

You guys were fantastic

By Paul Rupert

The day after I sat on the panel when Stanford SDS held its meeting with five of the university's trustees, a student hasher in a dormitory stopped me. "You guys were fantastic," he said. I thanked him. He continued: "You know, I'm no radical or anything--I mean I don't belong to SDS or the Resistance. In fact, I'm on the football team. I went to that meeting and I tried to do it with an open mind, but you guys were so right. Those trustees shouldn't be running this place."

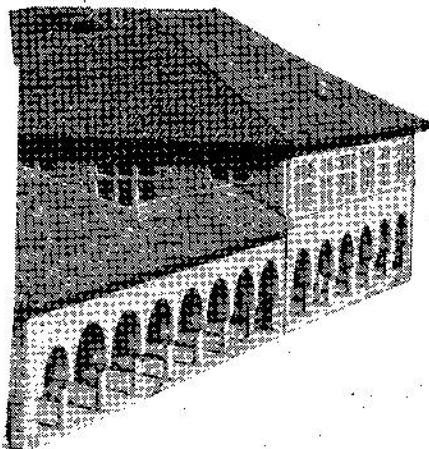
In a sense, that sums up the March 11 meeting. Five powerful and legitimate trustees came before the people they ruled, most of whom were trying to keep an "open mind" or were still angry at SDS for breaking into the last trustees' meeting. But by the meeting's end, the rulers had lost control of their audience, and the people were demanding an open meeting.

The successful meeting was a decisive point in the long struggle against the trustees and their political and military involvements. It grew out of the research of the early Vietnam war years, a time that saw the campus plastered with posters accusing the trustees of war crimes. The meeting was also possible because of dorm discussions and newspaper articles, numerous demands, and the SDS "opening" of January 14 (when 29 students invaded a trustee luncheon demanding that Stanford get out of Southeast Asia in many specific ways).

All those earlier acts were aimed at the legitimacy, and thus the power, of our wealthy, businessman board. Our early work was important, because when the trustees lost their legitimacy it was transferred to us--we had been aware of and publicizing

(cont. on p. 12, col. 2)

Trustees routed



Transcript of the meeting

In the wake of "opening up" the January 14 meeting of the Stanford Board of Trustees, Students for a Democratic Society at Stanford invited the trustees to an open forum to explain their involvement, and Stanford's involvement, in Southeast Asia. Shortly afterwards, the University Advisory Committee--a student, faculty, trustee group--issued an invitation for a more general discussion between representatives of the trustees and "concerned students." The following is an edited transcript representing about forty-five minutes of that two-hour meeting, held in Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday, March 11.

Representing the trustees were Mrs. Allan Charles (whose husband is a partner in the San Francisco law firm Lillick, McHose, Wheat, Adams, and Charles), Charles Ducommun (president of Ducommun, Inc., and a director of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and the Security First National Bank), Benjamin Duniway (federal judge in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals), W. P. Fuller, III (a director of the Western Pacific Railroad, Wells Fargo Bank, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company), and William Hewlett (president of the Hewlett-Packard Company and a director of the FMC Corporation and the Chrysler Corporation).

Representing the students were Jeanne Friedman (a member of SDS), Bill Kingle (SDS), Mike Kuhl (Stanford Young Republicans), David Pugh (SDS), Paul Rupert (The Resistance), Pat Shea (University Advisory Committee), and Michael Weinstein (last year's speaker of the student legislature). Doron Weinberg was moderator.

Ladies and gentlemen of the board of trustees, we are here today because of who you are and what you do -- both in this community and in the outside world. You are wealthy white businessmen, bankers, or lawyers, or the wives of such men. You have ultimate control over this university, which men of your choosing staff and run. You help run a variety of commercial empires in which you dictate basic policy. In both cases, your power is immense, and your right to that power is seldom questioned. You would probably argue that you make decisions in the

best interests of the people you touch; we are here to challenge that assumption.

