

RADICALS BETWEEN THE HEDGES: NEW LEFT ACTIVISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA, 1963-1975

by

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(Under the Direction of Robert A. Pratt)

ABSTRACT

Despite a lack of attention by many New Left scholars, a New Left community existed at the University of Georgia for over ten years. Originally composed of political activists who formed a chapter of Students for Democratic Society in 1966, the New Left expanded quickly after 1968, pulling in adherents of the counterculture, anti-war activists, Vietnam veterans, pacifists, women's liberation advocates and homosexual students fighting for gay liberation. The New Left often encountered resistance from University administrators and conservative student groups but consistently managed to increase membership and win battles. The New Left managed to survive as long as it did in a deeply conservative part of the country by adopting a pragmatic approach to activism, avoiding radical language and actions as often as possible and attempting to convince fellow students of the justness of their cause through dialogue and education.

INDEX WORDS: University of Georgia, Athens, New Left, New Right, Students for a Democratic Society, Young Americans for Freedom, Radicalism, Vietnam War, Vietnam Veterans, Feminism, Gay Liberation, Southern Student Organizing Committee, Student Activism

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Allison. Compared to her, everything else seems quite meaningless.

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Several people deserve thanks in helping me see this thesis to a successful conclusion. The seeds of this project were developed in Thomas Dyer's seminar on higher education in America. His enthusiasm for the topic played an important part in the decision to turn a seminar paper into a thesis. John Inscoc allowed me to explore the topic further in a community studies seminar supposedly dedicated to the nineteenth century. Ian Lekus helped guide me through the historiography of the 1960s and patiently listened as I fumbled my way to a better understanding of the period. Finally, Robert Pratt, despite the daily challenges of heading a lively history department, was always available for questions and helped me achieve a level of scholarship I wouldn't have found on my own.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

In 1969 country musician Merle Haggard released the single “Okie from Muskogee.” An immediate success, Haggard wrote the song as a conservative response to the sweeping changes occurring in American society, particularly among the young. Although located in Oklahoma, Muskogee symbolized any small Southern town and the song’s lyrics criticized many of the countercultural practices that had become popular since the mid-1960s, such as the consumption of illegal drugs, men growing their hair long, and the wearing of “beads and roman sandals.” In the third verse, Haggard made reference to the political unrest then occurring at colleges around the country. While other campuses experienced violence and upheaval Haggard wrote that, in Muskogee, “Football’s still the roughest thing on campus/ And the kids here still respect the college dean.”

For years, historians of the 1960s seemed to interpret these lines as truth, often dismissing outright the possibility that a significant New Left presence could exist on southern campuses. Contrary to these assumptions, by the mid-1960s New Left groups had sprung up at colleges and universities across the region and, although smaller in size and usually lacking the violence that characterized events in the North, protests and demonstrations by New Left groups took place across the South during the late 1960s and early 1970s



A definition of the New Left that has shifted and become more inclusive over time makes the lack of work on the Southern New Left somewhat surprising. Initially seen as consisting of white, mostly male, college students from the Upper Midwest, California, and the Northeast, sixties historians have expanded membership in the New Left to the point that it now includes groups founded by radical lesbians, anti-war homosexuals, militant Native Americans, and environmentalists. While each of these groups espoused its own unique agenda, they all possessed an underlying belief system that marked them as part of the New Left. Most importantly, the New Left was defined by a belief that the United States owed to each of its citizens the ability to live a life free from fear, oppression, violence and the denial of basic civil rights. To achieve this goal, the New Left believed that American society needed to be fundamentally reordered in such a way as to allow those who had been formerly disenfranchised to assume a role in the nation's decision-making process. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, New Left groups in both the North and South constantly searched for the best way to implement this radical change.<sup>1</sup>

The South's absence from New Left history is attributable to the first generation of 1960s scholars who created a narrative of the movement that focused on universities in the Northeast, Midwest and California. These historians, often ex-members of the New Left, followed what has become known as the "New Left Consensus" or "Declension Hypothesis". Briefly summarized, these conceptual models argue that the New Left emerged in 1962 with the drafting of the Port Huron Statement by Students for a

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<sup>1</sup> For an expanded discussion on the definition of the New Left see Van Gosse, *The Movements of the New Left, 1950-1975: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 1-4. While agreeing with most of Gosse's definition, I disagree with his choice to include the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s as part of the New Left.

Democratic Society (SDS). Consisting initially of white, Northern, middle class college students, many of them “red diaper babies” whose parents had belonged to the Old Left of the 1930s, the New Left remained a small movement until the mid 1960s when, based on their experiences working for civil rights groups in the South and their opposition to the Johnson administration’s commitment to defeating communism in Vietnam, large numbers of students swelled the ranks of SDS chapters across the North and Midwest.

By 1969, however, the movement had fallen apart. Unable to overcome internal differences, SDS split into two competing factions. At the same time, many early members of the New Left, as well as mainstream American society, reacted negatively to the countercultural elements, such as drug use and sexual experimentation, and the increased commitment to violence adopted by newer converts to the movement. Many scholars placed the final end of the New Left in 1970, when three members of the Weather Underground, a militant splinter group of SDS, accidentally exploded a homemade bomb in a New York City townhouse, resulting in their deaths.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1990s, younger scholars, many of them too young to have participated in the 1960s student movement, began questioning these conceptual models. Citing works from the first generation of New Left historians, such as *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* by Todd Gitlin, Maurice Isserman’s *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left*, “*Democracy is in the Streets*”: *From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* by James Miller, and Kirkpatrick Sale’s *SDS*, these younger scholars examined closely the New Left Consensus model and found that it

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed description of the New Left Consensus and Declension Hypothesis see John McMillian, “‘You Didn’t Have to Be There’: Revisiting the New Left Consensus,” in *The New Left Revisited*, edited by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 3-4 and Rick Perlstein, “Who Owns the Sixties?”, in *Lingua Franca*, (May-June 1996), 32-33.

ignored or misinterpreted important aspects of New Left history. One key criticism centered on the focus earlier historians placed on national organizations, with the majority of that focus on SDS and its leadership. As historian John McMillian noted, “far too many historians dwell on the institutional history of SDS and the powerful personalities of . . . movement leaders.” This created a significant problem since, as Maurice Isserman correctly states, “so much of the political energy of the decade arose spontaneously from the bottom.”<sup>3</sup> Activism at the grassroots level quickly became the new focus of 1960s scholars.

By shifting the focus away from national SDS and placing it on activism at the grassroots level, historians were able to identify other problems with the “New Left Consensus.” Earlier writers overemphasized the importance of organizations while ignoring activists outside of New Left groups. Too often scholars saw the history of the New Left as the history of its most popular organizations, such as SDS or the Progressive Labor Party. The second generation of New Left scholarship argued that the movement could not be contained within such clearly defined boundaries. It was instead “a messy agglomeration of national and local groups and initiatives. The New Left gleefully ignored organizational structure.”<sup>4</sup> Winifred Breines emphasizes that, “by focusing on the fate of SDS as an organization [first generation New Left histories] diminish the mass movement: regional and local activity that did not depend on a national organization, grass-roots organizing by students and other activists, the counterculture . . .”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John McMillian, “‘You Didn’t Have to Be There’: Revisiting the New Left Consensus,” *The New Left Revisited*, edited by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 4; and Maurice Isserman, “The Not-So-Dark and Bloody Ground: New Works on the 1960s,” *The American Historical Review* 94:4 (Oct. 1989), 999.

<sup>4</sup> Doug Rossinow, “Letting Go: Revisiting the New Left’s Demise,” *The New Left Revisited*, edited by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 241-242.

<sup>5</sup> Winifred Breines, “Whose New Left?” *The Journal of American History* 75 (Sep 1988), 531.

One of the most important issues discussed by the new generation of 1960s historians revolved around the rather difficult question of when the New Left ended. Most scholars traditionally placed the end of the movement somewhere between the riots at the Democratic National Convention in 1968 and the New York City townhouse explosion in 1970. But, once again, this conclusion equated the New Left with its national organizations. By focusing on the New Left at the grassroots level and, more importantly, viewing the New Left as a broad, loosely-based social movement instead of an organized political one, many scholars have argued that the New Left continued well into the 1970s.

As politics became personal, the New Left fostered the women's movement, the struggle for gay rights, and environmental causes, among others. As Breines states, "the politics of the late sixties, after 1967 and 1968, were not simple signs of the deterioration of the movement. There were imaginative political experiments . . . and there were the movements growing out of civil rights and the student movements that continued the drive for equality and peace in American society."<sup>6</sup> Andrew Hunt supports this argument by stating that, "the early seventies witnessed a change in the dynamics of resistance. Recent studies of the era suggest that protest movements were becoming decentralized and increasingly local. Most importantly, grass-roots resistance tapped into new constituencies during the early seventies."<sup>7</sup>

Taking these issues into consideration, several historians produced studies during the past decade that examined the New Left at the grassroots level, beyond its traditional end date of 1970, and outside of the its large enclaves on the West Coast, in the state

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 544-45.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Hunt, "'When Did the Sixties Happen?': Searching For New Directions," *Journal of Social History* 33:1 (1999), 152.

universities of the upper Midwest and in the cities of the Northeast.<sup>8</sup> But, once again, these historians largely ignored the Southern New Left, particularly in the Deep South states of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Kenneth Heineman dismissed the entire region with a quick mention of “relatively inactive Southern universities.” Noted sixties historian David Farber plainly stated, “Except for the Deep South, student protests . . . took place throughout the country.” Several historiographical essays and numerous books of New Left literature, while noting criticisms mentioned above, still failed to acknowledge the lack of work on the South.<sup>9</sup>

It has only been since the mid-1990s that work on the Southern New Left has begun to appear. The most significant recent work on the South is Gregg Michel’s monograph on the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC). Full of new insights into white political activism in the 1960s South, it still possesses some important shortcomings. Exploring the Southern New Left more closely than historians had done in the past, Michel’s main focus on the development of a regional organization and its leaders causes him to gloss over the grassroots activities of local SSOC chapters. Michel also ends his study in 1969 with the demise of SSOC. As an organizational study, this decision makes sense, but it leaves the reader with the impression that little occurred in

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<sup>8</sup> See Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Kenneth J. Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Robbie Lieberman, *Prairie Power: Voices of 1960s Midwestern Student Protest* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004); Rusty L. Monhollon, “*This is America?*”: *The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Mary Ann Wynkoop, *Dissent in the Heartland: The Sixties at Indiana University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> See Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 5; David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 197; Winifred Breines, “Whose New Left?,” Maurice Isserman, “The Not-So-Dark and Bloody Ground,” and Andrew Hunt, “When Did the Sixties Happen?” Also see footnote, pp. 11 of Gregg Michel, “‘We’ll Take Our Stand’: The Southern Student Organizing Committee and the Radicalization of White Southern Students, 1964-1969,” for a list of works lacking reference to white student activists.

the Southern New Left after or outside of SSOC. Michel reinforces this impression (and is only partially correct) when he states that “SSOC accomplished something no other . . . New Left organization had: it brought progressive activism into the white South. . . .”<sup>10</sup> In fact, the New Left existed in the South outside of SSOC. Or, to look at the issue from another perspective, the Southern New Left depended less on organizations such as SSOC for its well-being than on the relationships between activists and the communities they developed at the grassroots level.

The University of Georgia provides a good place to start looking for evidence of the New Left in the Deep South. While it had been a provincial college at the start of the 1960s, UGa underwent a period of intense growth during the decade, expanding its facilities and academic programs and bringing to campus in significant numbers for the first time young faculty and graduate students from outside the South. UGa’s proximity to Atlanta, a city that played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s and that was noticeably more urban and liberal than the rest of the Deep South, meant that budding activists in Athens could draw upon the larger Atlanta New Left community for both support and inspiration. Atlanta also provided several of UGa’s future New Left leaders who, as a result of witnessing first-hand the African-American struggle for civil rights and the resistance by segments of the white community to that struggle, underwent a transformation of thought that caused them to reject the traditions of the white conservative South and move to the left.

As a result of these important factors, the University of Georgia possessed one of the most active New Left communities in the South, and quite possibly the most

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<sup>10</sup> Gregg Michel, “We’ll Take Our Stand,” 6.

important one in the Deep South.<sup>11</sup> Normally viewed as a bastion of conservatism, UGa witnessed some of the largest and most confrontational student demonstrations in the region. However, almost nothing has been written about UGa's New Left community. Historian Thomas Dyer, in his 1985 history of the university, dedicates six pages to student activism during the 1960s. More importantly, Dyer follows the lead of New Left historians of the time by focusing on SDS, large scale demonstrations and politically oriented activism, a decision that ignores a large part of UGa's New Left history.<sup>12</sup> Michel mentions UGa's New Left, but only briefly and in the context of its relationship to SSOC.

The reality is that a vibrant New Left community existed at UGa starting in the mid 1960s and lasting into the 1970s. This shouldn't be surprising given the important role of the university in the life of Georgia. As the flagship school in the state's university system, UGa attracted students from all parts of the state and with all types of backgrounds and past experiences. As the university grew during the sixties, especially at the graduate level, UGa began attracting students not only from other states but also from outside the South, an issue that would create concern among school administrators during the early days of New Left activism at the school. This diversity found expression in the various groups that emerged during the ten year heyday of UGa's New Left. Besides SDS and its more southern-oriented counterpart SSOC, UGa also possessed a Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), a chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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<sup>11</sup> No work has been done on the New Left at Ole Miss or the University of Alabama, so it is currently impossible to determine the size or scope of the activist communities at those schools.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas G. Dyer. *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1985), 347-352

(VVAW), a women's liberation group (W.O.M.E.N. – Women's Oppression Must End Now) and a gay liberation organization, the Committee on Gay Education.

These groups participated in numerous New Left activities on campus, in Athens and in Atlanta. Besides leading the 1968 sit-in at the Academic Building, UGa-SDS also worked to eradicate compulsory ROTC, a requirement of all male university students who were Georgia residents, and desegregated a local bar frequented by students. The Committee on Gay Education sponsored social functions for the university's gay and lesbian students, twice having to go to court for permission to use school facilities.

Given the uphill battle of generating support in the Deep South for New Left issues, these groups often united forces to plan and carry out marches and demonstrations. Several of these events, such as the Vietnam War Moratoriums, occurred during the early seventies and were jointly sponsored by SDS, SMC, VVAW, and the Committee on Social Issues (CSI). Several groups proved so successful that UGa became an important center of Southern New Left activism, particularly in regard to veteran's issues and gay liberation. Furthermore, the New Left at UGa persisted past the collapse of national SDS and SSOC in 1969. The UGa-SDS chapter lasted until 1971 and the antiwar movement remained active until the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1973. Some of the most important New Left-inspired changes in UGa's political, social, cultural, and even physical landscape occurred between 1970 and 1975.

While a largely political movement in the 1960s, by the early 1970s the New Left had become a broad social and cultural movement.<sup>13</sup> As such, any sharp delineation that

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<sup>13</sup> For this project, the New Left is defined as any socially or politically left-leaning group. While some may argue that certain groups, such as women's rights or gay liberation organizations, do not truly belong to the New Left, within the UGa context these groups represented a minority segment of the student body



may have once existed between it and the counterculture began to blur. Once considered by New Left historians as a uniquely separate phenomenon, a reevaluation of the relationship between the counterculture and the New Left is currently underway and suggests a closer relationship between the two movements than had been previously thought.<sup>14</sup> These historians, however, still view the New Left and the counterculture as unique, if somewhat related, movements. As Rossinow notes, the two may have shared certain affinities but they still possessed key differences.<sup>15</sup> This reevaluation of the relationship ignores the Deep South but, if the University of Georgia proves representative of the region, the New Left played a more important role in bringing the counterculture onto Southern campuses in the late 1960s than in other parts of the country.

Not all student activism on UGa's campus came from the Left. Conservative students, concerned with the radical nature of the New Left, worked against UGa-SDS and other leftist campus groups. Activists on the Right became particularly vocal after 1969, when a national resurgence of conservatism met head-on the emerging social movements of women's rights and gay liberation. It was the social movements of the early 1970s that lasted the longest and in some respects had the greatest impact on UGa. Attacking stereotypes and prejudices deeply imbedded in American culture, the women's rights and gay liberation groups at UGa worked hard at carving out an equal space for themselves in the university community. Long after the cultural upheaval and political

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which had enough in common with other New Left groups to make this classification justified. Recent trends in New Left historiography support this decision.

<sup>14</sup> See Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002); John McMillian and Paul Buhle eds. *The New Left Revisited* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003); and Doug Rossinow, "The New Left in the Counterculture: Hypothesis and Evidence," *Radical History Review* 67, 79-120.

<sup>15</sup> Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 249-250.

turmoil of the 1960s and early 1970s had passed, these groups continued fighting for their cause.

A consistently pragmatic approach to activism defined the New Left at UGa, allowed it to achieve success in a deeply conservative part of the country, and connected the politically-oriented groups of the 1960s with the socially-oriented groups of the 1970s. During the New Left's lifespan at UGa, dogmatic leftist ideology often played a secondary role to achieving results. That isn't to say that the UGa's New Left wasn't radical. Activists, particularly from 1966-1970, largely rejected liberalism and worked towards creating a new American political and social structure. But, they never saw America's salvation, as New Left groups in other parts of the country did, in rigid political ideologies such as Marxism, Marxist-Leninism, Maoism, or any of the other left-based schools of thought popular during the era.

This pragmatism came, in part, from the fact that most of the New Left leaders were Georgia natives brought up in the conservative social environment they were trying to change. Most had, at one time or another, considered themselves a part of this environment, at least until entering the University or leaving the South for an extended period of time. Once they had rejected their past, however, UGa activists still found the knowledge they possessed about conservative Southern culture a useful tool in developing goals and strategies. The effectiveness of grassroots organizing became obvious at UGa, where the intimate knowledge of Southern culture that activists possessed helped them understand what was required to get students involved, get the administration's attention and, most importantly, get results. In some cases this meant rejecting the reactionary rhetoric of revolution in favor of a more practical language of

education, tolerance and equality. At other times, activists had to shape their activities and adopt tactics that, while not compromising the radical intent of the New Left, made it appear moderate enough to attract converts to the cause.

Because it proved necessary to develop goals and strategies unique to the situation at UGa, it can be misleading when a comparison is made between the events in Athens and those in other parts of the nation. Held next to other schools such as UC-Berkeley, Columbia or Kent State, UGa often appears as a rather insignificant example of moderation in a much larger narrative of radicalism. When examined within the proper social and political context of the 1960s Deep South, however, the UGa New Left reveals its true radical nature. If judged solely by its actions, the UGa New Left appears quite moderate, but these actions were the necessary product of the conservative environment in which the movement operated and did not reflect its actual radical beliefs. At heart, the UGa New Left envisioned the same fundamental restructuring of American society and culture that its seemingly more radical counterparts outside the South wanted--beliefs that composed the foundation of the 1960s New Left.

