sup>19</sup>

Morris's leadership style grew increasingly untenable throughout the decade. SIU students were in the position, then as now, of being part of a large university in a small town in the middle of nowhere, with limited sources of entertainment. With the rapid increase in enrollment in the sixties, SIU developed a reputation as a "party school," which often placed students in opposition to university administrators and city officials. The first major confrontation occurred during finals week in June 1966 and became known as the "Moo and Cackle riots" after Carbondale's first fast-food restaurant, the Moo and Cackle, outside which much of the action took place.

The events began on Sunday, 5 June, when students engaged in a late-night water fight that was broken up by police. The next night a large crowd of male students took

part in a panty raid at two women's dorms. "Eye-witnesses said many of the coeds encouraged the men in the demonstrations and threw various 'unmentionables' out of dormitory windows," according to the local paper.<sup>20</sup> Again police broke up the festivities, using, students complained, excessive force. The third night students returned, spreading into downtown Carbondale. State police dressed in riot gear joined local and campus cops, firing tear gas into the crowd as students built a bonfire in the street, threw rocks at police cars, and chanted, "cops eat shit." When police arrested thirteen students, the crowd marched to the police station and held a sit-in on Main Street. On the fourth night police arrested twenty-three more rioters, and President Morris expelled all students who had been arrested, the first mass expulsion in SIU's history.<sup>21</sup>

The Moo and Cackle riots were merely the first in Carbondale's long history of impromptu street demonstrations that frequently turned into clashes with the police.<sup>22</sup> Placed in context, the event is characteristic of the development of SIU's student movement in several ways. In the first place, the origins of the riots were completely apolitical. But overreaction by the police created resentment on the part of students, which then became the issue. A reporter on the fourth night of the riot commented, "Students who were present could give no clear idea of why they were there, except that 'they didn't want to be pushed around by police' or 'we have a right to be out here.'"<sup>23</sup> Once the demonstrations gained a focus, however, students began imitating tactics from the civil rights movement, engaging in a mass sit-in. In spite of such tactics, the overall atmosphere was anything but nonviolent, as students enjoyed engaging the police in violent confrontations. As one participant recalled, "There were a bunch of people running up and down the street, because once you know the police are after you, it's fun time."<sup>24</sup>

Even as this party culture developed at SIU, it increasingly came to be dominated by the counterculture of the late sixties. As southern Illinois native Larry Vaughn, who entered SIU as a freshman in 1968, remembers:

When I first got here, y'know, I hung out in West Frankfort with beer-drinking, fast-car-driving kids, so I started hanging out with the same type in Carbondale in the dorms. And over Christmas I went home for the holidays and a friend of mine had gone to Stanford University and he brought some pot home. So we got in the car and drove out into the country. Instead of drinking we started smoking pot and by the time the holidays were over it was like my whole perspective on how to have a good time had changed. So I came back to the dorms and I started hanging out with an entirely different crowd of people.<sup>25</sup>

The counterculture was not just about drug use, however. It was also about exploring alternative ideas and ways of life, all of which created a strong sense of community. Jim Hanson, a graduate student at SIU in the late sixties, described the scene: "There was a lot of socializing in those days. Most of the houses around Carbondale, you didn't even knock on the door, you just walked in. People laid down real cool, 'hey man.' . . . It was a neat time, especially this kind of public part of living in Carbondale."<sup>26</sup>

The student rights movement developed contemporaneously with the party culture, but at first there were few direct connections between the two.<sup>27</sup> The development of student rights as a significant movement on campus began in the spring of 1965 with

the founding of the Rational Action Movement (RAM). In late April and early May, RAM gathered twenty-five hundred signatures and held a mass rally focusing on student control of the student center, the administration's decision to shorten spring break, and its censorship of the editorial page of the student newspaper.<sup>28</sup> One member warned that "unless our demands are met along the way, the movement may end up in a riot."<sup>29</sup> Another supporter, though, stated that the movement "is not going to be another Berkeley."<sup>30</sup> RAM drew the support of a broad cross-section of students; its twenty-member coordinating committee included Mike Harty of the Student Peace Union as well as representatives from the Young Republicans and the Young Americans for Freedom.<sup>31</sup> RAM also led to the creation of a student party, the Action Party, which consistently fought for student rights issues for the rest of the decade. But President Morris increasingly dug in his heels, refusing to abolish women's dorm hours and, in 1967, banning *KA*, a student-edited insert in the campus newspaper, after it published an anonymous article encouraging students to violate dorm visitation rules.<sup>32</sup>