Ultimately, you control the finances of this university; you allocate the resources. Today you reviewed the budget prepared by your president. Over the years you have created a university in which engineering, aerospace, chemistry, business and electronics are emphasized. You have not created a university in which critical analysis of society and its goals is encouraged. You can decide which strata of society you will serve by setting admissions standards and providing financial aid. On the land you hold in trust for the community's use, you have built an industrial park, luxurious homes, and SRI. You are now building luxury apartments, and preparing to build a new industrial park. Clearly, such decisions largely determine the context and limits of our education.

The well-trained graduates of this university will enter your corporations or those of your associates, they will enter your university or one like it, they will work for your department of defense. And their work, like their education, will be in your interest. If that work is the planning of the Thai economy, the annihilation of Vietnamese who want to plan their own society; if it is the pacification of the demands of urban ghetto-dwellers who feel a need not for pacification, but for change; if it is the development of your industrial parks in a misshapen Peruvian economy, the creation of more lethal forms of chemical and biological warfare; if it is the development of a sociology or a political science which studies primarily the defense and expansion of your ideology and power, without challenging its basic assumptions--then Stanford graduates will do that work.

Or at least, many Stanford graduates. But a growing number of us look upon a different world, a world in which your interests -- those of the corporations and the university -- are in fact not the interests of a majority of the world's people: the poor and the black at home, the underfed, the undereducated, and the overpoliced of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We came to this university to learn about that world, to discover how we and other men can best live in it. We found not an

(cont. on p. 10, col. 1)

10 Transcript...

(cont. fr. p. 9, col. 3)

institution dedicated to finding the truth, to doing research on fundamental human problems, to teaching democracy through its practice, but rather a research and training institute which processes men and women to fill hierarchical social roles. In the face of Vietnam and the American ghettos, the intrusion of daily news, the overwhelming fact of human suffering and squandered resources, we have had to mold our own education. And that education has led us to you: we are asking that you justify your inordinate power over the lives of men.

We recognize that you have the power to remain silent and to evade our questions. We have seen you meet in closed session for years, inaccessible to us and our inquiries. And recently, when a group of SDS members attempted to open the door to air the question of your individual and collective activities in Southeast Asia, they were met with your adjournment and their subsequent punishment. An SDS request for an open meeting with all the trustees was apparently rejected; in its place we have this meeting, with selected participants, at a time and place of your choosing. There is no question that you have the power. If we do not like the university, we are told we should go elsewhere -- in much the same way the Vietnamese or Thai or Bolivian guerrillas are told that things shall be a certain American way -- or else.

We cannot accept your principles of exclusion; we demand that our politics be inclusive; that we involve all those affected by the university and the corporation in their decisions. You have decried the use of force on campus; we insist that you abandon your weapons of control and coercion on campus, and your weaponry of death and oppression around the world, and thus demonstrate your faith in the ability of the world's people, and the people of this community to create a democracy. Then as advisors, as men dedicated to open, democratic decision-making, we ask you to join us in the creation and direction of a real community.

Essentially I am asking that you transform your lives and your businesses; that you share your power. I am saying that such faith and such willingness are prerequisites for participation in an educational community. If you cannot show that faith, if you do not lay down your weapons, then I can only predict a steady erosion of the hope of non-violent change. Ghettos will burn again, guerrilla strength will grow, your campus will be torn apart. In the face of growing militarization, revolutionaries will study and steal your weaponry, and you will have lost your chance.

I urge you to lay down your weapons and your defensiveness; if you will not, then please resign and let the community replace you with men who will lead by the strength of their vision and not by their power.

Mr. Ducommun, as a trustee and a director of Lockheed, will you lay down your weapons?

Ducommun: I have to answer that categorically NO. (Applause.) Lockheed not only builds articles for the defense of

our country, but also, of course, is one of the largest builders of commercial aircraft in the world. You are asking me to do something that I think is completely unreasonable if you want this country properly protected, to protect your freedom that you're trying to fight for today.

(Laughter.)...

(At this point questioners described the overseas investments of the Trustees' various corporations, and pointed out that SRI was very much involved in economic research and counter-insurgency work in those countries.)