A final note regarding the groups involved at UGa. Keeping straight the numerous acronyms and abbreviations used to describe 1960s New Left groups can be a daunting task. The job is made harder when campus groups and national organizations shared the same acronym or abbreviation. When this occurred at UGa, in order to prevent confusion, I have attached the prefix UGa- to the name of the group. This allowed me to discuss, for example, the national SDS and UGa-SDS in close proximity while preventing confusion regarding which group did or said what.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Origins of the New Left at the University of Georgia: 1963-1968

On April 10, 1968 several hundred students began a three day occupation of the Academic Building on the University of Georgia campus.<sup>1</sup> The demonstration occurred at the end of the March for Coed Equality, an event organized by the Movement for Coed Equality (MFCE), a new campus organization founded with the purpose of changing what they considered to be antiquated policies regarding female student behavior. Once inside the Academic Building, however, it became clear that the demonstration had been the work of the local chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a campus-based group that had spent the previous two years fighting for a wide range of changes in the university's social and political life. Under the guise of the MFCE, UGa-SDS saw the March for Coed Equality as both an important protest against university policy and as a means for recruiting students into the UGa activist community. The events of April 10-12, 1968, however, had the opposite effect. Not only did the demonstration fail to swell the ranks of UGa-SDS but the subsequent disciplinary actions brought by the university's administration resulted in the temporary suspension from school of several key UGa-SDS members, including the group's founder. UGa-SDS survived these events, however, despite criticism from the university community, and by the fall of 1968 UGa possessed a small but growing New Left community on campus.

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<sup>1</sup> While the march had been planned and advertised for weeks, the number of participants may have been enhanced by the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. six days earlier and his funeral, which occurred the previous day in nearby Atlanta.

That the University of Georgia SDS chapter existed at all, let alone persisted, seems somewhat miraculous. Located in the Deep South, the university had earned a reputation as a socially and politically conservative school. UGa began the 1960s, like other universities in the region, a segregated school. This changed in January 1961 when Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter became the first African American students admitted to UGa. Although overshadowed by the more violent desegregations of the University of Alabama and Ole Miss, Hunter and Holmes encountered comparably staunch opposition to their admittance. The UGa desegregation effort turned particularly violent on January 11, 1961 when white students rioted outside Hunter's dormitory, a demonstration that ended only after police dispersed the crowd with the use of tear gas and fire hoses. Although a few white students reached out tentatively to Hunter and Holmes the majority continued to support, or at least refused to challenge, the South's heritage of social conservatism.<sup>2</sup>

While the university community remained largely resistant to social change it also pursued a series of structural and academic changes that would, in unforeseen ways, sow the seeds of future challenges to the existing social order. The University of Georgia underwent an intense period of growth in the 1960s. While past university presidents had envisioned UGa becoming a "modern research and public service oriented university," a

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<sup>2</sup> The desegregation of the University of Georgia has been the topic of several books and essays. The best and most academically oriented are Robert Pratt's monograph, *We Shall Not be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), the desegregation chapter in Thomas Dyer's, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 303-334, and Robert Cohen's two essays, "'Two, Four, Six, Eight, We Don't Want to Integrate': White Students Attitudes Toward the University of Georgia's Desegregation," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 79 (Fall 1996), 616-645 and "G-Men in Georgia: The FBI and the Segregationist Riot at the University of Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83 (Fall 1999), 508-538. Equally insightful if less critical in their analysis of the events are Charlayne Hunter Gault's autobiography *In My Place* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), and Calvin Trillin's account, *An Education in Georgia: Charlayne Hunter, Hamilton Holmes, and the Integration of the University of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1963).

traditionally negative attitude toward education in state government often thwarted plans for improvement. The election of pro-education governor Carl Sanders in 1962 and the increase in funds allotted by the state to the university finally allowed school officials to believe that the changes they had envisioned would occur.<sup>3</sup> Governor Lester Maddox continued boosting school funds and for fiscal year 1967-1968 the state appropriated \$34 million for the university, an amount nearly four times as great as for 1960-1961, the year of desegregation. Campus expansion emerged as one result of this increase in funds. Between 1961 and 1968 the university completed construction on the Biological Sciences Building, the Coliseum, the Visual Arts Building, an addition to the law school, more than half a dozen new dormitories, and numerous other structures. The expansion proved so extensive a new bus service was introduced to shuttle students around campus.<sup>4</sup>

A larger campus allowed for a larger faculty and student body. While the cumulative enrollment for 1961 stood at roughly 8,000 students, by the time of the April 1968 sit-in it had soared to more than 20,000. Part of the change in enrollment came from an increase in the number of graduate students, many from outside the state, a result of the creation of numerous doctoral programs during the sixties.<sup>5</sup> Graduate education held an important role in improving UGa's academic reputation and fiscal well-being. "Establishing or expanding doctoral programs," according to historian Roger Gieger, "raised the prestige of the institution, allowed it to recruit and retain better faculty, encouraged research, qualified it for special forms of federal aid and, especially for state

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<sup>3</sup> An advocate of more than education, Sanders stood behind a general policy of economic growth for Georgia. See Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1990) 222-224.

<sup>4</sup> All of the information regarding the university in this paragraph comes from Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 335-338

<sup>5</sup> Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 339, 341.

schools, justified appeals for increased resources.”<sup>6</sup> The university added 354 new faculty members between 1960 and 1967, bringing the overall total to 763. As with the increase in the student population, the growing number of faculty brought a diversity of viewpoints to campus. As historian Thomas Dyer notes, “The new professors came from much more varied academic backgrounds . . . among the new arrivals were professors who had served in institutions outside the South with strong traditions of faculty independence and with political values that differed markedly from the norm at Georgia.”<sup>7</sup>

A small minority of students also held political views that fell outside the norm and they attempted to reach out to the growing national student movement in the years after desegregation. UGa student Nelson Blackstock attended the founding meeting of the Southern Student Organizing Committee in April 1964. In December of that year, the national SDS office made contact with two UGa students, Harold Black and David Roberts, who expressed interest in forming a student group on campus that would possibly affiliate with SDS.<sup>8</sup> Law student and SNCC activist David Brann, as part of the wave of interest in SDS following its March on Washington to End the Vietnam War in April 1965, wrote former SDS Field Secretary Steve Max indicating his desire to form a chapter on UGa’s campus. Brann could not “promise anything in the way of direct action

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<sup>6</sup> Roger Gieger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 218-219.

<sup>7</sup> Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 340.

<sup>8</sup> Black was one of the first African American freshmen students admitted after Hamilton and Holmes, entering UGa in the fall of 1962. He was also the first African American male to live in campus housing. See Robert Pratt, *We Shall Note Be Moved*, 123-125.

any time soon,” but believed SDS could act as an organizational base for interested students who were at the time “only voiceless, powerless individuals.”<sup>9</sup>

Several events during the 1963-64 academic year may have led Brann and others to believe that UGa was ready for a leftist student organization. The Committee for Non-Violent Action (CNVA) visited the UGa campus on October 28, 1963 as part of its Quebec to Guantanamo Peace Walk. A pacifist group formed in the late 1950s, the CNVA organized a march from Canada to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as a protest against U.S. policy towards revolutionary Cuba. The group held an hour-long impromptu discussion outside the Commerce-Journalism Building until halted by campus police. Because of the literature being distributed by the CNVA, Dean of Students Daniel J. Sorrells banned the group from campus. Sorrells reversed his decision later that day and, two days later, Phi Kappa, a student debating society, invited CNVA member Michael Wells to deliver a lecture to the campus community.<sup>10</sup>

The CNVA visit occurred a few weeks after the Student Affairs Committee denied Phi Kappa’s request to hold a debate between an UGa faculty member and an unnamed member of the Communist Party. Phi Kappa’s request may have been intended as a response to the “Speaker Ban” passed in the North Carolina Legislature earlier that year (a move which barred Communists from speaking on the campuses of state universities), but the decision by Student Affairs generated little response among campus liberals. Georgia politicians, however, took notice and, mimicking their North Carolina

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<sup>9</sup> Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle For a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 37-38; Campus Organizing Form, *Students for Democratic Society Papers, 1958-1970* (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilm Corporation of America, 1977), Series 2A, No. 72. Referred hereafter to as *SDS Papers*; David Brann to Steve Max, 25 July 1965, *SDS Papers*, Series 2A, No. 72.

<sup>10</sup> For more information regarding the origins and campaigns of CNVA see 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), 158-165; *The Red and Black*, 29 October 1963.



counterparts, introduced their own Speaker Ban bill during the state legislature's 1964 session. Phi Kappa began circulating a petition against the measure among campus leaders. Members of the student body also spoke out against the proposed Speaker Ban. Recognizing the implied commitment to intellectual freedom that came with the decision to expand and improve the university, student Diane Schiffman commented that, "so much time . . . and money is being put into Gov. Sanders [sic] education program, it would be a shame and a contradiction to follow it with a gag rule." The University System's Board of Regents also opposed the bill and after an unofficial request to do so by the board, Representative Mac Pickard, the bill's sponsor, killed the measure by recommending it not leave the House's University System Committee.<sup>11</sup>

UGa's small collection of left-leaning students coalesced into the beginnings of the UGa New Left community when Students for a Democratic Society formed during the fall of 1966.<sup>12</sup> The UGa-SDS chapter began originally as a group called "The Underground." Despite the political implications of its name, the group dedicated itself to cultural explorations. Citing artists such as Andy Warhol and Allen Ginsberg as influences, co-founder Robert Roth stated that the group's purpose was to, "exchange ideas among students who are interested in these and similar artists."<sup>13</sup> The group quickly shifted its primary emphasis from culture to politics when freshman David Simpson joined a few weeks after the group's founding and The Underground affiliated with Students for a Democratic Society. Under Simpson's guidance and leadership UGa-

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<sup>11</sup> William J. Billingsley provides a thorough and engaging account of the North Carolina Speaker Ban in his book *Communists on Campus: Race, Politics, and the Public University in Sixties North Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999); *The Red and Black*, 8 October 1963, 21 January 1964, 6 February 1964.

<sup>12</sup> The most important New Left organization of the 1960s, SDS existed as an independent group from 1962-1969. For a complete history of SDS see Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973). Surprisingly, given the importance of SDS, no new analysis has been done of the group since Sale.

<sup>13</sup> *The Red and Black*, 15 November 1966.

SDS would spend the next eighteen months leading protests, creating controversy and generating concern among conservative students, administrators and alumni.

David Simpson did not fit the profile of either a radical leftist or a cultural rebel. An Athens, Georgia native, he opposed the civil rights movement while a teenager. After dropping out of high school at age 18, Simpson joined the Navy and spent his enlistment in Washington, D.C. during which time he earned his high school equivalency diploma. After being discharged he returned to Athens with a wife and child. His time away from the Deep South caused Simpson to rethink his political beliefs and he now supported the civil rights movement, as well as other New Left causes.<sup>14</sup> Simpson entered the university in 1966 and wasted little time getting involved in student activism. His first foray into campus politics occurred in November 1966, when he wrote a letter to the student newspaper criticizing sharply a “Statement of Student Rights” recently passed by the student government, calling the document “an insult to the University of Georgia student” since it gave to students only those rights the administration was willing to grant to them.<sup>15</sup>

University control over the lives of students quickly emerged as the hub around which the UGa-SDS wheel of activities spun. While UGa-SDS did participate in demonstrations similar to those being conducted by other SDS chapters around the country, the largely autonomous nature of each chapter allowed members to choose goals that held the greatest meaning to them, and which best affected the university to which it was attached. Underground co-founder and UGa-SDS member Phil Evans stated that, “We knew racism was prevalent and that the suppression of women’s rights was here on

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<sup>14</sup> Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South*, 178; *Athens Banner-Herald*, 9 October 1967

<sup>15</sup> *The Red and Black*, 17 November 1966.

a much larger scale. The Vietnam War had not been brought into our issues, because we thought coed equality would establish the greatest rapport with the largest number of students.”<sup>16</sup> While coed issues did not come to the forefront as quickly as Evans states, student rights issues remained one of the primary concerns for UGa-SDS from its founding through the 1968 demonstrations.

The traditional policy of *in loco parentis*, under which the university acted as a surrogate parent for its students and assumed responsibility for moral training as well as academic instruction, still dominated student life at UGa. “The University places itself between the student and the parent and assumes parental rule,” a University official emphatically stated. The administration did recognize, however, a growing concern in some circles regarding university policies. Dean of Men William Tate commented in October 1966 that, “the most persistent question asked me by parents . . . concerns the inconsistency between the rules for men and women.”<sup>17</sup> Students noticed this discrepancy, as well as the fact that changes regarding these policies were taking place at other universities around the country.<sup>18</sup>

UGa-SDS began its campaign for student rights when, in defiance of university regulations, it began publishing an unauthorized newsletter in April 1967. By publishing the newsletter, UGa-SDS openly challenged the University’s practice of exerting authority over off-campus activities. Although composed of students, the group operated off campus and without official recognition by the university which, in the view of UGa-SDS, placed them outside the domain of the university. University administrators, after

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<sup>16</sup> *The Red and Black*, 13 January 1970.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 11 October 1966.

<sup>18</sup> The Women’s Interest section of the 25 October 1966 issue of *The Red and Back* ran a story entitled, “Coeds’ Curfews Changing Over Nation.”

“seeing what our responsibility is in off-campus situations,” chose not to make an attempt at blocking the publication of the UGa-SDS newsletter.<sup>19</sup>

Despite winning its first confrontation with the university UGa-SDS had not necessarily impressed the student body. While some students agreed reluctantly with UGa-SDS that some University regulations existed on “shaky ground,” they also chastised the group for participating in “defiant radicalism” and “condemned” the student body for allowing UGa-SDS to dictate the manner in which protests against the university would be conducted.<sup>20</sup>

Despite criticism, UGa-SDS charged defiantly forward. The group staged a protest against U.S participation in Vietnam during Vice President Hubert Humphrey’s visit to UGa on April 13, 1967. While Humphrey spoke inside the Coliseum, UGa-SDS picketers outside the building found themselves the focus of a small but aggressive counter-demonstration. By the time Dean Tate arrived the UGa-SDS protesters had been physically assaulted. UGa-SDS informed Tate of the incident and also expressed their concern that University security had witnessed the assault but did not intervene.<sup>21</sup> Despite being assaulted, the Humphrey protest earned UGa-SDS more scorn than praise. *Red and Black* columnist W. Grant Weyman classified the New Left movement on campus as “apathetic” and “moronic,” and labeled the protestors as “Sign-carrying kids making asses out of themselves.” Gradually, however, some support for UGa-SDS appeared. While critical of the confrontational tactics UGa-SDS employed, *Red and*

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<sup>19</sup> *The Red and Black*, 6 April 1967.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> William Tate to George Parthemos, 14 April 1967, William Tate Papers, Box 41, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Athens.

*Black* Associate Editor Sam Shalala expressed admiration for the courage and conviction David Simpson showed in the recent demonstrations.<sup>22</sup>

During this period, UGa-SDS received support for its efforts from the Reverend Milner Ball, who had served as UGa's Presbyterian campus minister since January 1966. Responsible for overseeing activities at the Presbyterian Student Center, also known as Westminster House, Ball developed a relationship with UGa-SDS when the group began holding meetings there. This seemed the logical choice since Westminster House traditionally had been a safe gathering spot for students whose views or actions were unpopular among the broader university community. Ball encouraged UGa-SDS's "youthful commitment to justice" and would later play a role in the April 1968 sit-in.<sup>23</sup>

The end of the school year found UGa-SDS initiating two interesting if seemingly divergent undertakings. The *Red and Black* reported on April 27 that UGa-SDS was in the process of drawing up a constitution and applying for official recognition by the Student Senate. While this move may seem incongruent with an organization that sharply criticized student government and preferred challenging mainstream university political life instead of joining it, the decision indicated an increased desire on the part of UGa-SDS to confront directly administration policies and gain student support. Within a few months of its founding UGa-SDS had shown that the university could be successfully challenged, but the combination of being mostly ignored by the administration and its status as an off-campus organization limited the group's ability to sustain an attack on those university policies that governed on-campus student behavior. UGa-SDS expressed early on that it not only wished to keep the university out of what students did off

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<sup>22</sup> *The Red and Black*, 20 April 1967; 25 April 1967

<sup>23</sup> Milner S. Ball, *Called By Stories: Biblical Sagas and Their Challenge for Law*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 4.

campus, but also wanted to ensure that the university did not violate students' constitutional and legal rights in its regulation of on-campus activities. By establishing an official presence on campus, UGa-SDS would be in a better position to challenge university policy and, more importantly, the administration could not ignore them. On the practical side, as an official student organization UGa-SDS would also have access to university resources.<sup>24</sup>

UGa-SDS, however, did not abandon its off-campus activities. Its last action of the school year proved to be its boldest yet. On May 9, 1967 three African American members of UGa-SDS entered The Rail, an Athens bar frequented by students. This in itself was not unusual; blacks were allowed to buy beer to carry out. Once they received their beers, however, the three students didn't leave but instead sat down at a booth with some white friends. The owner, James Mitchell, confronted the African American students and told them that, "We don't allow colored people to drink here," but the students refused to leave. Mitchell summoned the police, who left within 20 minutes of arriving and without confronting the students. Seeking more than a symbolic gesture, the three African American students returned the next night and again sat down at a booth. Mitchell told the bartender to serve them. While it is unclear if UGa-SDS planned this confrontation or if it was initially the decision of a few of its members, the administration assumed that the group orchestrated the event since it reached out to UGa-SDS leaders to discuss what happened instead of the students directly involved. In turn, UGa-SDS leaders seemed willing to assume authority over the action.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> SDS member Pat Nelson remembers the group receiving \$250 once it obtained status as an approved campus organization. Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004.

<sup>25</sup>*The Red and Black*, 16 May 1967.

UGa-SDS had accomplished a great deal in its first six months of existence. The chapter successfully challenged both the university and the de facto system of segregation that still existed in the South. More importantly, the organization and its agenda won positive recognition among the student body. One student stated that, “If you [the *Red and Black* editorial staff] are serious about the reforms advocated in your editorials, you cannot afford to belittle the only campus group which is concerned to the point of action for helping you--and all students--acquire those student freedoms and the abolishment of *in loco parentis*.”<sup>26</sup> Students were not the only ones taking notice. UGa-SDS would enter the next academic year under the increasingly watchful gaze of university administrators and state education leaders.

During the summer of 1967, the Board of Regents of the University of Georgia System expressed concern over the activities of UGa-SDS. BOR Executive Secretary Henry Neal contacted University President Fred C. Davison on July 5 and recommended that, “someone attend these [UGa-SDS] meetings just to keep you posted as to what is going on.”<sup>27</sup> Davison replied to Neil’s request by stating that, “I personally feel that our best course of action involving groups such as this is not to dignify their presence by our recognition. Certainly, if we can prevent them from obtaining martyrdom we would do much to frustrate their efforts.”<sup>28</sup>

Whether Davison genuinely viewed UGa-SDS activities as insignificant or simply acted nonchalantly in order to dispel the concerns of University System officials proves hard to determine. Davison most likely wanted to make a good impression, considering

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<sup>26</sup> *The Red and Black*, 18 May 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Henry Neal to Fred Davison, 5 July 1967, Papers of President Fred Davison, Box 56, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Athens (hereafter referred to as the Davison Papers).