The third student culture in the mix grew out of the Student Non-Violent Freedom Committee, a local chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which was formed in 1962. The SNFC engaged in regional actions (in Cairo, for instance) as well as in picketing local businesses that practiced racial discrimination.<sup>33</sup> In the words of student activist Jim Hanson:

There was always that group of people [who] got their first baptism as radicals working in Cairo for civil rights in about '62 or, at the latest, '63. And there were probably . . . fifteen to twenty people who were down there who got shot at, who were SIU students . . . and that was the core. Most of them operated out of a Marxist-Maoist understanding of how the world worked and how the United States was conducting itself, how the university was conducting itself, and, of course, how the Department of Defense was conducting its foreign policy in Vietnam.<sup>34</sup>

A small group of students active in local civil rights activities but seeking to expand the scope of the movement formed the Socialist Discussion Club in 1965 because, as founding member Mike Harty put it, "it occurred to us . . . if you were a recognized student organization you could get a room at the student center for a meeting or if you wanted to pass out pamphlets—not that we had any—if you wanted to and you were a recognized student organization, you could have a table there." The group soon began to focus on the war, handing out antiwar literature next to military recruiters in the student center.

Within a fairly short time, the Socialist Discussion Club developed into a chapter of SDS. As Harty explains, SDS was

never a large organization, but it was always kind of a front organization and it, the membership of that old Socialist Discussion group, pretty much became SDS. Some one of us got a hold of the *Port Huron Statement*. We all read it, we all pretty much agreed with it and felt, well hell, here's something we can affiliate with and still have fun, which is pretty much what it was. . . . The irony was that from '65 through '68, SDS was in technical terms quite conservative. We were sort of serious, we weren't interested in game playing, we weren't interested in drugs.<sup>35</sup>

The local SDS chapter was also totally autonomous and separate from the national office, though not necessarily by choice. As Harty says, “We tried to have contact, but nobody ever wrote back.”<sup>36</sup> Jim Hanson echoes Harty:

It seemed a very local affair. . . . I didn’t see any coordinated national leadership. . . . As far as national SDS people coming in holding rap conferences with us—“Here’s what we’re doing here, what are you guys doing here? We’ll assist you, we’ll send you money, we’ll help you get out posters, we’ll do this, we’ll do that at Carbondale, we’ll help you if you’ll help us”—I never heard [of or] attended a meeting like that. It was all local insofar as I knew.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to SDS, there were other small leftist political organizations forming on campus in the late sixties. One of the most important was the Southern Illinois Peace Committee (SIPC), founded in 1967 and led by Bill Moffett, a black Trotskyite and pacifist.<sup>38</sup> One SIPC member says that Moffett played a major role in holding the group to a philosophy of nonsectarianism and nonviolence. “We had a lot of debates about . . . ideology, did we stand for a certain ideology? Moffett always succeeded in telling us, no, we’re an issue-related social movement—that is, we’re going to stop the war—and any political statements or any acts of violence in the end would be counter-productive.”<sup>39</sup> Moffett and the SIPC would maintain this philosophy throughout the period. Following a violent antiwar riot in February 1970, the SIPC went into the streets and cleaned up the debris before leading a peaceful march of twenty-five hundred.<sup>40</sup> And during the May 1970 riot, Moffett entered occupied buildings to plead with students not to engage in vandalism.<sup>41</sup> But the SIPC remained relatively small, and while Moffett was a visible leader at virtually every antiwar rally of the period, he never gained a large following.<sup>42</sup>

From the beginning, organizations such as SDS served as the left wing of the student rights movement. In Harty’s view, the Left viewed *in loco parentis* issues as valuable for educating students about the nature of their powerlessness. Even apolitical students resented the administration’s paternalistic actions and SDS believed that such resentment could be used to “show people what the university was all about. . . . We also saw it as a way of forming alliances with people you wouldn’t necessarily go to for an alliance with. People who you didn’t even know, student government, fraternity and sorority people.”<sup>43</sup>

