

Monday, April 6

CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE

The Stanford Anti-ROTC Movement

The current student movement at Stanford is addressing issues much broader than those suggested in such narrow comments as "Stanford University is no place to train soldiers," though such comments are widely approved. As the movement to Off ROTC expands into its second active week on campus, a number of immediate questions need to be answered.

Something else, however, should be dealt with first. There exists on this campus and across the nation a popular mentality which is both acutely analytic and consistently myopic. It is characterized by Daniel Bell's End of Ideology world view which takes the American social system for granted, and which treats all contradictions in that system as though they were mere ripples on its plastic surface, simple and separate and easily absorbed. From it emerges Compartmentalized Thinking, the ability to scrutinize a given object of concern while somehow ignoring its position or function in a more embracing fabric of reality. From it, specifically, come such arrogant responses as "You can't justify smashing Business school windows in your efforts to eliminate ROTC!" This critique will not attempt a detailed demonstration of the complex connections between Stanford, ROTC, the war, the military in general, big business, U.S. imperialism, and the American power elite. The writer (of this) accepts these connections as a foregone conclusion. Should the reader (you) be confused at this point, however, he might read for details the ROTC issue of the Stanford Chaparral (Feb. 16, 1970) as well as the SDS booklet Maggie's Farm (fall, 1969) before dismissing such a conclusion as groundless. It requires a radical departure from the popular method of looking at things--a method nurtured and cherished at Stanford--to arrive at a more unified view. Movement people tend to forget this and become impatient. For our new people, appreciation of the goals and tactics of the Off ROTC Movement really begins with a new appreciation for the overall texture of American life. Should you decide that obedience to a repressive power structure is as much a part of student and civilian life as it is of military life, and that you are in fact surrendering to that egocentric and dehumanizing structure until or unless you fight it, the rest comes easily.

What are the immediate objectives of the Stanford Movement? The most obvious objective is the total elimination of ROTC from the campus. Faculty members on both sides of the issue contend that, for better or worse, a final decision has already been made. For its part the administration has demonstrated its readiness to invoke a court injunction against any student or teacher who challenges the validity of that so-called decision. In addition, a new fixture on campus (the writer (me) proposes to call it Pitzer's Pig Patrol) consisting of a large number of uniformed and plainclothes police and self-appointed vigilantes continues to demonstrate its readiness to bust anyone who acts in violation of said injunction. Obviously, offering ROTC means defying the injunction. And it means dealing with the pigs, whoever they are, because they are acting as the only tangible force standing between the people and the power. That power, in the people's hands, would move to eliminate ROTC.

From this stems a corollary objective. The movement intends to impress upon the Stanford power structure that the continuation of ROTC will be far more costly and bothersome than it is worth. In February, 1969, the Stanford faculty voted to remove all academic credit from ROTC, abolish the punitive clause in student contracts, and deny faculty privileges to ROTC officers--three decisive steps toward the program's ultimate abolition. Too decisive, in fact, for the Department of Defense to tolerate. Last October, President Pitzer got the word. Stanford's 17 million dollars in DoD contracts stood in severe jeopardy unless something a bit more satisfactory could be worked out for the Army. It is reasonable to assume that the DoD was bluffing--it needs the research. But that didn't matter to Pitzer and the Academic Senate. The bluff worked, and the rest is recent history. Our current movement proposes, as a final recourse, to fight fire with fire. How many windows add up to \$17 million? At the same time, by disrupting ROTC classes and drawing continued attention to the issues we hope to discourage students from further participation in the program.

Finally, dissent against ROTC is both symbolic and substantive at the

national level. Symbolic in that it reflects active and growing concern over university complicity in the war effort, complicity which ranges from the production of military officers to the ongoing research in weapons technology and counterinsurgency methods. Substantive in that it serves further notice to universities nationwide that ROTC is a losing gamble, that rather than wait for the final confrontation they might eliminate it now while looking to sources outside the DoD for financial support. They've got to learn, sooner or later.

Once these objectives are understood, tactics remain to be discussed. Is there a place for rational dialogue in this struggle? Within the movement itself and between the movement and the greater Stanford community, yes. The movement is pressing its effort to establish such dialogue by making its objectives and concurrent activities public, and by openly inviting discussion in affinity groups, mass meetings, and campus living quarters. Between the movement and the administration with which it must finally deal, however, the answer is apparently no. The movement did not create or provoke this situation. Pitzer himself declared the issue closed to further debate as early as last February. No "constructive purpose" could be served by a community forum on ROTC, he told the Daily.

Meanwhile, we have thus far witnessed both a peaceful and a militant side to movement actions. The peaceful march through campus, past ROTC and to Pitzer's mansion last Thursday evening drew over 1,000 participants. The movement's peaceful attempt to participate in last Friday's Academic Council meeting ended abruptly when Pitzer instructed Dan DeYoung to read the injunction, spontaneously set to the tune of "We Shall Overcome." Movement members waited outside for the meeting to end, voting as a body to reject a last minute administration offer to allow three "representatives" to speak for the group, then engaged several dozen faculty members in rational dialogue as they emerged from the building. Alongside such peaceful efforts, however, have come the militant actions arising out of our 'cost-benefit' analysis. In the end, it seems that the issue will have to be resolved through force. We already know that Pitzer is prepared to crush us with his Pig Patrol. How this challenge can be met remains to be seen. But whether it means breaking windows, taking buildings, or shutting down the campus, the objective remains: we must make ROTC too costly to keep. This cost is incurred in many ways, perhaps the least of which is purely financial. Obviously we won't have to break \$17 million worth of windows. Every disruption threatens the overall stability of the university machine. Stanford becomes further enmeshed in the losing battle to save face with its own community and the Pentagon. The trustees apply increased pressure. Ken Pitzer has nightmares about David Packard and red paint. Alumni and parents scream that their aid and their children will be withdrawn from such an unhealthy environment. And the prestige of this university hits the skids. We are assured that ROTC cannot be retained at such a cost. We are prepared to inflict that cost if necessary.

JOIN US.