<sup>28</sup> Fred Davison to Henry Neal, 6 July 1967, Davison Papers, Box 56.

his recent appointment to the presidency of the University. At the time Neal contacted him, Davison had been acting president for less than two months and would not be officially inaugurated until May 1968. Only thirty-seven years old when appointed to the presidency, Davison had not been the obvious choice for the position, perhaps due to his lack of administrative experience. Holding a doctorate from UGa in veterinary medicine and another from Iowa State University in pathology and biochemistry, Davison entered university administration only in 1964, when he became dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at UGa. He held the post until 1966 when he was appointed vice-chancellor of the University System. Within a year of that appointment he was named university president.<sup>29</sup>

Despite Davison's recommendation to ignore UGa-SDS, tensions escalated between the group and school administrators.<sup>30</sup> At the start of the fall 1967 term, UGa-SDS began a new campaign to abolish the compulsory ROTC course required of all male university students designated as Georgia residents. When UGa-SDS circulated a petition among students at the ROTC desk during registration, Registrar Walter Danner confronted the activists and requested that they leave. One UGa-SDS member refused and Danner, according to one account, "used force to remove the petitioner."<sup>31</sup> At the end of October, the group published an "SDS Open Letter" that called upon the administration to publicly present its reasons for the continuation of compulsory ROTC

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<sup>29</sup> For a more complete biography of Davison see Thomas G. Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1985), 343-344.

<sup>30</sup> It should be noted at this point that not all administrators followed Davison's decision to ignore UGa-SDS or downplay its presence on campus. While very few administrators actually supported the group, it is likely that some thought SDS had the potential for introducing changes the University needed to make but would otherwise prove reluctant to introduce on its own. Like any large bureaucracy, the UGa administration employed people who held a variety of opinions regarding the rise in white student activism that swept the nation starting in the mid-1960s

<sup>31</sup> *The Red and Black*, 28 September 1967.



and stated that UGa-SDS would expand its efforts in the following days to increase the number of signatures on its petition.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the semester UGa-SDS continued to gain support from the student population. By October 1967 forty-two official members belonged to the group, although up to eighty people attended weekly meetings.<sup>33</sup> UGa-SDS also received encouragement in the opinion pages of the student newspaper. One letter from late October 1967 described UGa-SDS as “a small group which is trying to inform the students and get them to think for themselves.” The writers claimed that, “We are not members of SDS but merely students asking everyone to support it. . . .”<sup>34</sup>

The next triumph occurred in January 1968 when the Student Senate officially recognized UGa-SDS as a campus organization. Despite concerns over philosophies held by other chapters of SDS, the Student Senate in “an almost unanimous vote” made UGa-SDS a part of the University of Georgia community. UGa-SDS opponents took exception to the decision. Board of Regents member Roy V. Harris complained, “I know we can’t stamp out the Communists, but I do think that we should not encourage them by permitting their organization on the various campuses of the University System.”<sup>35</sup> Maintaining his relaxed attitude towards the group, Davison responded to Harris by assuring him that UGa-SDS did not present a major concern for the university since, “The SDS group on this campus probably has 30 members,” but “It is hard to tell, however, since they have almost dropped out of sight this [Spring 1968] quarter.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 31 October 1967

<sup>33</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 9 October 1967

<sup>34</sup> *The Red and Black*, 31 October 1967.

<sup>35</sup> Roy Harris to Fred Davison, 6 March 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56

<sup>36</sup> Fred Davison to Roy Harris, 7 March 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56.

Davison provided only a partially correct assessment of the UGa-SDS presence on campus. Although the group had temporarily halted the ROTC campaign and their appearance in the student newspaper virtually ceased, UGa-SDS had certainly not “dropped out of sight.” The group added protest against U.S. involvement in Vietnam to its agenda starting in January 1968 when it began a weekly series of “Peace Vigils.” Conducted every Thursday, UGa-SDS members stood with anti-Vietnam war signs for two hours outside Memorial Hall.<sup>37</sup> They also participated in demonstrations in Social Circle, Georgia, where local leaders protested for several days against inferior conditions at an African American public school.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, UGa-SDS became increasingly interested in coed rights.

Although concern regarding the disparity between the amounts of control the university exercised over the behavior of men and of women had been an issue as far back as 1963 among some segments of the student population, the topic attracted widespread attention starting in the fall of 1967. Several campus leaders expressed support for relaxing women’s rules governing off-campus coed housing, dress regulations, curfew hours and drinking.<sup>39</sup> Sensing that the time had finally come for a major overhaul of student rules, a joint session of the Student Government Association (SGA), Student Senate and president’s cabinet released on January 18, 1968 proposals for changes to rules regarding women’s curfews, housing issues and alcohol consumption. The changes, although drafted with help from the administration, were by no means

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<sup>37</sup> Letter Head Memorandum from SAC Atlanta to FBI Director, 2 July 1968. *COINTELPRO: The Counter-intelligence Program of the FBI* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1978), File 100-449698-2 AT

<sup>38</sup> William Tate to George Parthemos and Suthern Sims, 17 February 1968, William Tate Papers, Box 41; Pat Nelson interview, 9 March 2004; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 17 February 1968; *The Atlanta Journal*, 16 February 1968

<sup>39</sup> *The Red and Black*, 2 November 1967.

guaranteed approval. The Student Senate President stressed the importance of student support for the changes if the administration was to approve their placement on the ballot for the general elections to be held at the end of spring quarter. If “students aren’t 100 percent in backing these proposals they [SGA] wouldn’t have ‘a leg to stand on’ when presenting them to the administration for approval.”<sup>40</sup>

UGa-SDS from its inception considered student rights a key issue for getting large numbers of students involved in activism. The group often railed against the policy of *in loco parentis* in *The Red and Black* as well as its own newsletter. For UGa-SDS the debate over coed rights spoke to the broader issues of university reform and participatory democracy. Possibly the most important component of *The Port Huron Statement*, the foundational document of SDS, participatory democracy allowed for, “the individual [to] share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life.”<sup>41</sup>

University reform meant bringing school regulations into compliance with state and federal law. UGa-SDS viewed the push for coed rights as not only about the right for women to drink alcohol or live off campus but as a part of the larger struggle for fundamental social change and spoke repeatedly of the need for university reform in their newsletter. “He or she,” one article stated, “who will but consider the mass of rules which prescribe the behavior of young adults on this campus must certainly realize that they are oppressive commands. The well-acknowledged lack of ‘student rights’ clearly illustrates this fact.” Another article asked that, “students . . . examine the foundation of the University’s traditional role as guardian of student morality and social director of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 13 February 1968.

<sup>41</sup> *Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society* (1962); available from <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/hst306/documents/huron.html>

students' private lives.”<sup>42</sup> Even as early as November 1966, David Simpson argued that, “the [university] administration does not have the right to qualify the constitutional rights of a student. There are several regulations in effect at the University of Georgia which do precisely that; they are illegal and should be abolished.”<sup>43</sup>

By 1968, due in part to court challenges throughout the decade, *in loco parentis* as a legal principle was virtually moribund. University administrations across the nation, “rather quickly chose to retreat rather than resist the abandonment of parietal [sic] rules and the whole notion of *in loco parentis*.”<sup>44</sup> At the University of Georgia, however, *in loco parentis* died more slowly than at other universities. Several administrators resisted adopting the changes that were occurring on college campuses around the nation. Dean of Men William Tate stood as one of the strongest opponents of change.

Tate, a UGa icon, was generally “respected both as a tough enforcer of conduct regulations and as a compassionate counselor of troubled students.”<sup>45</sup> Seeing his role as Dean of Men as much more than simply administrative, Tate often disagreed when the university liberalized student rules. Tate once informed Davison, “I realize that the ‘atmosphere’ on American campuses has changed appreciably, and I am trying to accept as gracefully as possible certain changes which I think are not logical or helpful.”<sup>46</sup> Tate had served as surrogate parent to thousands of UGa students and did not relish giving up that role.<sup>47</sup> But he did grudgingly accept changes when he saw that resistance would be pointless. In discussing changes to the women’s dress code and the end of the secret

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<sup>42</sup> *SDS Newsletter*, undated; 13 November, 1967. Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>43</sup> *The Red and Black*, 17 November 1966.

<sup>44</sup> Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge*, 237.

<sup>45</sup> John W. English and Rob Williams, *When Men Were Boys: An Informal Portrait of Dean William Tate* (Lakemont, Ga.: Copple House Books, Inc., 1984), 7.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Tate to Davison, 27 April 1968. William Tate Papers.

<sup>47</sup> English and Williams, *When Men Were Boys*, 138.

marriage ban, Tate told Dean of Women Louise McBee, “I think that they were both policies that other people were going to change despite our views.”<sup>48</sup>

By the first months of 1968 all the elements were in place for a confrontation between UGa-SDS and the university administration. Recognizing the growing concern among students regarding the discrepancy in rules between the sexes and the reluctance of university administrators to abandon *in loco parentis*, UGa-SDS saw the March for Coed Equality as a prime opportunity to engage in large-scale direct action protest. Aware that the march could draw a great number of students but also realizing that the association of SDS (an organization often accused of being affiliated with Communism and extremist behavior at the national level) with the march might keep people away, UGa-SDS declined to participate officially in or even lend its official support to the march, although they remained intimately involved with the planning and execution of the event. Thinking beyond the march, UGa-SDS also hoped that students would become more interested in protest activity if they experienced it first-hand. Once students got a taste of activism, the thinking went, it would be easier to get them involved in other UGa-SDS activities.<sup>49</sup>

In an effort to generate support among students for the rules changes proposed by the Student Senate in January and with the hope of expediting the administration’s approval of the changes, the newly organized Movement for Coed Equality (MFCE)

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<sup>48</sup> Letter from Tate to McBee, 21 November, 1967. William Tate Papers. The secret marriage ban was implemented by Tate years earlier. As English and Williams relate, the ban was meant to discourage student marriages by stating that students could only get married with the permission of both their parents and the university. Failure to obtain permission before getting married could lead to the suspension from school of the students involved. Students did get married without permission, which could lead to embarrassing situations for Tate. In one 1966 case, after being tipped off that a male and female student had checked into a local motel without luggage, Tate went to the motel on the assumption that the students were unmarried. After being refused entrance to room, Tate burst through the door and got into a fistfight with the male student, only to find out the students were married. (English and Williams, 135-136)

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Milner Ball by author, 24 November 2003

planned a march for early April 1968. Although UGa-SDS disclaimed any connection to the MFCE, the group's leadership included UGa-SDS members Bill Clark, Maxine Karp, Katherine Omelanuk and Diane Wygal. In a Phi Kappa meeting on April 3, organizers explained the reasons for the march, although they did admit that they weren't sure if the protest would, "accomplish any tangible results."<sup>50</sup> March organizers met with Davison on April 8 to present him with a copy of the preliminary petition and to discuss plans for the march two days later. Davison did not guarantee his presence at the Academic Building on April 10 to receive the official petition at the march's conclusion, but did indicate he would most likely be present. The organizers, however, fully expected not only Davison's presence but his response to the petition, most likely in the form of immediate changes to at least some of the rules. The organizers refused to rule out the possibility of confrontational action if they did not get an immediate response from Davison. .<sup>51</sup>

The March for Coed Equality set out from the parking lot of Creswell Hall at 4:30 pm on April 10, 1968.<sup>52</sup> The group consisted of approximately 500 people, mostly University of Georgia students, with a few university faculty members mixed in. The route, about a mile in length, took them down Baxter Street and then on to campus, with the Academic Building as the final destination. The march went as planned, despite the rain that fell heavily on the participants. When the group reached the steps of the Academic Building Diane Wygal and Biology professor John Kerr delivered speeches extolling the virtues of the students' right to self-determination. When it came time to

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<sup>50</sup> *The Red and Black*, 4 April 1968

<sup>51</sup> *The Red and Black*, 9 April 1968.

<sup>52</sup> Although not reported at the time, Creswell Hall may have been picked at the starting location since it was named after Mary E. Creswell, the first female head of an academic department at UGa.

hand over the petition, however, Davison failed to arrive and the University was represented officially by Vice President George Parthemos. Instead of an immediate administrative response, the marchers heard from Dean of Students O. Southern Sims that changes had to come “through proper channels.”<sup>53</sup> Dissatisfied with the perceived slight by Davison and the unresponsiveness of the administration to their demands, roughly half of the marchers charged past university administrators and occupied the hallways of the Academic Building.<sup>54</sup>

Although widely reported at the time as a spontaneous decision, the sit-in had been a planned part of the event. UGa-SDS member Pat Nelson recalled that the group had planted members throughout the crowd and when the administration refused to reply immediately to the protestor’s demands, which UGa-SDS expected despite public statements to the contrary, the UGa-SDS people in the crowd began saying in loud voices that the students should go inside and wait until the university did respond. Although UGa-SDS was unsure of its potential for success, the tactic proved extremely effective.<sup>55</sup>

Hoping the students would vacate the building and needing to remind them who was in charge, Sims sent a letter to the students at 10:30 p.m. stating that the students were “interfering with the normal routine of the university” and requesting that all students clear the building.<sup>56</sup> The students refused and by the time the university opened for business on April 11, the administration realized the seriousness of the protesters. Davison entered into negotiations with a committee of five protesters, including David

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<sup>53</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 11 April 1968.

<sup>54</sup> This synopsis of the march and beginning of the sit-in is based on the events as reported in the April 9 and 11, 1968 issues of *The Red and Black*, and the April 11, 1968 issues of the *Athens Banner-Herald* and *The Atlanta Constitution*.

<sup>55</sup> Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004.

<sup>56</sup> Statement from Sims to protesting students, 10 April 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56.

Simpson, who had now become one of the sit-in's leaders, in hopes of ending the occupation. The talks failed despite efforts to reach a compromise and by the end of the business day students still occupied the building.

Thursday night witnessed an increased amount of activity both inside and around the Academic Building. Inside the building students considered a letter issued by Davison, stating that refusal to leave could result in "serious disciplinary consequences," including possible arrest by Athens police, and that "appropriate legal remedies will be sought" to end the sit-in.<sup>57</sup> Some time before 8 p.m., in another attempt to clear the building, the administration sent in Bob Roper of the State Fire Marshal's Department. Stating that the number of students in the hallways violated state fire codes, Roper concluded that, "if we had a fire here we would have a lot of dead students."<sup>58</sup> Either coerced by Davison's threat of arrest or in an attempt to comply with fire codes, the majority of the protestors left the Academic Building and took up residence across the lawn in Phi Kappa Hall, leaving 40 students remaining on each floor of the Academic Building, a number well within fire codes.

Outside the Academic Building and Phi Kappa Hall, the scene became boisterous. The unusual break in routine generated interest among the university community and by Thursday evening a contingent of loud and drunk observers, including some professors, congregated around the two buildings. Inside Phi Kappa Hall, the administration continued its attempt to disperse the demonstrators. A representative from the Campus Ministry Office stated that the sit-in was not generating support and, expressing concern about the UGa-SDS leadership of the march, requested the students end the sit-in since

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<sup>57</sup> Statement from Davison to protesting students, 11 April 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56

<sup>58</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 12 April 1968.



they had made their point. The protestors refused. They were then addressed by Roper who stated that Phi Kappa Hall was a bigger fire hazard than the Academic Building. Not willing to give up, the protesters chose the lesser fire hazard and by 2 a.m. had returned to the Academic Building.

By the morning of April 12, the administration had settled on decisive action. In an attempt to end the sit-in peacefully, Milner Ball and another member of the Campus Ministry Office met with Davison, Sims, Parthemos, a representative from the State Attorney General's Office, and a member of the Board of Regents. Ball first asked for permission to hold a Good Friday religious service at 2 p.m. in the Academic Building in hopes of using the opportunity to end the sit-in. Davison refused. Ball then asked for a "sign of good faith" from the University, such as refraining from taking disciplinary action against participants in the sit-in or a letter from Davison supporting the principles of women's rights. Again he was refused. Davison then informed Ball that an injunction was being drawn up against the protesters and would be enforced by 1 p.m.<sup>59</sup>

In defiance of the administration, Ball conducted a religious service in a corridor of the Academic Building. Afterwards, the protesters voted to determine if they should remain or leave. By a margin of three to one, the protesters decided to temporarily suspend the sit-in until the following Wednesday in order to give the administration time to come to a decision regarding the protesters demands. At 12:45 p.m. on April 12, the students exited the building, singing the university's Alma Mater. Meanwhile, Judge James Barrow of Clarke County Superior Court, at the University's request, issued a temporary restraining order barring students from "interfering with the normal functions of the university." It was signed at 2 p.m.

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<sup>59</sup> "Chronological Review" of the events of April 10-13, 1968. Davison Papers, Box 56.

The following weeks witnessed a variety of responses from the UGa community regarding the demonstration. The MFCE did not feel the issues that motivated the sit-in had been resolved. While their decision to leave the Academic Building had been an attempt at encouraging dialogue between the protesters and the administration, the decision by school officials to seek a restraining order sent the message that Davison had no intention of discussing the issue further. In response, the MFCE held a “wake” for free speech on Wednesday, April 17. About 300 students participated in the rally which, taking quiet and silence as its theme, featured “noiseless musicians” and a silent march of gagged students to the steps of the Academic Building, where they placed a black coffin with “Freedom of Speech” painted on its side. The MFCE had lost its momentum by the end of the month, however, when on April 23 a majority of the sit-in participants agreed in Athens Superior Court to abide by a consent order forbidding demonstrations inside University buildings, especially after regular business hours.

Response to the demonstration also came quickly from the broader university community. Davison, Tate and McBee received numerous letters from parents, alumni, faculty members and others. While not as lasting or as violent as events at Berkeley in 1964 or Columbia during April and May 1968 (one alumnus stated that “the recent mess at Columbia . . . has made the young ingrates there in Athens look like rock-bound conservatives”), most letters considered the sit-in significant and a harbinger of things to come if the administration did not act swiftly to crush New Left activism on campus.<sup>60</sup> Many echoed the sentiment of alumnus Hugh Gordon who hoped that, “the Board of

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<sup>60</sup> James W. Broddie to Fred Davison, Fred Davison Papers, Box 55

Regents will vest in you [Davison] complete authority to dismiss any student who is party to the insubordinate disgraceful conduct.”<sup>61</sup>

The protesters fared somewhat better in the regional press, where several journalists recognized the legitimacy of the coed rights issue and the larger concern for university reform.<sup>62</sup> Not surprisingly, several junior faculty members also voiced their support for the protestors. Brett Hawkins, a member of the Political Science faculty, emphasized that “radically innovating, evaluating and eccentric students and professors must not be made to feel unwelcome at the University of Georgia.” Responding to an editorial which attacked the sit-in, Biology professor John Kerr, who had given a speech during the march, asked, “You may laugh at this demonstration. You may scoff at it. You may ignore it. But then, who will come to your defense when your rights are endangered?” Assistant professor of philosophy Waltraut J. Stein said simply of the demonstrators, “They are indeed the hope of America.”<sup>63</sup>

Davison sought to place the demonstration in the least controversial context when, in late May, he sent a memo entitled “Man Bites Dog and the Difficulty of Perspective” to the Board of Regents and numerous other university supporters and prestigious alumni. He emphasized the small number of students involved in the sit-in and lamented the limited attention given to the other 15,500 students not involved. While taking no immediate action against the demonstrators, the administration did take a closer look at the demographic composition of the group. Perhaps influenced by local columnists who

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<sup>61</sup> Hugh H. Gordon, Jr. to Fred Davison, Fred Davison Papers, Box 55

<sup>62</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 12 April 1968, 1 June 1968; *Athens Daily News*, 12 April 1968; *The Atlanta Journal*, 13 April 1968, 6 May 1968; *Athens Banner-Herald*, 5 May 1968.