Despite the efforts of SDS to pull the student rights movement leftward, RAM continued to represent a broad cross-section of the political spectrum for several years. It was not until the 1967–68 school year that the three strains—party culture, student rights, and New Left—began to come together, especially under the leadership of student government president Ray Lenzi. A candidate for the Action Party, Lenzi had been elected with his running mate and fraternity brother Richard Karr on a straight student rights platform. But during the fall term Lenzi hesitantly began to speak out against the war, a stance that created tension between him and the conservative and pro-war Karr.<sup>44</sup>

During the winter and spring quarters of 1968, Lenzi consciously began to try to pull the three strains of the movement together. He was aware that the politicization of many students grew out of their participation in the party culture. “Everybody was get-

ting turned on. . . . They were smoking pot, they were dropping acid. . . . That increased their sense of negativity toward the government. 'What do you mean, they put you in jail for doing *this*?' That was just another reason to assume there was something evil about the authorities and the government system."<sup>45</sup> In April Lenzi introduced a bill in the student senate titled "Legalization of Marijuana: Pot is Groovy," which stated that "marijuana is too popular to be denied the public" and called on SIU police to "take the most relaxed attitude toward enforcement of this law" and "preferably exercise no enforcement whatsoever."<sup>46</sup> During the same period Lenzi also became one of the featured speakers at the growing antiwar demonstrations.<sup>47</sup>

Although Lenzi and Karr found themselves more and more at odds on political and cultural matters, they still cooperated on student rights issues. In April they published an open letter in the campus paper criticizing the administration for ignoring a student senate bill calling for the reform of women's dorm hours. The letter called on students to engage in mass civil disobedience by ignoring university rules and "determin[ing] their own hours."<sup>48</sup>

Student rights issues continued to provide the glue that held the three student cultures together, though frequently in odd ways. In April 1969, for example, three hundred women staged an after-hours walkout from their dorm, chanting "hour power" and "we shall overcome." But as the politicized women exited the dorm, they were greeted with the old-fashioned party culture in the form of a crowd of men chanting, "We want pants [sic]."<sup>49</sup>

The most self-conscious attempt to pull together the student rights, party, and New Left cultures came with the Unity Party campaign in the spring of 1969. The party crossed racial lines, running the black Campbell for president and the white Wallace for vice president. Ray Lenzi wrote optimistically in the underground paper *Big Muddy Gazette*, "The forces for change on this campus are no longer disparate. Blacks, new left radicals, freaks, hippies, workers, and all other progressive people can stand together supporting the candidacy of Dwight Campbell and the Unity Party. The pieces of a truly *mass radical movement for social change* have fallen together in Southern Illinois. This spring we shall capture the initiative and change will come."<sup>50</sup> Campbell also emphasized bringing different kinds of people together. "We've got to realize that we are all students and all our problems are intertwined. . . . To unify the campus the Party has to have people who dig people, and this is the first thing I do."<sup>51</sup>

The party platform that united the various student groups focused primarily on student rights issues; of the twelve-point program the party put forth, eight involved student rights. Other points included hiring more black faculty members and increasing the university's involvement in Carbondale's poorest neighborhoods. Significantly, no mention was made of the war.<sup>52</sup> This effort to build a coalition of left-liberal forces proved successful, as the Unity Party gained the endorsement of the Action Party and won the election in a landslide.<sup>53</sup>

While the Unity Party sought to avoid the issue, other groups were anxious to focus on the war, especially since U.S. policies in Vietnam now had a tangible symbol on campus. In July 1969 Morris and the board of trustees had approved the creation of the

Center for Vietnamese Studies and Programs. Widely believed to be a CIA front, the center was financed by the Agency for International Development (AID), which would provide \$200,000 a year for five years to study ways to reconstruct Vietnam after the war.<sup>54</sup> Appointed as the center's distinguished visiting professor was Wesley Fishel, who had been part of a similar program at Michigan State, well known for antiwar activist Robert Scheer's 1966 exposé in *Ramparts* of the connections between the CIA and the Michigan State program.<sup>55</sup>

SDS attacked the center in its *Big Muddy Gazette*, denouncing it as an example of American imperialism and running a drawing of a nude Delyte Morris on the front page. University officials responded by withdrawing the permit that allowed the *BMG* to be sold on campus.<sup>56</sup> In the resulting furor, many people spoke out in defense of the *BMG*'s free speech rights, including those who did not necessarily share the paper's politics, putting university administrators on the defensive.<sup>57</sup>