Klingel: . . . Union Oil is now drilling in Thailand, where SRI--as the gentleman pointed out--is doing quite a bit of research. In addition, Utah Mining and Construction Company, which is represented on the Board of Directors by, let me see, well, Mr. Arbuckle, and also Mr. Littlefield who is not here, is doing quite a bit of the building of bases, air bases, in Thai-

**IM NOT
TOTALLY INVOLVED**



land. That's just to clear up that fact.

Ducommun: What's the connection?

(Laughter.)

Pugh: First, Mr. Hewlett said that he's not connected with SRI. Well, as I understand it the Stanford Board of Trustees appoints the SRI Board of Directors; in fact, the Stanford Board of Trustees actually owns SRI. So there is a connection there, there's a legal connection. Secondly, Mr. Ducommun doesn't quite understand the connection between the trustees' corporate interest in Thailand and SRI's counter-insurgency office in Thailand. There are forty-three permanent staff members in Thailand now working for SRI. Now, we're not subscribing to any conspiracy theory, like Arbuckle or Littlefield or Alf Brandin, who's the Vice-President for Business Affairs at Stanford, who's also a Utah director, that they go over to SRI and say, "How about a little counter-insurgency to protect our investments?" It's not a bunch of cigar-smoking ogres up in the board room. It's rather that these men form a class who have interests in investments in the Third World, and SRI was formed to do research for government and industry in 1946.

(A number of people asked why the

Stanford Board was all-white, why there were no black or Third World people on the Board. The Trustees said there might be some in the future, that they were considering expansion, and so forth.)

Floor: I would like to know why there are no Third World people (presently) on the Board of Trustees.

Fuller: I guess the honest answer is that we have not gone out and looked for one. (Laughter and applause.)

HEWLETT'S FIB ABOUT GAS

Floor: I want to see if there is some sort of credibility gap in this university. SDS has said that your FMC (FMC Corp., a conglomerate of which Hewlett is director--ed.) is producing lethal nerve gas. Do you deny that categorically? And if you don't, then I really question your humanity. If you are the sort of person who can direct a company which can make lethal nerve gas, then you're the sort of person I don't want running my university. (Applause.)

Hewlett: FMC does not make nerve gas.

Rupert: Seymour Hersh, in what I understand is a definitive study called Chemical and Biological Warfare attributes the Newport, Indiana chemical plant, which produces Sarin, a version of nerve gas, to your corporation; and further checking on that by David Ransom of the Peninsula Observer got a clarification and an affirmation from one of the public relations men in your office in San Jose. So either the book and your P.R. man are wrong, or in fact it's true.

Hewlett: I'm amazed by the accuracy and reliability of your sources, but I happened to check with the president of FMC, whom I consider superior to your sources, and he says that they are not making nerve gas at the present time.

Floor: Have they ever made nerve gas.

Hewlett: The answer is YES. They were asked by the government to build a plant, which they built and operated at the request of the government and they turned that plant over to the government about six months ago. (Loud laughter and applause.) . . .

DUCOMMUN: SRI IRRELEVANT

Floor: Research down at SRI, funded by the Defense Department, is used to help exterminate Vietnamese and those Vietnamese to date haven't had a whole lot to say about that--at least in your Board meetings; and I'm just wondering whether research criteria that don't involve people who are being affected and in some cases being killed by the decisions that are being made, whether in fact that kind of policy is tolerable. I hold that there's no such thing as academic freedom to commit genocide in Vietnam, and I'd like Mr. Ducommun and Mr. Hewlett, as the leading war profiteers on the panel, to respond to that.

Ducommun: First of all, I would challenge your statement that I'm a war profiteer. I'm not. You keep constantly harping about this idea that those who are on the Board are mixed up with the military-industrial-scientific complex. I think your common sense has gone someplace when you try to identify us in that kind of a conspiracy. There's not a single person on the Stanford Board that I've worked with for so many years who isn't trying with the best common sense to do a job for all of you students, all of the university as a whole. I think the statements that Judge Duniway made that we try to find the finest

faculty for you, we do not try to . . .

Floor: That wasn't what I asked.