<sup>63</sup> Brett W. Hawkins to Fred Davison, Davison Papers, Box 55; *Athens Daily News*, 17 April 1968; *Athens Banner-Herald*, 17 April 1968. SDS also received support from History professor Charles Crowe and Philosophy professor John Grandrose. *The Atlanta Constitution*, 25 May 1968.

expressed concern over the effects of the growing “cosmopolitan strain” of the university and the possibility that “semi-professional college disrupters” may have been partially responsible for the sit-in, Sims produced a summary of the sit-in participants delineated by gender and state of origin.<sup>64</sup> He may have been disappointed to find that only thirty three of the 362 participating students came from outside the South and that all attended the university.

Despite the recent disruptions to daily life, the University found time to celebrate when it officially inaugurated Davison on May 11, 1968. The event generated a great deal of attention, as some of Georgia’s most prominent citizens, including Governor Lester Maddox, attended the ceremony. UGa-SDS took full advantage of the statewide attention focused on the school. Continuing their attempts at direct confrontation and disruption of the peaceful operations of the university, UGa-SDS announced its presence at the inauguration by displaying a seventeen foot high banner containing the phrase, “The Emperor Wears No Clothes.”<sup>65</sup>

Although the university administration had taken no action against the demonstrators in the month since the sit-in, the disruption at Davison’s inauguration brought swift action against the students involved. Letters were sent out on May 15, 1968 to David Simpson, George Langworth and William Bell stating that charges had

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<sup>64</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 14 April 1968 and 19 May 1968. For the breakdown of the demonstrators please see, Memo from O. Southern Sims to Dr. Boyd McWhorter, Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>65</sup> There exists in the documentation of the event no explanation of why this phrase was chosen. An allusion to the fairy tale about the king whose subjects refused to inform him of his nakedness when he thought he was clothed, perhaps SDS was attempting to let Davison know that they were not afraid to speak the truth. SDS member Pat Nelson provides another explanation for the choice of the banner. Davison had commissioned the creation of a ceremonial breastplate that he would wear during the inauguration. A small crisis developed over whether this would be an appropriate piece of regalia for Davison to wear. The SDS banner may have attempted to point out what the group considered to be the silliness of the issue given the major events occurring in the world. Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004; Robert C. Anderson to Lamar Dodd, Davison Papers, Box 108.

been brought against them in regards to their actions at the sit-in and the inauguration. As Dean of Men, William Tate would chair the hearings and set May 17 as the date for the initial proceedings.

The reasons for the administration acting at this time are not clear, but several factors could be responsible for pushing it into action. The university administration may have finally decided that the UGa-SDS chapter, despite its limited membership, possessed too radical a philosophy to be continually placated or ignored. In the weeks between the sit-in and the inauguration, the highly publicized SDS-led sit-in at Columbia University occurred. The violent end to that demonstration unnerved both New Leftists and the movement's detractors. Perhaps Davison and the other senior administrators thought that unless action was taken against the UGa-SDS chapter, the events that occurred in New York could happen in Athens. Also, given the amount of animosity shown by the university community towards UGa-SDS, the administration would not have felt they were making an unpopular decision in confronting the group. While many in the student body supported the coed rights movement, as well as the other issues UGa-SDS espoused, very few had ever been comfortable with the tactics that the group employed. Over the eighteen months since the group's inception, commentary both for and against the group consistently contained the same two strains of thought: support for the changes UGa-SDS sought but opposition to the direct confrontational tactics the group employed to achieve those changes. The criticism continued after the inauguration demonstration when a *Red and Black* columnist stated that, "The post-march demonstrators not only hurt themselves personally with their continued and juvenile

antics, but hurt every University student who favors rule liberalizations. To demonstrate a sincere interest is one thing, to try to coerce through harassment is quite another.”<sup>66</sup>

The administration’s decision to act against Simpson and UGa-SDS could also have a much simpler explanation - embarrassment. Although Davison continually attempted to convince those outside the university that UGa-SDS represented a small minority of students, the events at the inauguration amply demonstrated that there existed an uncontrollable element at the university that had little regard for decorum, tradition or Davison’s authority. Simpson had not just caused problems for the university administration; he had embarrassed them in front of the state’s most prominent citizens and leaders. Some clearly believed this to be the reason behind the action taken against Simpson and UGa-SDS. Political Science Department head Dr. Thomas Dye, after complimenting the “reasonable fashion” in which the university handled the sit-in, stated that, in regard to the charges against Simpson, Langworth and Bell, “these students are being charged with embarrassing the University, nothing else.”<sup>67</sup>

Both the students charged and the administration took the proceedings seriously, each choosing to have legal representation present, an unusual decision for a university disciplinary hearing. The Athens ACLU chapter secured legal representation for the students, hiring Walter M. Henritze, a criminal attorney from Atlanta and Roy Lucas, a professor of law at the University of Alabama, as the students’ lawyers. On May 17, Tate granted a postponement until May 21 so the students’ lawyers could prepare their case.

After changing locations twice due to the large crowd that wished to view the proceedings, the hearing finally began at 2:30 p.m. on May 21 in a Law School

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<sup>66</sup> *The Red and Black*, 14 May 1968.

<sup>67</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 19 May 1968.

auditorium. While reading off the charges against the students, Tate, in a decision never explained, stated that the two charges related to the demonstration at Davison's inauguration had been dropped. This meant that the charges against Simpson, Langworth and Bell, the three students involved in the inauguration events, dealt only with the sit-in. Deciding to prosecute these three students seemed an odd choice if the administration meant to punish those responsible for the sit-in. Simpson and Langworth did become involved with the Steering Committee that worked with administration officials to resolve the sit-in but they had not participated officially in planning the march. William Bell, while present at the sit-in, did not assume a leadership position or even take an active role at any point during April 10-12. During the hearing, witnesses for the university easily recalled Simpson and Langworth at the Academic Building, both from memory and from photographs taken of the event, but only one could remember seeing Bell and recalled that he "sat in the corner and read a lot."<sup>68</sup> Pat Nelson believed that Bell was at the Academic Building "trying to hit on a woman."<sup>69</sup> More importantly, the administration chose not to charge any of the march organizers, other members of the steering committee or, for that matter, any women, who made up half the organizers and the group of protesters. By dropping the charges related to the inauguration demonstration, membership in UGa-SDS became the only unifying element among the three students. It seems clear now, as it did to some at the time, an attack on UGa-SDS drove the administration's choice of whom to discipline.<sup>70</sup>

The hearings continued on Thursday, May 24. Simpson's lawyer accused Davison of making a deal with Governor Maddox to prosecute the leaders of the sit-in

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<sup>68</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 22 May 1968.

<sup>69</sup> Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

(mostly members of UGa-SDS) in exchange for Maddox not deploying state troopers to break up the protest. Davison and Maddox both denied these allegations but the decision to charge three additional students call this denial into question.<sup>71</sup> Tate announced that Phillip Evans, William Daniel and Howard Gilchrist, Jr. also faced charges related to the sit-in. Neither Evans nor Daniel participated in the planning or leadership of the march or sit-in. Evans, however, was a founding member of the UGa-SDS chapter and Daniel, a UGa-SDS member, would later assume a prominent role in the organization.<sup>72</sup> It now became clear to Simpson and the others that the university ultimately aimed to cripple UGa-SDS, which administrators viewed as the real leaders behind the MFCE and the sit-in.

The University rested its case against Simpson, Langworth and Bell on May 24, 1968 and Henritze took up the defense on Tuesday, May 28. The defense questioned the motives of the university in prosecuting the three students. Bell's limited role in the sit-in became a key part of their argument. Also, Leonard Laster, leader of the Black Student Union, drew attention to the inconsistent manner in which the university disciplined its students when he testified regarding the total lack of action taken against any of the students involved in an earlier demonstration at the University Union during which a fight broke out between African-American and white students. The defense finished presenting its case on May 28 and Tate spent the next day arriving at the decision he handed down on May 30. Simpson received a year's suspension from the university while Langworth received suspension until January 1969. William Bell received probation.

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<sup>71</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 24 May 1968.

<sup>72</sup> The charges against Gilchrist were dropped when it was determined he was no longer a University student by the time of the hearings.



UGa-SDS promptly protested the disciplinary action. Forty students gathered at Davison's office in Old College on the afternoon of May 30 to discuss Tate's decision. The talks proved unproductive and, after Davison left and campus security closed the building for the night, eight demonstrators remained in the building on the third floor. They received encouragement from students positioned outside the building and even met with Simpson, who climbed up a ladder to speak with them. He eventually convinced the eight students to leave, believing that, "it was stupid for them to risk arrest when so few people are willing to put their bodies on the line." The protesters failed to inform the administration of their decision to leave, resulting in a confused Tate and Clarke County Sheriff Tommy Huff, who entered the building later that evening with the aim of clearing out the demonstrators only to find the building empty. Meanwhile, several other UGa-SDS members pitched two tents on the lawn outside the Academic Building and erected a sign labeling the area "Persecution City."<sup>73</sup> The demonstration lasted until June 2, when all involved agreed to strike the tents and leave, feeling that they had sufficiently expressed their displeasure regarding the suspensions of Simpson and Langworth.<sup>74</sup>

By now the excitement exhibited for the initial hearings had dissipated. The hearing for Daniel and Evans did not generate nearly the interest of the initial proceedings but did have a few exciting moments. Simpson attended the hearings and questioned several witnesses for the defense. Following up on the belief that the hearings represented an attempt to discipline key members of UGa-SDS, Simpson asked Bill

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<sup>73</sup> The inspiration for "Persecution City" most likely came from "Resurrection City," a temporary community of tents and plywood shelters that was built on the Mall next to the Washington Monument during the Poor People's Campaign, a six week civil rights demonstration in May and June of 1968. Organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the campaign was on the front page of many newspapers during the same time as the disciplinary hearings.

<sup>74</sup> Letter Head Memorandum from SAC Atlanta to FBI Director, 2 July 1968. *COINTELPRO: The Counter-intelligence Program of the FBI*, File 100-449698-2 AT; *Athens Banner-Herald*, 31 May 1968; *Athens Daily News*, 31 May 1968.

Clark, an original organizer of the march and UGa-SDS member, if Evans and Daniel had “the ability to be leaders and if they could exercise leadership over the Students for a Democratic Society,” for which Clark answered in the negative. The tension that existed between the administration and the accused students manifested itself when, upon calling a university employee as a defense witness, Daniel hoped that by testifying the employee was not risking his job. Tate viewed this as a “personal affront.”<sup>75</sup> The hearing concluded after only two days, and on June 5, 1968, Tate handed down judgments against Daniel and Evans. Both received the same suspension as Langworth.

All four students initially made attempts to appeal their suspensions but only Simpson followed through with the process. Evans, Daniel, and Langworth received a formal letter over the summer regarding the final status of their suspensions, while Simpson attended an appeal hearing on Aug. 22 with his lawyer. Also present at that hearing was Alexander Cocalis, an Assistant Attorney General for Georgia and the lawyer who represented the University during the initial hearings in May. Cocalis best summed up the university administration’s growing concern regarding UGa-SDS activities when he stated that:

What is at stake is the right of the University to carry out its functions of education in a peaceful manner. That is not to deny David Simpson’s freedom of speech. It’s to deny him the right to go in and organize a mob, if you will, and take over a building and try to bring the University to its knees by stopping its administrative processes, until his minority group gets its way. In that sense, we are like the recent episodes at Columbia. *The difference being in degree rather than in kind.*<sup>76</sup>[italics added]

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<sup>75</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 4 June 1968.

<sup>76</sup> Transcript of Aug 22, 1968 meeting of the Faculty Committee on Student Affairs appeal hearing of David Simpson. Davison Papers, Box 56.

Cocalis had also mentioned the Columbia demonstration during the original hearings. This event seems to have exerted great influence on the University's changing attitude to UGa-SDS. While violence had not occurred at UGa yet, there existed a fear within the university administration that it very well could occur. By engaging in the same direct confrontational tactics utilized by other SDS chapters, the UGa-SDS helped facilitate the concern that what happened elsewhere could happen in Athens. The impact of the events at Columbia helps explain how an administration that chose to ignore or placate SDS at UGa for a year would drastically change its mind within a month and actively seek to cripple the group by attacking its key members. This would also explain why, in a demonstration consisting of over 300 students evenly split between male and female, the administration chose to suspend only four males--two who assumed leadership roles only after the course of the demonstration had been decided and two who simply participated in the sit-in, but who all shared the distinction of being UGa-SDS members. In a letter to Davison, Pat Nelson, asked, "Why were all four students males? Why were only two of them members of the steering committee? Why was it not 'leadership', but membership in SDS the criterion for singling out these students?"<sup>77</sup>

On April 24, 1968, the UGa student body voted on the changes to coed rules that had been proposed earlier in the year and which acted as the initial motivation behind the March for Coed Equality. These changes won overwhelming approval. The university administration agreed to follow the sentiments of the student body and on July 19 announced officially the new policies, making UGa "one of the most liberal schools in the South on student privileges."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Pat Nelson to President Fred Davison, 20 September 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>78</sup> *Athens Banner-Herald*, 25 April 1968; *The New York Times*, 20 July 1968.

For UGa-SDS, however, the election results and, more importantly, the administration's acceptance of them stood as a qualified victory at best. UGa-SDS had viewed coed rights as only a part of the larger issues of student rights, university reform and participatory democracy and, through the March for Coed Equality, hoped to gain new believers in these issues and members for the organization. In this regard UGa-SDS largely failed. Few new members immediately joined the ranks of student activists, due to either a lack of concern for issues beyond coed rights or, as UGa-SDS member Dan Eavenson believed, the events at Columbia. As Eavenson noted, Columbia ““scared a lot of people off. They saw police beating radicals and it scared them.”<sup>79</sup> But if the ultimate goal behind the University's decision to prosecute the five students was the eradication of UGa-SDS leadership and a crippling of the organization, it also failed. UGa-SDS persisted beyond the suspension of Simpson and the others, continuing its efforts into the next academic year. The real and lasting achievement of UGa-SDS during its first two years of existence rested in the solid foundation it had built for future student activism. UGa-SDS demonstrated that a small group of leftist activists could operate successfully in even the most conservative of environments, creating a strong community of like-minded individuals committed to social change. Over the next several years the UGa New Left would expand both its membership and agenda while reaching out to the broader Southern New Left movement.

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<sup>79</sup> *The Red and Black*, 13 January 1970.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Radicals, Hippies, Arsonists and Antiwar Activists: The Growth of the New Left at the University of Georgia 1968-1970

Buoyed by its success during the spring term, UGa-SDS entered the summer of 1968 with high hopes for the upcoming academic year. A key component of the group's optimism came from its new alliance with the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), a southern-based student organization working for civil rights in the region. At the same time, the UGa New Left began expanding beyond SDS, as the counterculture and antiwar groups emerged on campus. But, as the New Left continued to grow, so did its opposition. The UGa chapter of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) became a vocal and persistent critic of SDS and all other traces of the New Left on campus. The administration also kept a close watch on any radical activity, a seemingly justified concern as increasingly radical rhetoric and behavior crept into the UGa New Left. In May 1970 all of these threads came together in an unprecedented manner. Outraged by the killings of four Kent State University students by the Ohio National Guard, the UGa New Left led a two day demonstration which saw thousands of students protesting in the streets of Athens and the closing of the university for two days. The largest student demonstration in the school's history, the May 1970 demonstrations also marked a turning point for the UGa New Left.

The alliance between SSOC and UGa-SDS took shape over the spring and summer of 1968. An often overlooked New Left organization, SSOC formed in 1964 when several members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) saw the need for a regionally-based organization that could recruit and help organize the small but growing number of white civil rights activists on southern college campuses.<sup>1</sup> Originally designed as a true coordinating committee that provided only materials and advice to campus activists from its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, SSOC shifted to a membership-based organization in 1966. By 1968, with chapters at colleges and universities across the South, the group no longer focused solely on civil rights issues, incorporating regional labor issues and the war in Vietnam into their catalog of concerns. While the exact origins of the connection between the UGa SDS and SSOC remain unclear, the relationship proved strong enough that SSOC decided to hold its 1968 spring conference at the University of Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

The conference was scheduled from May 3 to May 5, 1968, the weekend before Fred Davison's inauguration as university president. It also coincided with Law Day, an

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<sup>1</sup> SSOC has received little mention in New Left historiography. Brief references appear in Kirkpatrick Sale's *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), Clayborne Carson's seminal work on SNCC, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), and Sara Evans's groundbreaking work on the women's liberation movement, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Christina Greene has written an interesting article on SSOC entitled "'We'll Take Our Stand': Race, Class and Gender in the Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969," in Virginia Bernhard et al, eds, *Hidden Histories of Women in the New South* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994). The group has received recently its first authoritative and exhaustive study. See Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964-1969* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), 2004.

<sup>2</sup> How and when SSOC and SDS allied at UGa seems a matter of perspective more than anything else. In its reporting of the 1968 spring conference, SSOC mentions that the UGa SSOC-SDS chapter hosted the conference. See Worklist Mailing, Southern Student Organizing Committee, May 15, 1968 *Students for Democratic Society Papers, 1958-1970* (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilm Corporation of America, 1977), Series 3, No. 172. The FBI, however, believed no SSOC chapter existed at UGa. See Letter Head Memorandum from SAC Atlanta to FBI Director, 2 July 1968. *COINTELPRO: The Counter-intelligence Program of the FBI* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1978), File 100-449698-2 AT; and *The Daily News* (Athens) and *The Atlanta Constitution* both reported the conference as being sponsored by the UGa-SDS chapter. *The Daily News*, 6 May 1968; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 4 May 1968.

annual event sponsored by the university's law school, planned for May 4. The SSOC conference leaders received unexpected news on Friday afternoon when, fifteen minutes before the beginning of registration, the university cancelled all reservations the group had made for the use of school facilities. University administrators and SSOC offered conflicting reasons for the group's banishment from campus. John Cox, Director of Student Affairs, stated simply that the university had never promised the use of facilities to the organization. This seems an unlikely scenario given that UGa student David Simpson had made the arrangements regarding the use of school facilities. The founder of the UGa-SDS and a seasoned activist, Simpson would have made sure he followed reservation procedures precisely. SSOC and Simpson gave much different reasons for the administration's decision. "The university," Simpson stated, "told me first that they were refusing us the facilities because the conference would be potentially disruptive." SSOC related how Lindsey Cowan, the law school dean, "considered it particularly inappropriate to make space available for the SSOC conference at the same time Law Day activities were being carried on."<sup>3</sup>

Unwilling to pack up their things and leave, SSOC quickly found alternative locations for conference events, including a farm owned by Simpson's father and the Athens headquarters of Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. The high point of the conference came on May 4, when participants organized a demonstration during the Law Day keynote speech, delivered by Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Although barred from entering the auditorium where Rusk spoke, about sixty demonstrators formed a picket line outside and listened to several of their own speakers, including former national SDS

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<sup>3</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 4 May 1968; Worklist Mailing, Southern Student Organizing Committee, 15 May, 1968, *SDS Papers*.

president Carl Oglesby. Afterward, the activists returned to their conference, which ended quietly the following day.