By the fall of 1969 the convergence of the student rights movement, the New Left, and the party culture, along the increasing intransigence of the administration, created palpable tension on campus. As one person recalled, "everyone kind of knew something was going to happen in the fall [before the spring riots]. It was just like all anybody could talk about at every party."<sup>58</sup> Under Campbell's leadership the Unity Party not only led the fight for student rights but also sought to involve itself in the broader community. The party inaugurated a campaign called "Serve the People," which sent student volunteers into Carbondale and surrounding towns to offer a free extermination service and trash cleanup projects.<sup>59</sup>

But the war was the elephant in the room, and it was increasingly difficult to ignore. The reasons for student concern were as much personal as ideological. In the words of one African American student, "for me, the two big issues [were] the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, although I felt more involved in protesting the Vietnam War. That had more of a direct impact on me because I knew people who were dying."<sup>60</sup> Larry Vaughn agreed: "The war in Vietnam affected me directly from high school. I actually had older friends, brothers of friends, sons of my parents' friends, that had already died in Vietnam. For me it was a real thing. That was one of the most important aspects, we knew that we could die, that we could be killed. Y'know, it wasn't a joke, it wasn't something on TV."<sup>61</sup>

As protests against the Vietnam Studies Center mounted, Campbell and Wallace offered the resources of student government to the antiwar movement. In late January 1970 violence broke out in demonstrations against the center that lasted two days and resulted in fifteen arrests. As tension escalated, so did student rhetoric. Both Campbell and Wallace denounced "the pig power structure," and Wallace declared, "We fear that the brutal and reprehensible tactics used by police may be the beginning of a total police state at SIU."<sup>62</sup> Students responded with the creation of a coalition to "Off Viet Studies" and on 20 February two hundred protesters entered a meeting of the board of trustees and demanded the removal of the Vietnam Studies Center. In an exchange with board member E. T. Simonds, Wallace echoed Malcolm X: "If we're beaten again, we'll have to resort to self-defense in any form necessary." When Simonds asked, "Is



that a threat, partner?" Wallace responded, "If we're attacked, we'll defend ourselves. We haven't threatened anybody."<sup>63</sup> That night demonstrators engaged police in a series of disturbances that resulted in two arrests and \$15,000 in damage to university buildings and Carbondale stores.<sup>64</sup>

Four days later Campbell and Wallace were suspended for their participation in the protest over dorm hours. Student rights, then, remained a central issue, and dorm hours, especially, provided a locus for all strains of the movement. For the student rights group, the curfew issue represented the university's paternalism; for the New Left, it symbolized the broader issue of powerlessness; and for the party culture, it ruined many an evening plan. As for the war, despite its resonance for so many students, it would probably have remained a peripheral issue had it not been for the Vietnam Studies Center.

But all that changed in May 1970. On the evening of 1 May fifty people gathered in a parking lot just off campus to protest President Nixon's announcement, the day before, that the U.S. military had invaded neutral Cambodia. When the small crowd started a fire in the street, police arrived and arrested eight people. The same night, someone threw a firebomb into the Vietnam Studies Center.<sup>65</sup>

On Monday, 4 May, Ohio National Guard troops killed four students at Kent State University. That night SIU's student government held an emergency meeting and voted unanimously to join a national student strike, with a boycott of classes to begin at noon on Wednesday. On Tuesday two thousand students gathered at a rally in front of Morris Library, and the administration announced that classes would be canceled on Thursday for a day of mourning.

The next day another rally in front of the library drew three thousand people. After listening to several speakers, a crowd marched through nearby buildings, calling students to leave classes and join the strike. About fifteen hundred strong by this time, the crowd moved to Wheeler Hall, where the air force ROTC offices were located. Using bricks from the remains of Old Main, protesters broke windows and then occupied the building.<sup>66</sup> While Bill Moffett urged students inside Wheeler to refrain from vandalism, others chanted, "burn it down." Shortly after 5:00 P.M., about a thousand people marched through downtown Carbondale before returning to campus, where they reoccupied Wheeler Hall until they were forcibly cleared by police. In the meantime, at the request of the sheriff, 650 National Guard troops had been sent to Carbondale, a number that would swell to twelve hundred over the next several days.<sup>67</sup>

On the evening of Thursday, 7 May, another rally attracted two thousand people to the front of the library. At 9:00 P.M. demonstrators marched up Illinois Avenue and sat in at Main and Illinois, the town's major intersection. City and university officials informed the demonstrators that they could remain and that traffic would be rerouted. At this time, according to H. B. Koplowitz, the crowd was "low-key, somewhat festive but benign."<sup>68</sup> Speakers addressed the gathering as wine bottles circulated and marijuana smoke wafted through the air. Monitors wandered through the crowd, urging calm.