Ducommun: I'm getting to your question. The job we're trying to do for the university as a whole is one of building a great university that is going to serve all of mankind, and the problems at SRI are completely irrelevant to this discussion. Completely.

Floor: The SRI study group is going to come out with a report in the middle of April either recommending severance of SRI from the university or that it be brought under tighter control by the university, and YOU as trustees are going to have that decision, and that's where the bulk of the offensive research that we're talking about is done. Now, if you won't talk to that point, then why are you here?

Ducommun: Are you convinced that all of the research that Stanford Research does is done to kill the Vietnamese?

Floor: Enough of it.

Ducommun: Does SRI do anything that's good in your opinion?

Floor: Can I . . .

Ducommun: Answer the question, answer the question.

Floor: I'm asking YOU to answer the question. I asked the question why SRI should be permitted to do research that takes the lives of Vietnamese, that decisions are made for which you people who make decisions are held in no way accountable--now is that tolerable?

Ducommun: Do you think that SRI does anything to help protect the lives of American soldiers in Vietnam? (Shouts from the audience of "Answer the question!")

(Trustee Hewlett intervened here with a general response to the line of questioning that had been going on for some time.)

Hewlett: . . . Now, in a sense you've asked a lot of questions about what are our morals, if you wish. Really, each person has to live with himself and to accept a position like this . . .

Friedman: But the Vietnamese have to live with you!

Hewlett: Will you shut up! (Laughter and applause.) And each man has to live with himself in making decisions like this. Now, he must appoint . . . he must approach jobs like this with a clear conscience, and to do this he must have reviewed what he is doing on the outside and I can tell you that I have done this, and whether you share my view or not, I approached this job with a clear conscience. I consider that if people do approach their job with a clear conscience and a sense of good will, we can make progress.

In a similar way, I respect many of the people who are in the SDS, because I feel that there are many people in the SDS who are of good will and who are conscientiously trying to make improvements. And as long as they are willing to work in a rational fashion, I feel very strongly that they are an important element of the community, and I would no more ask that a member of the SDS be turned away from the Stanford campus simply because of the views they held or their membership in the organization.

In a similar way, if the members of the Board of Trustees approached their jobs with good will and honesty, I would see no reason why you should ask them to be turned away from the Stanford community.

(An extended question was asked, which Judge Duniway summarized.)

Duniway: Let me see if I have it about right. The question was "What do I think Stanford ought to be?", and then the question, "Should it take stands on a pol-

itical issue?", something like that?

All right, let me take those two if I may, just briefly. Stanford ought to be a place where you have a first class faculty in all of the major disciplines of learning, offering the very best quality of teaching and doing research along the lines that are of interest to them, to students who come here to learn and to work with them. There ought to be free inquiry, there ought to be free discussion, there ought not to be repression of the truth on the part of either faculty or students--by anybody.

Now, the second question is, "Should the university take political positions?" I say that if the university gets into taking political positions it will be destroyed. (Cheering and applause.) I don't care whether it's fascist, Republican, Democrat, communist, whatever you want to call it. Where it becomes a political instrument, then it's going to become con-

S.U.'s SERVICES ARE
PERFORMED FOR THE U.S.
I HARDLY CALL THAT POLITICAL



trolled by the political society, and its freedom is gone, and the kind of community of scholars that it ought to be will cease to exist. We have seen this happen. (Cheering.)

(At this point several persons from the floor asked why Stanford University was participating in the war.)

Duniway: I don't think it's fair to say that the university is participating in the war. (Groans from audience.) If it's true that some people in this university are doing some work that may aid the armed forces, it is certainly also true that there are many people within the university who are vigorously and actively opposing the war on the political front and in every other way they know how. This is precisely what I was speaking to. The university as an institution should neither be waging the war nor opposing it. It is the business of individuals within it according to their own beliefs as to what they do about it.

Friedman: It's a very nice thing to view the university as an open place where I do my thing and you do your thing, only your thing happens to be doing research on weapons of destruction and death in the name of this university and using them, having the facilities, being part of the world that uses them. I can go out and stand in front