By the fall of 1968, the UGa-SDS chapter had officially renamed itself SSOC-SDS. But, the name change did not signal a significant shift in the group's membership or agenda. David Simpson, no longer a UGa student and now working as a state organizer for SSOC, maintained close ties with the UGa chapter. Many UGa-SDS members from the pre-alliance days remained and, more importantly, they continued working on the same issues from previous years. The organization did, however, fully embrace SSOC's belief in Southern distinctiveness, a concept that defined the South as a unique region within the larger nation, possessing its own set of problems that could only be solved by Southerners. Putting the concept into practice, SSOC tried to find instances of social progressivism and anti-racism from Southern history that they could hold up as examples for white Southerners to emulate. While nobly intended, Southern distinctiveness would create problems for the organization before the academic year ended.<sup>4</sup>

In the meantime, SSOC-SDS spent the fall term focusing their efforts on several key issues. The group revived its campaign against ROTC, dormant since the fall of 1967, largely in response to the news that cadets now had to sign a loyalty oath. Several students refused to sign, leading to accusations of disloyalty, and threats of failing grades and FBI investigations into their lives. SSOC-SDS attempted to bring attention to the

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<sup>4</sup> For a fuller discussion of Southern distinctiveness and how it affected SSOC see Gregg Michel, *Struggle for a Better South*, 42-45, 190-202.



issue by circulating petitions against ROTC, requesting that the student senate officially criticize the loyalty oath, and involving the Atlanta New Left community in the fight.<sup>5</sup>

SSOC-SDS also tried to discredit ROTC through less serious measures. In early November, SSOC-SDS members, led by student activist Dan Eavenson, protested in a unique fashion as the Scabbard and Blade drill team practiced next to the Coliseum. Calling themselves the Short-Crow Memorial Kazoo and Tambourine Marching Band and Drill Team (named after two ROTC instructors), the demonstrators placed themselves on the sidelines of the drill field and played musical instruments as the drill team practiced. After a brief confrontation with ROTC instructor Colonel Robert Crow, and several minutes of playing, the activists departed the field. Labeled a failure by *The Red and Black*, SSOC-SDS members William Clark and Michael Godfrey instead considered the event a success, since the goal had been simply to make “a mockery of the entire drill enigma.” In fact, the demonstration became a regular component of the ROTC campaign, continuing into the winter and spring quarters.<sup>6</sup>

The student activists also continued their attempts at challenging de facto segregation at white-owned local businesses and organizations. Reminiscent of the earlier effort to desegregate The Rail, a group of white and African-American students entered Alice’s Café on the evening of July 17, 1968 wishing to confront the restaurant’s owner, Don Wilbanks, about his refusal to serve an African American customer earlier that day. In the first incident, the African-American customer had accompanied several white activists to the café. Wilbanks and his wife made several attempts at getting the

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<sup>5</sup> *Sabot* (SSOC-SDS newsletter), 15 October 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56; *Great Speckled Bird*, 11 November 1968, *Underground Newspaper Collection*. Wooster, Ohio: Micro Photo Division, Bell and Howell, 1981.

<sup>6</sup> *The Red and Black*, 5 November 1968; 11 November 1968; bi-monthly report to William Tate from William Bracewell, April 1-18, 1970, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

students to leave, saying first that there was not enough food to serve them, then trying to get the students to agree to leave if they were served. Told by the students that he was “missing the point of our being here,” Wilbanks accused the activists of making trouble and informed them he would use his gun if they returned, emphasizing his point by laying the weapon on the countertop. When a group returned to the café later that night, Wilbanks backed away from his earlier confrontational position and served two African-American students, but only after a “long-haired youth” agreed to leave the establishment. After the remaining activists left, Wilbanks closed the restaurant and called the local police.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this incident, SSOC-SDS also began a campaign against the segregationist practices of the local Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women’s Christian Organization (YWCO). The group led a two-pronged attack against these organizations. First, it confronted directly the YMCA when, on October 16, roughly forty students and faculty picketed outside the organization.<sup>8</sup> SSOC-SDS focused most of its efforts, however, on convincing the university to cease providing funds to the YMCA and YWCO through donations from the university’s Community Chest. A yearly campus-wide fundraising drive that allowed university personnel to make charitable donations through a payroll deduction, the Community Chest distributed the funds collected evenly to eleven local organizations, including the YMCA and YWCO.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Daily News*, 18 July 1968. It is unclear whether the African-American students belonged to SSOC-SDS. Unlike the incident at The Rail in May of 1967 when SDS existed as the only radical student group, by 1968 a Black Student Union had formed on campus. SSOC-SDS member Pat Nelson stated that the two groups often coordinated their efforts, but did not specifically mention this event. (Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004)

<sup>8</sup> *Great Speckled Bird*, 11 November 1968.

For the previous year a Faculty Ad Hoc Committee on the Community Chest had opposed the distribution of funds to the YMCA and YWCO, but to no effect. In October 1968, SSOC-SDS and other campus groups rallied behind the committee's position. In an editorial *The Red and Black* commented, "It is insulting to the Negro members of the University community that they be asked to contribute to the development of facilities that they are forbidden to use." SSOC-SDS attacked the university more directly when it proclaimed that, "resources of our university are being used to perpetuate one of the more ugly manifestations of white racism in Athens." On October 17 the efforts of SSOC-SDS and other campus groups culminated in a march across campus to President Davison's office. While thirty-five students and faculty demonstrated outside, Davison met for several hours with representatives of the group. Ignoring the concerns of the protestors, however, Davison refused to remove the YMCA and YWCO from the list of organizations the Community Chest supported.<sup>9</sup>

Although not immediately successful, these efforts most likely played some role in the desegregation of both groups the next year. At the very least, Dean of Men William Tate predicted the end of demonstrations against the organizations. "One problem of last year," Tate notes, "a student protest joined by some faculty members both on and off the campus because the local YWCO and YMCA were not integrated, will be eliminated in the future as these two groups are to be integrated, already officially voted by the groups concerned."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Great Speckled Bird*, 11 November 1968; Memorandum to President Davison from William Tate, 24 January 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 41; *The Red and Black*, 3 October 1968; *Sabot* (SSOC-SDS newsletter), 15 October 1968, Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum to President Davison from William Tate, 8 July 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 41.

The end of demonstrations against the YMCA and YWCO may also have resulted from both the SSOC-SDS chapter's acceptance of the SSOC focus on community-building, and the realities of life in a small Southern college town. Despite a small but growing number of committed activists, attempts at generating interest in the general student body towards protest activity often had to compete with other, more exciting, elements of UGa life. "It would be kind of difficult to interest students in our movement during the football season," Simpson noted, "we're just looking forward to the winter and spring when things get boring around here."<sup>11</sup> SSOC's commitment to building grassroots support in the white community also shifted the focus of UGa activists away from large, direct confrontation-style demonstrations, such as the demonstration outside the Athens YMCA. Despite the fact that by 1968 a newer generation of SSOC leaders felt it necessary to embrace more confrontational tactics and national issues, UGa activists supported the founding SSOC generation's belief in addressing southern problems through community organizing. The YMCA/YWCO campaign and the efforts to desegregate local restaurants reflected this approach. Although confrontational to some degree, SSOC-SDS considered these actions attempts at organizing local groups across the traditional dividing lines of black-white, town resident-student, and faculty-student, instead of just opportunities to voice opposition en masse.

Activists may have also perceived that the time was ripe to make attempts at creating a broader social movement. While not joining politically oriented groups like SSOC-SDS, many members of the university community had begun to question and explore political and social alternatives. Pete McCommons, an alumnus who had attended UGa during the desegregation crisis in 1961 and later returned as a faculty

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<sup>11</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 9 December 1968.

member, noticed that by the summer of 1968 a new feeling of excitement had appeared on campus. Students, encouraged by young, liberal professors, had become much more interested in academics, politics and social change.<sup>12</sup> The launching of the “Free University of Georgia” during the fall of 1968 was an attempt by SSOC-SDS at community building as well as capitalizing on the student body’s new found interest in learning and issues of the day.<sup>13</sup>

The free university concept originated as an outgrowth of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California-Berkeley in 1964. Based on the idea that courses offered by the university provided “joyless learning,” ill-prepared students for “vigorous citizenship” and “deadened their creativity,” the free university aimed to provide an “environment favorable to new experiences.”<sup>14</sup> Offering courses on both political and cultural subjects, free universities sprang up in college towns across the nation over the next several years. The movement had largely waned by 1968 and many had closed their doors, but a successful school still operated at the University of North

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<sup>12</sup> Pete McCommons, interviewed by author, 19 July 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Gregg Michel, *Building a Better South*, 134; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 9 December 1968.

<sup>14</sup> The Free University movement exists largely as a footnote in New Left historiography and no systematic study of them has been undertaken. One, however, is needed given that their purpose remains poorly defined and inconsistently described in the literature. Some New Left historians portray them as venues for the political education of potential radicals while others view them as one expression of the counterculture’s search for personal enlightenment. See Michael William Doyle, “Staging the Revolution: Guerilla Theater as a Countercultural Practice, 1965-1968,” in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and ‘70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 76; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 429-430; Kenneth J. Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 72, 165, 226; W.J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 45-46, 132-33, 135, Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 283-284; Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), 265-269.

Carolina and one had been founded recently at the Georgia Institute of Technology in nearby Atlanta.<sup>15</sup>

SSOC-SDS saw the Free University of Georgia (FUG) as an alternative to the official university and as a “community not only in rhetoric but reality” with an emphasis “on the knowledge and insight gained, on the excitement of learning and discovery, and on class participation in curriculum planning and implementation.”<sup>16</sup> SSOC-SDS set up a table at fall term registration, manned by Simpson and SSOC-SDS members Pat Nelson and Bill and Bob Clark. By the end of the first day sixty three students had registered for free university courses. The group even asked Dean Tate, when he approached the table, if he would give a presentation on the history of the University of Georgia. A month later Simpson explained the principles of FUG to a meeting of the Phi Kappa literary society, emphasizing that the free university offered students an alternative to UGa, which was controlled by “business and industrial interests.”<sup>17</sup> By the time classes had begun, over two hundred students had registered for one of the ten courses FUG offered.

Held off campus in the backrooms of downtown stores and in student apartments, and taught by a combination of New Left activists and UGa faculty volunteers, such as philosophy professor John Granrose, the courses reflected the varied interests of SSOC-SDS. Students interested in the state of college education could enroll in “The Unfree University: Higher Education in the ‘great society’.” Those concerned with current events could sign up for “The Lessons of Vietnam: A Critique of U.S. Foreign Policy” or “The Politics of Futility: ‘Dick Humphrey’ vs. ‘Hubert Nixon’.” Several courses

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<sup>15</sup> Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS*, 268; Robinette Kennedy, “Can the Free U Free You?” *Impressions* Vol. 3, No.1 (Nov. 1968), 34; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 9 December 1968.

<sup>16</sup> SSOC-SDS Free University promotional pamphlet quoted in the *Great Speckled Bird*, 7 October 1968.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum to Vice President for Instruction Dr. George Parthemos from William Tate, 26 September 1968, William Tate Papers, Box 41; *The Red and Black*, 18 October 1968.

reflected SSOC's concern with southern problems and its belief in Southern distinctiveness, "Great American Institutions Series No. 1: White Racism" and "Tom Watson and Southern Populism: The Radical Southern Heritage."<sup>18</sup> Two courses offered reflected a new component of the UGa New Left. "Modern Poetry: Writing and Understanding the 'New Verse'" and "Photography and Cinematography: Experimental Film-making" represented the interests of a growing number of students who, although falling outside the mainstream of student culture, did not share the radical political convictions of SSOC-SDS members. Instead, they believed social change originated in the creation of an alternative to mainstream American culture. The counterculture had arrived at UGa.

The UGa New Left had formed at the same time that the national counterculture movement began to spread beyond its origins on the West and East Coasts.<sup>19</sup> While

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<sup>18</sup> SSOC's interest in Tom Watson displayed an incomplete understanding of the Georgia politician's career. As former SSOC president Tom Gardner expressed in 1996, "We all got excited about Tom Watson and were on our way to being populists; then someone finished reading the book [C. Vann Woodward's biography of Watson] and we rediscovered the power of racism and jingoism." (Paper read at the Southern Historical Association's annual conference, Little Rock, Arkansas, 2 November 1996).

<sup>19</sup> No other part of the 1960s has generated more discussion and debate than the role of the counterculture. Popular cultural memory of the decade has wound the counterculture and the New Left so tightly together that very few people, besides New Left historians, view the political activism of the New Left and attempts at cultural revolution as two separate, if somewhat related, phenomenon. The result is that many see the road leading to both the riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and the "Three Days of Peace and Love" at the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival as originating in the same place. The reality is much different. The counterculture, focused on the arts and personal enlightenment through sex, drugs and rock and roll, had its roots in the Beat Generation of the 1950s. The New Left, however, drew its inspiration, to some degree, from the Old Left of the 1930s and 40s and, more importantly, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. That is not to say, however, that the counterculture and the New Left did not find common ground. Recent works on the counterculture have explored the often contentious relationship between the two movements and the role the counterculture played in the transition from politics-centered activism of the 1960s to the personal political issues that dominated 1970s activism. For a discussion of the roots of the New Left see 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 and Michael Kazin provide a brief but thorough overview of the birth of the counterculture in *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 151-172. The essays in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002) cover almost every conceivable element of the counterculture. Two recent books provide an excellent discussion of the relationship between the New Left and the counterculture, Doug Rossinow's *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia

countercultural followers in larger and more socially liberal locations, such as San Francisco, often avoided the political activities sponsored by New Left groups, the relatively small community in Athens of those choosing to live outside the normal boundaries of acceptable social and personal behavior resulted in counterculture adherents often involving themselves in New Left activities.<sup>20</sup> After delivering a speech at UGa in February 1968, Georgia Senator Herman Talmadge noted that “there were quite a number of far left *and hippies* [italics added by author] in the audience last evening. I spoke for about fifteen minutes and answered questions for about thirty to thirty-five minutes. Many were pro-Viet Cong and anti-America. I inadvertently thought one of the hippies was a lady. He was terribly insulted and stalked out of the room.”<sup>21</sup>

Personal appearance issues often played a role in the relationship between the New Left and both the counterculture and university administrators. Realizing that their efforts at changing university policy already met staunch resistance from administrators, SSOC-SDS did not wish to make their situation any more difficult by challenging social norms. While still a student at UGa David Simpson encouraged members of the New

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University Press, 1998) and *The New Left Revisited*, edited by John McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003). The experiences of many political activists in the 1960s often shared little in common with the image of the marijuana smoking, long haired, free love advocate of popular memory. For excellent discussions of this issue see Margot Adler, *Heretic's Heart: A Journey through Spirit and Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 152-171, 237-239; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987); and Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> The foundational beliefs of the counterculture mirrored those of the New Left. Both movements sought a fundamental change in American social life, albeit through different means. This desire for change allowed for an alignment between the two groups even though the counterculture usually ignored political causes and the New Left often refused to participate in the countercultural practices of drug use, free love, and alternative clothing and hair styles. For more on the goals of the counterculture and the complex relationship between the counterculture and the New Left see Braunstein and Doyle, *Imagine Nation*, 5-14 and Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 247-295.

<sup>21</sup> Letter to William Tate from Herman E. Talmadge, 14 Feb 1968, *William Tate Papers*, Box 36.



Left to keep their appearance within acceptable standards by maintaining short hair and wearing suits in the belief that it would aid the movement.<sup>22</sup>

By 1969, an increasing number of students, especially non-activists, began dressing like “hippies.” It would prove difficult to determine who among these students truly embraced the counterculture’s anti-establishment ideology and who simply dressed the part for reasons of fashion. Administration officials at the time encountered the same difficulty but chose to accept the more benign interpretation and placed most hippies outside the membership of the New Left. “Many people are surprised,” William Bracewell commented, “at the increase in the number of ‘hippy’ looking students on campus this fall. There has been an increase, but I do not feel this is unexpected. Many of our students began associating with the hippy element this summer, and many have brought back their hippy attire. I am continually concerned that the University not lump all persons who dress in this manner as offensive people. Many of our students with long hair are quite legitimate students here to receive an education.”<sup>23</sup> Bracewell also suggested that administrators reach out to the growing number of “hippy” students, believing that the university “can best serve” the hippies’ needs.<sup>24</sup>

Administrators did recognize, however, a darker side to the increased presence of the counterculture on campus. Bracewell and others expressed concern over the increasing numbers of students experimenting with illegal drugs. LSD (D-lysergic acid diethylamide), appeared on campus in the mid 1960s and secured its place as the drug of

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<sup>22</sup> “Impression Encounter: Steve Wise: The Great Speckled Bird,” *Impressions* Vol. 4 No. 2 (March 1970), 12.

<sup>23</sup> Bi-monthly report to Dean of Students William Tate from Administrative Assistant William Bracewell, 2 October 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>24</sup> Bi-monthly report to Tate from Bracewell, 1 August 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

choice for UGa's counterculture by the spring of 1967.<sup>25</sup> A hallucinogenic, the drug found widespread usage during the mid-1960s in the countercultural communities of northern California. For those who took LSD, the drug was not just a means of having fun but also played an integral role in countercultural beliefs. Through LSD it was believed people found self-enlightenment, a necessary first step on the path to creating a new American culture.<sup>26</sup>

Within two years, drug use had spread beyond the borders of the counterculture and into the general UGa student population. Losing much of its radical cultural significance, drug use had now become just another way of having fun, used equally by hippies and fraternity members. Besides LSD, marijuana and various amphetamines proved popular. Although a wide cross-section of the student body consumed drugs, nobody knew for sure how many students were involved. Estimates varied wildly from "two percent to ninety percent." Administrators attempted to downplay the presence of drugs on campus. Dean of Student Affairs O. Suthern Sims stated his belief that "a very small percentage of our students are involved in drug traffic," and Dean of Students William Tate believed "the situation is not a large problem on campus." All agreed, however, that no definitive way existed for knowing with any amount of certainty how many students took drugs.<sup>27</sup>

This uncertainty did not keep the administration from attempting to control the drug traffic on campus. Dean Tate maintained a relationship with the Atlanta office of

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<sup>25</sup>"LSD," *Impressions* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1967), 15-17.

