

On The Strike

After more than two weeks of strike and the related activities at Richmond, many students and faculty members have been asking questions and doing some "soul-searching" as to the effectiveness and meaning of our activities. Have we accomplished or learned anything, or has this been an extended vacation? Has our strike made any difference in the functioning of the "war-machine"? What about the many students who have not been coming to school? What about the regular course material- isn't that still important, and can't we do both? What about next term?

These questions are important and are not easily answered. There are, however, as I see it, even more important questions, questions which were with some of us before the strike, which have been illuminated by the strike, and which are likely to remain with us long after this strike is over. In two categories these questions are (1) What has happened to the "traditional university"? Can it function in our society or is it dead? and (2) (assuming we agree with the objectives of the strike) What are we doing in school? Shouldn't we be out in the streets instead of maintaining our reasonably comfortable jobs and positions as students and teachers? Is this the best way to change our society or are we assuming a safe "cop-out"? Can we reasonably continue in our roles in society?

Again there are no easy answers. Many people have "answered" it by running from it. They haven't come to school and don't have to confront the questions. I realize this is no consolation to those of us who have been here working hard, exhausting our energies. I don't envy those people, especially teachers, who have been successful with their traditional education. How strange and perhaps even threatening our school has become to them, nor do I envy those who are completely bewildered by all that is happening here. I share in part their estrangement and bewilderment. What has happened at Richmond over the past few weeks has not been easy for any of us—either mentally or physically. We have opened up many new possibilities, both for ourselves and for the school. If one of the functions of education is (and I believe it is) to raise questions as well as offer answers, then we have seen a good deal of educating during the past few weeks. The results of this education may not be easily visible or measurable at this point, but I don't feel it has to be. (Perhaps only the next strike can give us that measure). If we are satisfied with our positions as students and educators, as I am and think we should be, then I feel we should be truly satisfied with what we have done, have tried to do, and continue to do during the strike.

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