At around 10:00 P.M. about seventy-five people attempted to block the nearby railroad tracks. Carbondale's mayor and several march leaders pleaded with them to keep

the tracks clear, while most of those sitting at Main and Illinois remained oblivious to the controversy. At this point national guardsmen and state police decided to move the entire crowd and began firing tear gas into the group of demonstrators. Panic ensued as police forcibly removed the crowd; many protesters responded by throwing bricks and smashing windows. By the end of the night there had been seventy-nine arrests, fifty-nine injuries, and \$100,000 in damage done to seventy-eight businesses. The mayor declared a state of civil emergency and a sundown-to-sunrise curfew.

Violent confrontations continued for several days as students held ever larger rallies demanding that SIU be shut down. Finally, on Tuesday, 12 May, SIU chancellor Robert MacVicar announced to a crowd of four thousand outside the president's office that the university would be closed "indefinitely." The next morning President Morris met with a crowd of three thousand students who encouraged him to keep the school open; Morris announced a referendum to be held the next day to determine whether the university would remain closed. On 14 May students voted decisively (8,224 to 3,675) to keep the university closed.<sup>69</sup>

During this chaotic two-week period, a complex relationship developed between the movement's leaders and the rank and file, each group interpreting events differently. From the leaders' perspective the events were not so much a riot as a student strike. In Ray Lenzi's words, "it was a very conscious, planned activity that was organized. The goal was to shut down the university as a statement to the state and the nation against the war in Vietnam and even though definitely things got out of hand and got a little disorganized at times . . . there were leaders with a conscious strategy who wanted to shut SIU down."<sup>70</sup>

But the question of leadership in SIU's student movement was problematic. For one thing, New Left organizations like SDS distrusted the very idea of leadership.<sup>71</sup> Even the most hard-core politicians at SIU neither provided nor saw any significant leadership of the student movement. Bennett recalls, "There were no charismatic leaders . . . who could stand up and rally the troops around [them]. This was pretty much a leaderless movement and I just don't think there were any substantial leaders. There were functional leaders, people who, if a meeting needed to occur, got it organized. In a sense, it was a mob, a leaderless mob."<sup>72</sup> While leaders like Ray Lenzi kept in mind the goal of a student strike and tried to move things in that direction, events seemed much more spontaneous to the rank and file. As one participant recalls, "there were a couple of leaders, so to speak, people who got to make speeches. I thought it was pretty much issue-run. I'm sure there was somebody who said we're going to get that together here and have this demonstration and pass out these things, but I never got the feeling that someone was manipulating us."<sup>73</sup> Even some of the speakers saw events in a similar light. Jim Hanson remembers that "people took to the streets kind of spontaneously. From that point on, there really wasn't any organizing to speak of. Not to say we weren't happy to jump in front of a crowd [and] tell them what we wanted them to hear, but it was all very short-term planning, like hours prior to organizing something."<sup>74</sup>

Doug Allen, an assistant professor in the philosophy department who was "right in the middle of things," was also struck by the spontaneity of events. "Things really es-

calated and it got to the point that it couldn't be controlled."<sup>75</sup> In the end the movement's rank and file, imbued with the party culture ethic, was in no mood to listen to voices of reason encouraging restraint. Larry Vaughn recalls, "What we did is we divided up into groups and we would roam around the streets and we would take bricks and we would pound police cars with all these bricks. The police cars looked like junk cars on wheels, completely torn up. . . . We were just out there doing what [we] thought [we] had to do."<sup>76</sup>

While the events culminating in the student strike brought together the various strains of SIU's student movement, the decision to close the university revealed the movement's rifts. When the university shut down, thousands of students reacted predictably. As Bill Bojanowski put it, "It was the original street party at SIU. People were smoking dope on the street. . . . We had our makeshift parades going down the street. Some guy with a Nixon mask on, it was a circus atmosphere. It was a lot of fun, nobody got hurt. . . . It was pretty peaceful, everybody was everybody's friend."<sup>77</sup>