<sup>26</sup> David Farber presents a thorough description regarding the role of LSD in the counterculture in his essay "The Intoxicated State/Illegal Nation: Drugs in the Sixties Counterculture," in *Imagine Nation*, Braunstein and Doyle, eds.

<sup>27</sup> Nancy Lyerly, "An Investigation of the Prevalence of Psycogenics in the University Faubourg . . . or . . . Welcome to Advancing Acid," *Impressions* Vol. 4 No. 1 (November 1969), 14-17, 45.

the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), specifically Special Agent Robert Kane, who kept Tate and Bracewell informed of surveillance operations involving student residences suspected of being locations for drug trafficking. Bracewell and Tate also stayed informed of countercultural activity by talking with students and their parents. Through interviews with students, the two administrators tried to get a firm grasp on how widespread drug use was on campus. Through these methods they learned of a “hippy colony” residing in a house on Milledge Avenue and a commune that had recently organized on a farm in Madison County.<sup>28</sup>

Given the ill-defined boundary between the New Left and the counterculture, it is not surprising that SSOC-SDS members also participated in drug use. In SSOC-SDS, however, drug use maintained its politically emblematic status throughout the 1960s. Recreational drug use did, no doubt, motivate some members to ingest LSD and smoke marijuana, but activists saw a close connection between drug use and radical politics. In May 1969 an incident at Westminster House focused attention on SSOC-SDS and its involvement with drugs. A female university student interviewed by Major Paul Dumas of UGa’s Public Safety Division (campus police) related how she had purchased hashish from SSOC-SDS member Roger Milford while at Westminster House. Documents from the ensuing investigation demonstrated how administrators viewed drug use and radical political activity as closely related. Edward Kassinger, Director of Public Safety at UGa, indicated that Milford was not only a “militant member of SDS” but also a “fugitive wanted in Oconee County, Georgia for the possession of dangerous drugs.”<sup>29</sup> SSOC-

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<sup>28</sup> Bimonthly report to Tate from Bracewell, January 16-31, 1970, 2 October 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum to Fred Davison from Edward Kassinger, 26 May 1969. Davison Papers, Box 55. The Westminster House incident and the subsequent investigation may have had the larger purpose of trying to

SDS, however, did not hide its support of drugs or the broader countercultural connections to New Left politics. Instead, it advertised this support. On the cover of its 10 April 1970 newsletter a drawing of a marijuana cigarette stood vertically within a circle at the center of the page. Overlaying the cigarette and forming an “X” were an electric guitar and an assault rifle.<sup>30</sup>

While the New Left and the counterculture represented a growing community of left-leaning students on campus, these groups still stood as the minority opinion. Although most UGa students remained indifferent to politics, one organization did rise up to support the majority’s conservative social and political views. In the wake of the 1968 sit-in Young Americans for Freedom (UGa-YAF) emerged as a bastion of opposition to the New Left on campus.

Young Americans for Freedom formed as an “outgrowth to develop a new conservative leadership cadre, capture control of the Republican Party, and ultimately shift that party to the Right.”<sup>31</sup> The organization’s heyday existed from its founding in

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trap SDS members in illegal activities and/or force the resignation of the Reverend Milner Ball, the director of Westminster House. Ball was a supporter of SDS and in the past received criticism for that support, particularly his decision to allow SDS to hold its weekly meetings at Westminster House. The female student who bought the drugs was an “active Presbyterian” and had recently provided information in several criminal cases, according to Kassinger. Hardly the stereotypical drug user, her motive for purchasing the hashish seems, at least, questionable.

<sup>30</sup> SDS Newsletter, 10 April 1970, Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>31</sup> John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 5. The past decade has seen an increase in the interest paid by historians to the New Right. While most work on the 1960s still focuses on the Left, several historians have undertaken the study of the right in its various guises. Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) existed as the Right’s version of SDS, a youth-based organization consisting mostly of chapters on college campuses. While the organization’s heyday ended with defeat of Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election, the organization survived into the 1980s and acted as the conduit into politics for many of today’s Republican and conservative politicians. For a history of the organization from its founding to 1964 see Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties*. A complete history of the organization is found in Gregory L. Scheider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999). Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) stands as the most important recent work on the New Right. A current trend in 1960s historiography is using a comparative approach to analyze the histories and legacies of the New Left and New Right. For examples see Geoff

1960 until 1964, when membership waned after the defeat of Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election, a campaign the group built its membership on. During this period YAF maintained a nominal presence in the South due to the strength of the Democratic Party in the region (a strength that waned throughout the 1960s) and, more likely, YAF's refusal to oppose actively the Civil Rights movement. As the 1960s progressed and the conflict in Vietnam began to overshadow civil rights issues, and as many southern Democrats shifted allegiance to the Republican Party, YAF chapters emerged on college campuses across the South.<sup>32</sup> Initially focused on generating support for U.S. policy in Vietnam, YAF shifted its efforts to directly confronting the New Left after the group's pro-Vietnam campaigns failed to gain broad support and, more importantly, concern emerged over the growing radicalization and confrontational nature of New Left political groups.<sup>33</sup> From 1968 to 1970, the UGa-YAF chapter worked consistently against New Left efforts on campus.

The UGa-YAF had been organized on campus in the fall of 1965, but it began its campaign against the UGa New Left in earnest only after the spring 1968 sit-in.<sup>34</sup> In a

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Andrews, et al, *New Left, New Right and Beyond: Taking the Sixties Seriously* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Paul Lyons *New Left, New Right, and the Legacy of the Sixties* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Numan V. Bartley, *The New South 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 384-95; Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 58. No study of YAF in the South yet exists so conclusions regarding the organization's development here are preliminary at best.

<sup>33</sup> Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 110-112.

<sup>34</sup> Sam Dickson, interviewed by author, 7 September 2005. Attempts at interviewing members of the UGa New Right provided a unique insight into the changing nature of conservatism since the 1960s. Although half a dozen members of the UGa New Right were contacted and initially agreed to be interviewed for this project, they all later changed their minds. Evidently, the New Right members contacted are still in touch and after consulting with each other, they elected Sam Dickson to speak for them. They offered no explanation for this decision but it seems likely that they were aware of the virulently racist, sexist and homophobic rhetoric they employed in New Right publications and in letters to other student publications during their time at UGa and wished to distance themselves from their past. Dickson gives some confirmation to this belief when he stated that the others possessed public and/or professional reputations which they wished to maintain and that this contributed to their decision not to be interviewed.

special edition of its newsletter, *The Reasoner*, UGa-YAF clarified its position regarding the demonstration. Concerned that local newspapers had listed UGa-YAF as supporting the sit-in, *The Reasoner* stated that, while UGa-YAF believed, “the Civil rights of the coeds have been violated,” and that the university should, “restore to its coeds those rights which are theirs by right of citizenship,” they disagreed strongly with the tactics employed by the protestors.<sup>35</sup> In spite of this qualified support for the coed rights demonstration, the university administration held the UGa-YAF chapter up as symbol of the conservative nature of the student body. Davison explained to an alumnus that while SDS maintained a “small organization” at UGa, the university had, “a much larger chapter of the Young Americans for Freedom.”<sup>36</sup> UGa-YAF proved so dedicated to the conservative cause that in 1967 chapter president Sam Dickson also held the chairmanship of the state YAF organization.<sup>37</sup>

For YAF, particularly its Southern chapters, the greatest threat of the New Left lay in the movement’s association with communism. As historian Gregory Schneider has noted, “Southerners in YAF during the 1960s did not join the organization because of its position on civil rights or because conservatism represented segregation, but rather because of YAF’s focus on the Communist issue in American politics.”<sup>38</sup> U.S. foreign policy regarding communism was of particular concern for the UGa chapter. The group filled the pages of *The Reasoner* with articles about the spread of communism and the failure of liberals such as Robert Kennedy to confront the threat. In an effort to educate the UGa community about the communist threat, UGa-YAF sponsored a film series

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<sup>35</sup> *The Reasoner*, 16 April 1968, Louise McBee Papers, Box 5, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia. Athens.

<sup>36</sup> Letter to UGa alumnus W.E. Towson from Davison, 2 June 1969, Davison Papers, Box 56.

<sup>37</sup> *The New Guard*, Vol. 7, No. 10 (December 1967), 25.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 58.

which screened documentaries “revealing facts of history that are usually left out of the history books.” Topics included the Soviet invasion of Latvia, The Communist San Francisco Riots of 1960, and Fidel Castro.<sup>39</sup>

UGa-YAF expressed particular concern over the close relationship between communism and the New Left. The organization argued during the 1968-1969 academic year that, “the time for the public exposure of the unsavory background and composition of groups like the Students for a Democratic Society . . . is long overdue.”<sup>40</sup> UGa-YAF also took notice of the emergence of SSOC on campus. Group chairman Anthony Weaver expressed concern that, while SSOC may represent a new direction for campus radicals, it may also just be “chocolate covered SDS.”<sup>41</sup>

UGa-YAF’s most successful campaign occurred during the 1969 spring term. In addition to the threat of communism, a growing concern existed in UGa-YAF about the increasingly radical behavior displayed by New Left groups. While returning from YAF’s Southern Regional Conference in late March 1969, Weaver and two other UGa-YAF members, Wade Knowlton and Paul Chellis, decided to start a petition drive aimed at letting the majority of students voice their displeasure with New Left-generated violence. Weaver and past UGa-YAF chairman James Baldwin formed a splinter group, the PRO-UGA Committee, and drafted a petition. The brief text stated that, “We, the undersigned students, declare that we are here for an education and not a revolution; and hereby petition the administration to expel and/or to take prompt legal action against any

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<sup>39</sup> *The Reasoner*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (10 May 1968); Vol. 2, No. 2 (14 Oct. 1968); Vol. 3, No. 2 (28 May 1969).

<sup>40</sup> “The Voice of the Majority,” YAF leaflet, undated.

<sup>41</sup> *The Red and Black*, 18 Feb 1969.

person(s) or groups of people taking part in any disruptive acts on our campus.”

Circulated during registration, the petition eventually garnered 3,368 signatures.<sup>42</sup>

The New Left sharply criticized the petition. Students Brad Strickland and Gary Kerley questioned the vague and ill-defined language of the petition, asking what was meant by a “disruptive act” or a “revolution.” Strickland and Kerley accused the PRO-UGA Committee of keeping the wording “nebulous” in the hopes that it would generate more signatures. Student Jason Johnson also criticized UGa-YAF for showing their “intolerance for students who use their constitutional right to dissent,” and noting that the campus may be facing just as much danger from the right as from the left.<sup>43</sup>

UGa-YAF considered the petition drive an overwhelming success. In addition to the large number of signatures, the group received coverage of their efforts by both of Athens’s daily newspapers and a local television station. On April 16, Weaver, members of UGa-YAF, and the PRO-UGA Committee handed over the petition to President Davison. The PRO-UGA Committee’s petition reflected a concern that the growing radicalization of the national New Left, as witnessed at Columbia University in May 1968 and at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago that same summer, would make its way to UGa. This concern seemed justified when, by the spring of 1969, the UGa New Left demonstrated an increasing radicalism in both its words and actions.

By 1969 an escalation in radical behavior and rhetoric occurred within the national New Left. As the first generation of activist leaders were replaced by younger activists who entered the movement after the escalation in Vietnam, the New Left began focusing on international issues, adopted an affinity for pseudo-Marxist beliefs and

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<sup>42</sup> Anthony Weaver and James Baldwin, “University of Georgia YAF Forms Majority Coalition,” *The New Guard* Vol. 9, No. 6 (Summer 1969), 25.

<sup>43</sup> *The Red and Black*, 1 April 1969; 8 April 1969.



proved to be less patient in its quest for social change. Frustration at the apparent lack of change in American social and political life led to infighting within SDS, as competing factions tried to find the ideology that would best bring about the revolution. This struggle created only more frustration as the New Left “trapped itself in a seamless loop: growing militancy, growing isolation, growing commitment to The Revolution, sloppier and more frantic attempts to imagine a revolutionary class, growing hatred among the competing factions with their competing imaginations.”<sup>44</sup>

As early as 1967 UGa New Leftists grew impatient with their strategy of rational appeals to the opposition in hopes of winning concessions. In its efforts to secure rights for coeds, SDS stated that, “it is becoming increasingly obvious that ‘working through channels’ is effective only so long as basic, meaningful issues are not raised.”<sup>45</sup> By the fall of 1968, Simpson expressed a growing frustration at the perceived lack of change or, more importantly, the immense difficulty in affecting any fundamental change. “I have come to the realization,” he stated, “that our country’s problems are rooted far more deeply in the institutions and history of America than I had ever before realized.” Asked his opinion on which presidential candidate could best serve the needs of the nation, he replied, “much of the power to shape major events and set national priorities in America does not lie within reach of the electoral process.” Feeling alienated by mainstream politics, the UGa New Left more fully embraced radicalism as original members of UGa-SDS and SDS-SSOC left campus to work for New Left organizations at the regional level and younger students, fully supporting the revolutionary rhetoric spouting from the mouths of national New Left leaders, filled the void.

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<sup>44</sup>Todd Gitlin, *Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, 380.

<sup>45</sup> *SDS Newsletter*, 16 May 1967, Davison Papers, Box 56.

The most vocal and active, Jane Hopper represented the radical SDS position within SDS-SSOC. As with many younger student activists who came of age after 1965, Hopper rejected the image of America as a force for democracy in the world and considered liberals “apologists for empire.”<sup>46</sup> “There are many kinds of revolutions occurring,” she stated, “We may not have the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror . . . but still the revolution is growing and it will not be over until all the ‘Why’s’, whose present answers have driven young people into the streets in protest, can be answered satisfactorily.” Echoing the anti-imperialist position of national New Left groups, Hopper went on to ask, “Why were we taught that our country defended liberty against oppression? Why do we support corrupt, feudal governments and stop freedom revolutions by labeling them ‘communistic,’ for the protection not of the American people, but of a few private owners?”<sup>47</sup>

The increased radicalism at UGa did not stay confined within the activists’ speeches; several New Leftists backed up their talk with action. From 1968 to 1972, activists made four attempts to burn down the Army ROTC Building on campus. While all proved unsuccessful, lack of knowledge on the part of the arsonists and dumb luck, rather than the activists’ intent, proved the deciding factor. The first attempt occurred on May 16, 1968. Arsonists broke into the building through two windows and set a match to two gallons of flammable solvent they had poured on the floor of the cadet lounge. Campus police spotted the fire and called the Athens Fire Department, who quickly

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<sup>46</sup> Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 226, 228.

<sup>47</sup> *Red and Black*, 6 Feb. 1969.

extinguished the blaze. The damage was limited to some “scortched [sic] woodwork and smoked flooring and ceiling.”<sup>48</sup>

A more serious attempt occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1969. Once again, the arsonists broke in through a window on the first floor. This time, however, they spread a flammable liquid over the floors on both the first and second stories of the building. They also attempted to disarm the sprinkler system. The arsonists’ main focus seemed to be the Cadet Operations room. They first ransacked the room, scattering files and records “over a large area of the floor.” They then placed student records and roll books on a table and tried to set them on fire. After igniting the fuel the arsonists left, taking a copy machine with them.<sup>49</sup>

Surprisingly, the fire quickly burnt itself out. In the “Report of Loss” filed with the state, insurance adjuster L.H. Crawley wrote of his surprise at the failure of the arson attempt. “The puzzling feature,” he writes, “is why the fire didn’t burn.” The sprinkler system had been shut off but the fire did not spread through the building. In his estimate, a “lack of ventilation probably prevented the fire from developing.” For Crawley, a serious attempt had been made to burn the building and “it was indeed fortunate a major loss did not occur.”<sup>50</sup>

The university leased the ROTC Building to the United States Army and since damage had been done to U.S. property, the FBI, specifically Special Agent Robert Kane, assumed jurisdiction over the investigation into the arson attempt. Within a month, the investigation centered on SDS-SSOC members living at a home outside of Watkinsville

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<sup>48</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 17 May 1968.

<sup>49</sup> *Athens Banner Herald*, 10 February 1969; *New York Times*, 11 February 1969; Military Building Fire Incident Report, Davison Papers, Box 55.

<sup>50</sup> Report of Loss, 12 Feb. 1969, Davison Papers, Box 55.

nicknamed “The Round House.” On March 6, 1969, at the request of Kane, Deputy Jewell Timms of the Oconee County Sheriff’s Office visited the Round House and requested that its residents come to the Sheriff’s Office the next day at 10 a.m. to be interviewed.

Kane, along with Sheriff Charles Halcomb and Edward Kassinger, interviewed five residents - David Payne, Pat Nelson, Michael Moody, Ivan Lester, and Bill Daniel - all UGa-SDS members since at least the April 1968 sit-in. After interviews with Payne and Lester in which both students indicated that Moody mostly likely set the fire, Kane and the others questioned Moody. Despite showing some initial hesitation, Moody confessed to the arson attack on the ROTC Building. He also explained that the copy machine had been given to the SSOC office in Atlanta. Asked why he attempted to burn down the building, Moody replied that, “he resented the University’s administration requiring the students to have compulsory ROTC.” Finally, Moody took the officers to the home of his accomplice, Henry McCormack. Both Moody and McCormack were placed under arrest and later tried on the charge of second degree arson. In his report to the court, Kassinger found that, “it is difficult to reconcile [the arson attempt with] the stated ‘liberal’ objectives of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Southern Students [sp] Organizing Committee (SSOC), who are involved in this situation, who claim to be advancing ‘democracy’ and rail against the ‘establishment.’”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This description of the investigation comes from a report Edward Kassinger sent to Thomas W. Ridgeway, the Solicitor General for the Western Judicial Circuit, Davison Papers, Box 55. In the report, Kassinger notes that Payne had dropped out of school in order to receive psychiatric treatments. The noting of New Left students experiencing, or possibly experiencing, mental illnesses appears several times in the papers of administration officials. In compiling a list of coeds involved in the 1968 sit-in, notations are made in reference to at least one girl withdrawing from school after a suicide attempt, perhaps linked to her involvement in the demonstration. In August 1969 Bracewell states that he discussed the mental health of SDS member Jane Hopper with Dr. Ray Campbell in Health Services and both agreed she was “in need of intensive psychiatric therapy.”, Tate Papers, Box 46. It appears that one way in which administrators

During the spring of 1969 the “liberal” objectives of SSOC caused a rift between the head office of the organization and the national leadership of SDS. Affiliated with SDS since 1964, SSOC had recently become an object of scorn within the more revolutionary group. SDS found itself involved in a vicious internal power struggle by 1969 and the two primary competing factions within SDS, the Progressive Labor Party and the SDS national office cadre, “alternately wooed and attacked SSOC.” Although both sides of the struggle considered SSOC too liberal to remain within the SDS fold, both factions also realized the added numbers that SSOC would bring to their side could have an important effect on the struggle for power within SDS. SSOC, not realizing that its membership rolls meant more to the SDS factions than the organization, but understanding the importance of the affiliation with SDS, tried desperately to maintain its credibility among both SDS factions. The fight proved futile. At the March 1969 SDS National Council meeting, both factions voted not only to negate the alliance with SSOC but to recommend also the total dissolution of the organization. Reeling from the vote, SSOC struggled on for a few months, but at its Regional Conference in June officially dissolved.<sup>52</sup>

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tried to understand the unusual and confrontational behavior of some students in an otherwise docile and compliant student body was to consider them mentally ill.

<sup>52</sup> Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 191-192; Gregg Michel, *Struggle For a Better South*, 198-226. Interestingly, David Simpson played a key role in the demise of the group he championed over SDS after his suspension in the spring of 1968. Simpson and SSOC founder Lyn Wells, at the March 1969 SDS meeting, created an alliance with Mike Klonsky, a member of the “national office cadre,” in hopes of saving SSOC, a position Klonsky supposedly supported. Klonsky, however, voted to dissolve the group. Simpson, in spite of the bad faith gesture by Klonsky, pushed for the dissolution of SSOC at its June conference. An interesting question worth exploring is whether Simpson truly supported the SDS position for ideological reasons or if he simply saw the demise of SSOC quickly approaching. Michel does not mention the fact that Simpson founded the UGa-SDS at a time when SSOC was actively forming chapters on campuses across the South. Simpson may have encouraged the presence of SSOC on UGa’s campus for practical reasons (its focus on Southern issues could draw more new recruits than SDS), but when push came to shove he returned to the group he first supported.

The battle between SDS and SSOC played itself out in miniature on the UGa campus. The joint SDS-SSOC chapter, less than a year old, began to fall apart as SSOC adherents within the group left and SDS supporters joined. Simpson, during the spring and summer of 1968 had “successfully rechanneled [sic] the revolutionary fervor of Georgia students from SDS to SSOC.” But, no longer a student, Simpson soon left Athens to travel regionally for SSOC. Two other leaders of the group, Pat Nelson and Bill Cozzens, soon followed. They were replaced by younger students who, coming of age after the heyday of the civil rights movement and during the escalation of war in Vietnam, were more attracted to the timelier and exciting anti-war and anti-imperialistic rhetoric of SDS.<sup>53</sup>

SSOC, however, did not quietly disappear. “We can’t get down to our projects,” complained SDSer Jane Hopper. “Every time I open my mouth they (SSOC) tell me to shut up. For some reason they totally despise everything I stand for.” According to SSOC, however, SDS acted as the disruptive element. “There are a lot of SDS people who come down here to ‘freak everybody out’ or to ‘get the pigs,’” Simpson explained, “What they don’t understand is that they’ve got to win over these rednecks they’re trying to freak out. So what I say to Northerners who come down here is to put your heart in the revolution in Dixie or get out.” The differences proved so contentious that SSOC supporters burned their SDS membership cards.<sup>54</sup> Despite this show of solidarity, SSOC was on a downhill slide.

The “lingering demise” of SSOC during the spring of 1969 “created a vacuum which is being filled by the Students for a Democratic Society,” according to Bob

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<sup>53</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, undated, SDS Vertical File, Georgia Room, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia; *Red and Black* 13 Jan. 1970.

<sup>54</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, undated, SDS Vertical file.

Goodman of the *Great Speckled Bird*, Atlanta's New Left newspaper.<sup>55</sup> Goodman's words proved prophetic when, just a few weeks after the SDS meeting that called for SSOC's demise, SDS national secretary Mike Klonsky visited UGa. Klonsky spoke before a capacity crowd at the University Chapel. Trying to find common ground between SSOC and SDS, Klonsky stated, "Through a white oriented society blacks do not receive the background necessary to compete with white students," But, Klonsky added, dismissing the notion of Southern distinctiveness that SSOC held so dear, "the Northern gettos [sic] reflect as much racism as found in the South."<sup>56</sup>

During the summer of 1969 at their National Convention in Chicago SDS finally fell victim to the infighting that had been raging in the organization for the past year, leaving forever unknown how effective SDS could have been at recruiting southern radicals. Going into the convention as the largest student organization the United States, SDS emerged as two groups, both driven by anti-imperialist and Marxist ideology, and both having little interest in the Southern New Left.<sup>57</sup> The UGa New Left also fell victim to the national split and by the summer of 1969 SDS-SSOC had become inactive on campus. UGa-SDS would re-emerge less than a year later but in the void created by the demise of SDS-SSOC a new campaign focused on Vietnam emerged on campus.<sup>58</sup>

Vietnam had always been a concern for members of the UGa New Left community. David Simpson, a Navy veteran, had kept one eye on U.S. foreign policy as he tried to build a student movement on campus in 1967 and 1968. The conservative nature of the student body, however, made it difficult to generate much opposition to a

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<sup>55</sup> *Great Speckled Bird*, 16 June 1969.

<sup>56</sup> *Red and Black*, 27 March 1969.

<sup>57</sup> For descriptions of the shattering of SDS see Todd Gitlin, *Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, 377-391; and Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS*, 557-574.

<sup>58</sup> Letter to Frank Scarlett from William Tate, 15 July 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 31.

war that the U.S. government advertised as a fight against communism, especially at a time when it seemed the United States was winning. In the aftermath of the January 1968 Tet Offensive, when it became clear to many Americans that victory in Vietnam would not come swiftly or without great cost, UGa students outside the SDS-SSOC circle began questioning U.S. involvement in the conflict.

Although SDS tried to generate opposition to Vietnam in the immediate wake of the Tet Offensive, anti-war protests on a large scale did not emerge on campus until the fall of 1969. By the summer of that year, the campus seemed ready to confront the Vietnam issue. *Red and Black* columnist John Conwell noted that, “it’s about time we discussed the Vietnam War on this campus,” because, in part, “every year UGA contributes many young men [to the war effort].”<sup>59</sup> The absence of SDS-SSOC and its experienced leadership made it difficult, however, to develop an organized campaign against the war.

The lack of effective antiwar leadership at UGa reflected the condition of the national antiwar movement. By the summer of 1969 the organization that had spearheaded the movement for the past several years, the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE), found itself in a weakened state. The violence at the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the “lackluster” demonstrations against Richard Nixon’s inauguration in January 1969 had left the MOBE, “politically isolated” and out of the mainstream of American thought just as American public opinion began opposing the war in Vietnam. Something new was needed and it came from two “young liberals,” Sam Brown and David Hawk. Instead of organizing mass demonstrations in a few big cities, the traditional approach, Brown and

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<sup>59</sup> *The Red and Black*, 13 August 1969.



Hawk proposed that protests should occur in cities all over the nation on the same day, led by a loosely organized national committee. Brown and Hawk's new organization, the Vietnam Moratorium Committee (VMC) set October 15, 1969 as the first Vietnam Moratorium Day. The event proved a huge success, as "millions of Americans in thousands of cities, towns and villages across the nation," called for an end to the war in Vietnam.<sup>60</sup>

Antiwar activists at UGa contributed to that success. The campus chapter of Young Democrats, Phi Kappa Literary Society and an ad hoc Vietnam Moratorium Committee jointly planned the event. Activities began at noon with a service to honor those killed in Vietnam. Jeanette Rankin, former member of Congress, renowned pacifist and resident of nearby Watkinsville, delivered the keynote address. Stating that, "War is just an excuse for the military to get rid of their obsolete hardware," Rankin also, "lauded the crowd for their efforts in bringing the Vietnam issue to the fore."<sup>61</sup> Several others speakers addressed the crowd, including student and Vietnam veteran Paul McBride, who "expressed shame at his role in the war," and history professor Charles Crowe, who received the largest ovation of the day when he stated that, "I refuse to cooperate with a system that sends one more young man to his death in Vietnam."<sup>62</sup> After the memorial service, several professors and campus ministers proceeded to the chapel and rang the

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<sup>60</sup> Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?: American Protest Against the War in Vietnam 1963-1975* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 255, 269; Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), 106-107. The antiwar movement by 1969 consisted of several similar sounding and sometimes competing organizations. In addition to MOBE and VMC, there existed the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), and the New Mobilization Committee (New MOBE), as well as several less prominent organizations. Several books do an excellent job of explaining and clarifying the often confusing antiwar movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition to the books mentioned above see Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle Over Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), an encyclopedic treatment of the subject.

<sup>61</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 16 October 1969.

<sup>62</sup> *The Red and Black*, 16 October 1969; *Athens Daily News*, 16 October 1969.

bells while reading off the names of war victims. Finally, later that evening, a candlelight march moved from Memorial Hall to the University Chapel, where the playing of “Taps” concluded a brief ceremony.

Despite the liberal tone of the event and the absence of prominent campus radicals from the planning committee, opposition to the Moratorium still occurred. Local Athenians flew flags outside their homes and businesses, and many drove around town with their headlights on as a sign of support for the war, a gesture proposed by the UGa-YAF chapter. On campus, Chi Psi fraternity placed a banner on its housing stating “Chi Psi Supports America.” Opposition, however, proved less than confrontational. Chi Psi member David Franklin stated his fraternity’s “purpose is unification. We don’t down the hippies or anyone else for being against the war. We really want everyone to get together.” University leaders officially downplayed the significance of the event. Administrators were quoted as considering the day of the Moratorium, “a regular day of class.” Unofficially, they displayed annoyance with the Moratorium. Dean Tate hoped that the October 15 event, “will be the last involvement of our students with this program.” This attitude might explain why he assessed the crowd size at nine hundred, while the campus and local papers reported fifteen hundred participants.<sup>63</sup>

The fifteen hundred anti-war protestors at UGa constituted the largest Moratorium demonstration in Georgia. Outside the Atlanta metropolitan area, the only event of note occurred at Valdosta State College in South Georgia, where four flames were lit on campus and burned throughout the day. In Atlanta, demonstrations were held at almost all colleges and universities but they failed to generate the same level of support as at

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<sup>63</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 15 October 1969, 16 October 1969; Semi-Monthly Report, 17 November 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

UGa. The largest event occurred at Emory University, where seven hundred students gathered on the quadrangle to hear several speakers.<sup>64</sup>

The national VMC called for a second Moratorium on November 13-14. In Athens, UGa antiwar activists focused their efforts on two events. The first, a candlelight march on the evening of November 13, progressed from Memorial Hall to the steps of Terrell Hall, headquarters for the UGa Air Force ROTC unit. There, despite the unseasonably chilly weather, 425 people listened to Mrs. Mildred Stewart, whose son was killed in Vietnam, speak out against the war. The next day U.S. Senator Charles Goodell, a critic of American Vietnam policy, spoke at Memorial Hall. Goodell criticized the South Vietnamese government, labeling it corrupt and the biggest obstacle to peace in Vietnam. He also noted that the Moratoriums were having an effect in Congress. “We are no longer dealing in the rhetoric of war in Congress – we’re dealing in the rhetoric of peace.” He added that the Moratoriums were creating “a strong base of public support.”<sup>65</sup>

Fewer protesters turned out for the November Moratorium at UGa than in October, but this occurred throughout the nation. The huge success of the first Moratorium would have been difficult to duplicate under any circumstances. The New MOBE demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on November 15, however, made the task of the VMC even more difficult by forcing the Moratoriums to share publicity and participants with a closely related antiwar event. The New MOBE march

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<sup>64</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 16 October 1969; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 16 October 1969.

<sup>65</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 14 November 1969; *The Red and Black*, 18 November 1969.

most likely reduced the attendance at Friday's events in Athens since a contingent of UGa antiwar activists planned on attending the Washington demonstration.<sup>66</sup>

Opposition to the November Moratorium at UGa proved better organized than in October. The administration, while once again officially distancing itself from the demonstration, kept close watch on Moratorium planners with the help of the F.B.I. Members of UGa-YAF created a new group designed solely to oppose the Moratoriums. Calling itself "Student Majority Opposed to Simplistic Solutions" (SMOSS), the group claimed to represent the "majority Vietnam war sentiment on campus." Led by student Jimmy Jordan, also the president of the UGa-YAF chapter, SMOSS drew attention to the close alliance between the VMC and the New MOBE, a group with close ties to the Communist Party of the USA. During the Moratorium, SMOSS's sole activity of note occurred during Mrs. Stewart's speech, when the group stood at the back of the crowd with American flags.<sup>67</sup> The large turnout in both Moratoriums foreshadowed events of the next spring, when UGa would witness the largest student demonstration of the 1960s.

The various elements that caused and directed the demonstrations in May began coming together in the first few months of 1970. In January, after an absence of about six months, UGa-SDS reorganized on campus. Despite the factional fighting that destroyed the unity of SDS at the national level its organizational structure had always allowed local chapters to operate autonomously, the result being that many chapters remained viable long past the point at which the national organization lost its role as the leading group in the New Left. Student activists made the first attempts at reviving the

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<sup>66</sup> Tom Wells, *The War Within*, 392; Melvin Small, *The Antiwarriors*, 114, Semi-Monthly Report, October 1969, William Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>67</sup> Semi-Monthly Report, October 1969, Tate Papers, Box 46; *The Red and Black*, 11 November 1969; *Athens Daily News*, 14 November 1969.

UGa-SDS chapter during the summer and fall of 1969. Jane Hopper, the most vocal proponent of SDS from the SDS-SSOC group, contacted the Chicago office of what remained of national SDS during the summer in hopes of receiving their assistance in re-organizing the UGa chapter. They did not respond. Hopper also indicated to a local newspaper that Mark Rudd, a leader of the Weatherman, the most militant faction to emerge out of the collapse of SDS, may speak on campus during the fall term, but this plan never came to fruition.<sup>68</sup>

By January UGa-SDS activists had managed to reorganize the group under the leadership of sophomores Dan Eavenson and Lynn Baldschun. The group's initial plans centered on campus issues, such as concern over the increase in fares for the campus bus service and the high prices charged for textbooks at the university bookstore. Although they hinted at a less confrontational attitude towards the administration, the group quickly reverted to a position of militancy and confrontation. Lampooning the university's Greek system, SDS stated that the group's acronym actually stood for Sigma Delta Sigma, and that the organization now acted as a fraternity for "all the beautiful people who were cut out of rush because of their bizarre appearance." Emphasizing the close relationship between countercultural drug use and radical leftist politics, a line from the group's "fraternity ballad" read, "Sigma Sig, Sigma Sig! Drop a Tab and Kill a Pig!"<sup>69</sup> UGa-SDS's commitment to radicalism would emerge full blown during the next Vietnam demonstration in April.

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<sup>68</sup> Semi-Monthly Report, October 1969, Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>69</sup> *The Red and Black*, 22 January 1970, 27 January 1970. Dropping a tab meant ingesting a dose of LSD. The "Kill a Pig" reference meant to assault a member of law enforcement, whom student activists had begun calling Pigs.

In February 1970, the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC - a front group for the Socialist Worker's Party), convened a conference in Cleveland to plan future demonstrations. The conference drew more than thirty-five hundred participants, including approximately thirty students from UGa. Absent from the meeting, however, was the liberal and unifying tone of the fall Moratoriums. Attendees represented radical and revolutionary movements from across the leftist political spectrum. They had come to Cleveland, according to historian Tom Wells, "bent on breaking the SWP's stranglehold on the SMC and turning it into a multi-issue anti-imperialist organization that could fill the void left by SDS's demise."<sup>70</sup> Out of the conference came the decision for a Moratorium and national student strike on April 15.

The new role of the SMC as a catch-all for various New Left groups became apparent during the Moratorium events at UGa. Unlike the events in October and November, which memorialized the war dead, the April Moratorium became predominantly a forum for radicalism and anti-imperialism. The Moratorium began at noon on April 15 with a rally in front of Memorial Hall. Speakers included Ted Brodek, an Emory instructor and member of the Black Panther Party, Socialist Workers Party member Joe Cole, UGa-SDS member Bill Daniels, and Lyn Wells of the Revolutionary Youth Movement. After the rally, about one hundred students staged a protest outside the ROTC Building. During the protest, thirty to forty students entered the building with the hope of accessing the arms room in the basement. Unsuccessful, the protesters left the building to listen while UGa-SDS leader Dale Hardman read a ten point program that would "put an end to busts [drug arrests], intimidation, racism and the exploitation by those in control of the University."

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<sup>70</sup> Tom Wells, *The War Within*, 405; *The Red and Black*, 17 February 1970.

The event concluded that evening with two events. The first, a “Student Revolutions Symposium,” featured a three person panel composed of a member of the Women’s Liberation movement, Socialist Workers Party member Doug Jenness, and David Simpson, now part of the Revolutionary Youth Movement. UGa-SDS also held its third annual Anti-Military Ball. The highlight of the dance had traditionally been the crowning of Miss Anti-Imperialism. This year, however, a debate erupted within the Moratorium Committee on whether or not the crowning, “would conflict with the principles of the Women’s Liberation Movement.” At UGa, the April Moratorium generated far less interest and participation than those during the fall term. Some Moratorium organizers, particularly those belonging to the moderate sponsoring groups, such the Young Democrats and Phi Kappa, blamed the low turnout on “too many radical students” who excluded “the moderate ones who were opposed to the war.” Any disagreements within the UGa New Left quickly disappeared when, in early May, they united in protest against one of the great tragedies of the 1960s.<sup>71</sup>

On April 30, 1970, President Nixon delivered a televised message to the country in which he announced that U.S. troops had begun combat operations inside the borders of Cambodia. Immediately, protest erupted on campuses across the country, from “such hotbeds of New Left sentiment as Berkeley . . . to community colleges and southern state universities previously untouched by antiwar activism.”<sup>72</sup> Oddly, given the growth of antiwar activism over the past year, UGa remained silent. On May 4, during a protest at Kent State University in Ohio, National Guardsmen shot and killed four students, causing a further escalation of student demonstrations. The mounting national crisis caused

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<sup>71</sup> *The Red and Black*, 14 April, 16 April, 28 April 1970; Semi-monthly report, April 1970.

<sup>72</sup> Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided*, 278.

Nixon to cancel travel plans, including a trip to Georgia during which he had been scheduled to attend the dedication of the Richard B. Russell Library on the University of Georgia campus. Still, UGa remained silent.

Several groups, however, had been making plans to mark the recent events. Student Government Association President Bob Hurley and vice-president Mike Willoughby had spent the two days since the Kent State killings planning a memorial service for the slain students, slated to take place on Wednesday, May 6 at 7 p.m. Meanwhile, at noon on May 6, a group of about twenty UGa-SDS members gathered outside Memorial Hall to protest against ROTC, the Cambodian invasion and the Kent State deaths. The group marched to the Army ROTC Building, where the protesters, now numbering sixty, encircled the building.