But for the more politically conscious within the movement, the closing of the university dissipated the movement's strength and destroyed further opportunities for organizing. Doug Allen, for one, says he felt let down when the school closed and everyone went home:

There was a lot of potential, we were even talking about educational things, priorities, and what kind of university did we want this to be. It was exciting, sitting all day in rap sessions, exploring different things like non-violent resistance. . . . Normally, you'd have a small group of people, but here [was] a huge number of people. There was a sense of excitement building up [and then] the whole thing toppled.<sup>78</sup>

Similarly, SDS activist Larry Bennett believes that the growing influence of the party faction drowned out the influence of the more serious politicians and proved counterproductive for the creation of a long-term mass movement. According to Bennett:

None of the *Big Muddy Gazette* collective or the SDS types wanted this university closed. I think the pressure from the riots became more of a party and it sucked in a lot of people who weren't politically on board and it just became like a happening, a way to be part of something that felt like a national movement. But it sucked up a lot of extra people and I think those people did want the university closed and had they been in Moo and Cackle in 1966, it would have been a panty raid. . . . I don't think the serious movement people thought that was the thing to do because we understood that people were employed at the university. Close the university, you jeopardize people's jobs. And we were also concerned about the way the working-class people in the surrounding communities would actually regard the movement. We wanted to be popular, we didn't want to be elitist college students. . . . We didn't want to alienate the working class.<sup>79</sup>

The student movement did not die out altogether after the riots, but its character did seem fixed by the events of May 1970. Two years later, when Nixon announced the mining of Haiphong harbor, Carbondale again erupted in riot, as more than one thousand people participated in several days of both nonviolent and violent protests. Once again rank-and-file protesters often overruled the reasoned voices of leaders. On 10 May,

when a crowd of about a thousand marched to the Vietnam Studies Center and began hurling rocks at windows, Bill Moffett confronted the demonstrators and urged non-violence, saying, “We cannot trash [this place] because we are going to lose and alienate a lot of students who are against the war.” Believing his call for restraint had worked, Moffett then asked, “Do you want to trash?” and the crowd resoundingly answered “yes!”<sup>80</sup>

In his address at the 6 May rally in front of Morris Library, Dwight Campbell drew a comparison between Kent State and SIU. “We need to understand that what happened at Kent State is something we should’ve expected a long time ago.” Referring to a January confrontation between students and campus security forces outside the Vietnam Studies Center at Woody Hall, Campbell said, “The only difference between what happened here at Woody Hall and what happened at Kent State is a matter of degree.” In conclusion Campbell urged people to honor the dead by continuing the movement against the war. “Them cats don’t want flowers. They want you to carry on the struggle where they left off. Don’t just have a memorial service—have a struggle service.”<sup>81</sup>

In echoing Wobbly martyr Joe Hill’s last words, “Don’t mourn, organize,” Campbell’s speech placed events at SIU in the context of the long-term history of the American Left, the national mass movement against the war in Vietnam, and the escalating tensions between SIU students and administrators over local issues. The convergence of national and international issues with those of purely local significance, in Carbondale and similar places across the country, complicates our view of the development of the New Left and the student antiwar movement in the late sixties and early seventies.

On the most obvious level, our study of SIU reflects the diversity of the movement; the “prairie power” protesters of the late sixties had different backgrounds and sensibilities from the founders of the New Left.<sup>82</sup> In less elite institutions, where students often lacked ties to the Old Left and where protesting meant a larger break from family and community than it did for students from professional, middle-class families, there was little sectarianism and a less distinct boundary between New Left and counterculture. Clearly, in parts of the country where the movement was too small and isolated to be able to afford the luxury of arguing over fine points of doctrine, people learned to work with others whose politics they did not share. And, always, the issues were as much personal as they were political.

Our conclusions about SIU point to the need for more studies at the grassroots level, as it becomes clear that formal organizations such as SDS were relatively unimportant on many campuses. The story of the student movement is not synonymous with SDS. Such studies must also address the different components, or cultures, of the movement on various college campuses. Surely SIU was not the only campus where a political movement developed as an overlay of the party culture that already existed. It was not so much that people joined the movement simply to be “cool” or to save themselves from the draft—to mention two of the more popular explanations for student activism. It was, at least in part, because the protest movement was, for a time, a way to have fun. As students became swept up in something bigger than themselves, they discovered the