The demonstration quickly grew. Within an hour of the initial demonstration, two hundred students had gathered at the ROTC building. Frustration and anger boiled just below the surface. Several tried to occupy the building, but were persuaded against the idea by Army personnel and, surprisingly, student activist leaders who convinced the protestors that, “nothing could be accomplished by taking the building.” About fifty conservative students entered the fray when, after observing a UGa-SDS member remove a U.S. flag from the building, they rushed across the street from Park Hall to replace the flag. For his own protection ROTC instructors allowed the protestor inside the building.<sup>73</sup>

By 1 p.m. the crowd had grown to over three hundred and moved from the ROTC building up to North Campus. The demonstrators had formulated a plan demanding that

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<sup>73</sup>*The Atlanta Constitution*, 7 May 1970; “Spring 70,” *Impressions*, Vol 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 24. The general description of events on May 6 and 7 come from the *Impression* article previously cited and “A Chronology of Recent Demonstrations,” compiled by the Student Affairs Office, Davison Papers, Box 7.



administrators close down the university for several days as a memorial to the students killed at Kent State, a decision made by several other schools around the nation. Moratorium leader Jim Saxon and UGa-SDS leader Phil Evans both addressed the crowd. Evans told the group that, “students now are showing their abhorrence at the genocide in Southeast Asia and here at home.” He also demanded that President Davison sign a letter recently printed in the *New York Times* which condemned the Kent State killings and which had been signed by several university presidents around the country.<sup>74</sup> The demonstrators first attempted to talk with Dean O. Suthern Sims at the Academic Building but, finding him absent, moved just down the lawn to Old College with a plan to take over the building and conduct a sit-in until a university official spoke to them. Instead, Vice-President for Instruction George Parthemos met the students outside Old College and calmed the crowd. Parthemos promised the crowd that administrators would meet to discuss the closing of the university in exchange for a promise that the protestors not do anything else until 7 p.m. that evening, the scheduled time for the memorial service. The crowd outside Old College had grown to somewhere between five hundred and one thousand protesters.

At 7 p.m. the memorial service began with the reading of a statement from the administration. Parthemos, President Fred Davison and the academic deans had met that afternoon to discuss closing the university. They decided instead to make Thursday classes optional for those who wished to further mourn the students killed in Ohio. It became clear immediately that the crowd did not consider optional classes as the appropriate decision. Noticing that Davison had not attended the memorial service, demonstrators decided they needed to meet with him to discuss further the situation. The

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<sup>74</sup> *The Red and Black*, 7 May 1970.

protestors left campus and, in a move that surprised many administrators and faculty, marched to Davison's home on Prince Street.

By this time, the demonstration had come to the attention of Athens city officials. Mayor Julius Bishop had attended the memorial service but, when confronted by student leaders, could not explain Davison's absence or where he could be found. The Athens police department also became involved as the large crowd marching through city streets forced the rerouting of traffic. Several blocks away from Davison's house, more policemen stood ready with tear gas if the crowd got unruly.<sup>75</sup>

Upon reaching Davison's residence, the demonstrators sat down in the street, waiting for an appearance from the university's president. After forty-five minutes, it became clear that Davison would not speak to the group and they moved back up Milledge Avenue and on to campus. While the demonstrators had not been successful in their goal of speaking to Davison, the march to his house and back had increased dramatically the size of the crowd. The route both to Davison's house and back on to campus passed by several dormitories and fraternity and sorority houses. The crowd called out as they passed for those inside to join them, and many did. By the time the marchers made it back on to campus and took up a position outside the Academic Building at 9 p.m. the number of protestors had reached three thousand.

Displays of anger and frustration occurred sporadically over the next several hours. Conservative student observers got into a shouting match with some of the demonstrators, exchanging chants of "keep the school open!" and "close the school down!" At one point, the conservative students attempted to rush the crowd in the hopes of causing a panic but changed their minds just before entering the group of protesters.

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<sup>75</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 7 May 1970.

Davison finally arrived at the Academic Building around 10:30 p.m. and went into a meeting with Dean Sims and several protest leaders, including UGA-SDS member Dale Hardman and Committee on Social Issues member Cindy Thomas.<sup>76</sup> Outside, students continued to demand an appearance by Davison and while waiting, somewhere between fifteen and fifty students entered the building, smashing windows on two floors to gain admittance. Police quickly arrested three students but it is unclear whether these students had been among those who broke in or if they entered the building after the windows were broken.

Davison eventually addressed the crowd at 11:25 p.m. In an attempt to dispel the demonstrators, Davison reiterated the decision of optional class attendance but stated he would negotiate further with protest leaders on Thursday. This statement received a cry of “Bullshit!” from the demonstrators so loud that the rest of Davison’s statement was drowned out by crowd noise. Davison remained in the building until 12:20 a.m. when several members of the Georgia State Patrol escorted him off campus. Before leaving, Davison was overheard on the phone “pleading” with Governor Maddox not to send in state or federal military troops.<sup>77</sup> The crowd dwindled throughout the night, so that by sunrise on Thursday approximately one hundred students remained on the lawn outside the Academic Building.

The demonstrators reassembled at noon on Thursday outside Memorial Hall. There, Parthemos and Sims announced to the crowd that the Board of Regents had decided to close all twenty-six schools within the University System for the next two

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<sup>76</sup> The Committee on Social Issues had formed a few months earlier and took its name from the Georgia State University Committee on Social Issues, one of the oldest New Left groups in Georgia.

<sup>77</sup> “Spring 70,” *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 27. *The Great Speckled Bird*, 18 May 1970.

days, largely as a result of the UGa demonstration.<sup>78</sup> Despite achieving their initial goal, the demonstrators decided to take up the cause of the three students who had been arrested the night before. Requesting amnesty for the students, protest leaders met for most of the afternoon with several university administrators. When it became clear that the university did not plan to withdraw charges against the three students, activists began planning a march through town that evening.

The mood of the demonstrators throughout the day, who numbered several hundred, appeared volatile enough to cause concern among sympathetic faculty members and administrators. The planned march route passed by the Athens Courthouse, where the three students were being held. Deciding it would be better if the students were released before the march, John Granrose of the philosophy department led a group of faculty to the courthouse in hopes of freeing the three students. There they met Dean Tate and, working together, secured the students' release, allowing them to make an appearance at the start of that evening's march.<sup>79</sup>

Reasons for the march had changed throughout the day. Although the majority of marchers who gathered earlier that day intended to continue their expressions of outrage against the Kent State killings, the shutting down of the university removed much of the cause for further demonstrations on that issue. By 7 p.m., when the march began, the demands of the protestors centered on the removal of charges against the three students and Davison signing the *New York Times* letter. Moving through town, the march passed the courthouse, where people began to sit down in the street. March marshals, mostly faculty members, pushed the marchers forward, hoping to avoid a confrontation with the

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<sup>78</sup> "Spring 70," *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 27; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May 1970.

<sup>79</sup> "Spring 70," *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 28.

police. The march proceeded to Davison's home. Numbering about one thousand, the protesters took up residence on the president's front lawn and in the street, demanding that Davison speak with them. After a forty-five minute wait, Davison emerged. He refused to drop the charges against the three students, stating that the removal of the university's *in loco parentis* rights by the courts during the 1960s (ironically, a goal that the early New Left fought hard for) kept the university from interfering in the case on behalf of the students. He also refused to sign the *New York Times* letter. Both decisions met with jeers and heckling from the crowd. By this time, the march permit had expired and noticing that "local police looked restless," and not wanting these "outside agents" to take over the situation, several administrators and faculty made attempts to get the demonstrators moving.<sup>80</sup> Finally, Granrose succeeded in starting the protestors back towards campus.

By this point the protest had lost the interest of many of its participants. After reconvening at Memorial Hall and debating for an hour about what to do next, the group had dwindled to about two hundred demonstrators. Those remaining decided to march to the Academic Building with hopes of occupying it but, noticing the large contingent of campus and local police guarding the building, the remaining demonstrators marched instead to Old College. There the anticlimactic ending to the two days of protest occurred. Several of the campus's most dedicated radicals smashed a glass door and urged the other protestors to enter the building. "You said you wanted violence tonight," one radical shouted to the crowd, "now you've got it." Most of the crowd responded with boos. Another student protestor, perhaps noticing "the contingent of state troopers armed

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<sup>80</sup> "Spring 70," *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 30; *Athens Daily News*, 8 May 1970; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May 1970.

with tear gas and billy clubs that waited nearby” begged the students not to enter the building. “If you enter that building,” he stated, “you’re asking for violence and bloodshed.” Caution prevailed. Realizing that the crowd would not storm the building the radicals dispersed, followed soon by the rest of the protesters.<sup>81</sup>

The campus New Left, as the main contributor of leaders to the May 6-7 demonstrations, tried to keep the sentiment that generated the mass uprising alive over the next several weeks but achieved little success. UGa-SDS member Dale Hardman presided over a meeting of an Emergency Strike Committee on Friday, May 8, in front of Memorial Hall. The meeting attracted no more than forty participants, some of them university personnel sent to observe the proceedings. The committee tried to regenerate interest in the Cambodian invasion by working with student government in the hopes of getting the Student Senate to endorse a resolution calling for an immediate removal of troops from Cambodia and Vietnam. The committee also planned another rally for May 14. While the Student Senate eventually passed a watered down version of the resolution on May 20, the May 14 rally never occurred.<sup>82</sup> The final demonstration occurred on Monday, May 11, when a dozen students sat quietly outside Davison’s office in Old College. By the end of the afternoon, they had dispersed.

University administrators attempted to quickly quell any rumors that a large segment of the UGa student body had turned radical. On Saturday, May 9, Davison delivered a State of the University speech to a meeting of the Alumni Society. Much as he had done two years earlier after the April 1968 sit-in, Davison sought to minimize and isolate the “real” radicals. While noting that the university had a “sincere concern on the

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<sup>81</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May 1970; *Athens Daily News*, 8 May 1970.

<sup>82</sup> <sup>82</sup> “Spring 70,” *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (Nov. 1970), 30; Report on the Meeting of the Emergency Strike Committee, Acting Dean of Student Affairs, Davison Papers, Box 55.

part of many who wish to voice their concern and their doubts” about current events, Davison went on to say that UGa had only “a few who are openly defiant of any authority and who appear to want only disruption . . . and let me emphasize that this is only a small number.” Kenneth Waters, Dean of the Pharmacy School, tried to spread the word that not only were a small number of students involved in the May 6-7 demonstrations, but that some of those involved came from “off-campus, and some were from other schools within and without the state.” Finally, local papers explored what the “typical” student participant in the demonstrations was like. The *Atlanta Constitution* came to the conclusion that less than one hundred students who participated in the protests could be classified at “hard core revolutionaries bent on bringing students to a violent confrontation with authority.” Most were like “Steve”, who classified himself as a radical and against the war but also an advocate of non-violence.<sup>83</sup>

Despite these efforts to minimize the role of the New Left, even a brief examination of the events of May 6-7 shows the importance of the movement in organizing the two days of protest. Protestors early on acknowledged the leadership roles assumed by New Left members. UGa-SDS members Dale Hardman and Phil Evans, Vietnam Moratorium leader Mike Willoughby and C.S.I. member Cindy Thomas quickly assumed positions as the primary leaders of the demonstrations. Their legitimacy among demonstrators and their ability to lead the demonstration emerged during the first few hours when they gave the protest a cause--a shutdown of the university--while also controlling and maintaining the large crowd during a six hour lull in activity on the afternoon of May 6. This period of inactivity could have easily led to many

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<sup>83</sup> Fred C. Davison, *State of the University*, delivered to the Alumni Society Meeting, 9 May 1970. Davison Papers, Box 114; Letter to John H. Beach, Jr. from Kenneth L. Waters, 25 May 1970, Tate Papers, Box 45; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 11 May 1970.

demonstrators losing interest. Instead, the crowd grew. The rising popularity of the counterculture, with its “anti-establishment” philosophy, and the growing antiwar sentiment on campus, as witnessed in the large turnouts of the Vietnam Moratoriums held over the past nine months, also encouraged many students to join the protest.

The UGa New Left experienced a tremendous amount of change in the two years since the 1968 sit-in. Moving beyond the bounds of a single organization, the New Left began to focus its attention on both national and international issues, absorbing members of the growing counterculture and antiwar movement. It also found itself immersed in the same organizational struggles that characterized the national New Left. Conflict within the UGa New Left community erupted for the first time with the SDS-SSOC crisis. Also, the more radical members of the New Left at UGa began embracing the revolutionary and anti-imperialist rhetoric coming from national New Left organizations, a cause for further disagreements among UGa activists. New Left groups were not the only students active on campus. Young Americans for Freedom emerged to combat the growing influence of what they saw as communist influenced radicalism at UGa. In May 1970, all these elements converged during two days of protest. While the partial success of the May protests stands as an important part of UGa’s New Left history, it also represented a turning point in that history. Never again would so many students gather together in protest. Instead, as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, UGa would witness the rise of a new kind of activism, one centered on education instead of protest and the personal instead of the political.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### From Political to Personal: The Decline of the Traditional New Left and the Rise of the New Social Movements 1970-1975

While the dust from the May demonstrations settled at the University of Georgia and on hundreds of other campuses around the country, the nation seemed to take stock of the turmoil generated during the past two years. Many Americans, including New Leftists, wished to move forward, beyond the seemingly endless confrontations between radical demonstrators and “the establishment.” For some former activists, this meant leaving the movement all together. Others turned inward. Believing change had to come from inside themselves, many went off in search of spiritual awakening at one of the increasing number of communes sprouting up around the country. Other activists, however, felt that social and political causes still existed which demanded their commitment. Opposition continued against the Vietnam War. The women’s movement, which had been growing steadily since its inception in 1968, achieved a prominent role in American life by the early 1970s. More controversial, the gay liberation struggle found support beyond its strongholds in New York City and San Francisco. These movements transformed the New Left. On the UGa campus, groups supporting these causes existed in the first half of the 1970s. And while conservative student groups tried to capitalize on the general public’s frustration with the American Left, New Left groups on campus pushed their agendas forward, thriving as the decade approached its midway point.

By the beginning of the 1970s the counterculture found itself being pulled in opposing directions. Many of the countercultural elements that had shocked Americans in the mid-1960s had worked their way into mainstream popular culture by the 1970s. Long hair, relaxed clothing styles, casual sex and recreational drug use had become imbedded in American life. At the same time, many activists exhausted by the events of the past several years, and countercultural adherents upset by the commodification of their lifestyle, tried to create idyllic communities or embraced self-improvement programs, religious or otherwise, in attempts to find personal and social harmony.

At the University of Georgia, student cultural life embraced the watered-down and non-ideological version of the 1970s counterculture. As early as 1970, the “Greek-Freak” phenomenon appeared on campus. The Greek-Freak was a fraternity or sorority member who looked the part of a hippie and engaged in some Freak behaviors while maintaining their mainstream American values. The Greek-Freaks, noted student Doug Monroe, were “dressing hip, growing hair, and consuming drugs with the gusto they formerly reserved for grain alcohol. However, they still retain the crass materialism, shallow conceits, and vapidness that identified them as traditional Greeks.” Monroe went on to comment sarcastically about the trendy nature of adopting a “hip” appearance. “If you, the average denizen of Bulldog County are not hip, you had better get hip. The University has never been a stronghold of originality and there certainly is no reason to start now.”<sup>1</sup>

Nothing represented the transition of the counterculture into mainstream student life more than in the increase in illegal drug use. In 1971, Dean Tate noted that “the drug

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<sup>1</sup> Doug Monroe, “Student Forum,” *Impressions* (March 1970), 7-8; Doug Monroe, “how you gonna keep ‘em down on the farm now that they’ve dropped STP?” *Impressions* Vol. V No. 1 (November 1970), 16.

problem is in every area of our society” and expressed concern that the number of drug-related student arrests had increased from eleven during the 1969-1970 school year to thirty four in the 1970-1971 year.<sup>2</sup> These arrests represented a small minority of the number of students who had tried drugs at UGa. In a “Survey of Drug Use” conducted during 1971, four hundred and seventy freshmen were asked about their drug consumption. Thirty percent indicated that they had taken illegal drugs. Further answers showed that the majority of students who took drugs did so on a casual basis and avoided “hard” drugs such as LSD, barbiturates and opiates. Respondents also noted the ease of obtaining marijuana and its widespread use. Eighty four percent of those asked knew at least one person from whom they could procure the drug and approximately eighty percent knew at least one student who used marijuana once a week. While the survey concluded that “regular or frequent use of drugs . . . is reported by less than twenty-five percent of a large sample of the 1970-71 freshmen class,” it also indicated that a much larger percentage of the student population engaged in occasional recreational marijuana use.<sup>3</sup>

A 1972 student referendum reflected the popularity of marijuana. Sponsored by the Student Government Association, a “pretty heavy turnout” of four thousand and seven hundred students answered questions regarding the legalization of marijuana. Fifty-nine percent favored legalization of the drug with controls similar to those placed on alcohol. Representing the opinion of the majority of those who voted, Student Body president Pat Swindell stated that, “the same arguments can be used against alcohol as are used against marijuana, so it seems to me, you can either legalize it or go back to

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<sup>2</sup> Memorandum from William Tate to O. Suthern Sims, 24 June 1971, Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>3</sup> William K. Boardman, “Questionnaire Survey of Drug Use By University of Georgia Freshmen, Athens, Georgia,” Davison Papers, Box 19.

prohibition.”<sup>4</sup> The prevalence of drug use among the student body, however, appeared to wane after 1972. While drug-related student arrests indicated that a wide range of drugs, including cocaine and heroin, were still being used on campus, fewer people were getting arrested. While Dean Louise McBee felt that these numbers represented a reduction in drug use, it may also be true that students simply made greater and more successful attempts at not getting caught.<sup>5</sup>

As the trappings of drugs and hip clothing attracted a growing number of students, few adhered to the deeper ideological underpinnings of the 1970s counterculture. The desire for social and personal improvement that drove many Americans into the environmental movement, communes and self-help groups never took hold of a large number of students at UGa. Dean Tate expressed relief that a committed counterculture had not grown up in Athens. “In the Atlanta area, where the hippie population has increased in number, the state has a distinct center of new culture,” he stated, “however, my fears that this group might move to Athens and be centered around the University have not materialized.”<sup>6</sup> Some students made attempts to recreate in Athens several of the more successful counterculture community-building projects from around the nation. A seminar program going by the entertaining name of Alexander Aardvark’s Alternative Life Styles appeared in 1971. Seminars covered a wide range of counterculture interests, including yoga, vegetarianism, communal living, natural childbirth and “psychedelic drugs for spiritual enlightenment.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The Red and Black*, 9 February 1972.

<sup>5</sup> “University Drug Advisory Council, University of Georgia Annual Report for 1972-1973,” Davison Papers, Box 19.

<sup>6</sup> William Tate to O. Suthern Sims, Semi-Monthly Report, 18 March 1971. Tate Papers, Box 46.

<sup>7</sup> *The Red and Black*, 8 October 1971.

Approximately one hundred UGa students and Athens residents founded the Athens Co-op Program in 1971. The cooperative, or co-op, had three components: a food co-op, a Job co-op and a crisis center. The crisis center, meant to help those addicted to drugs, gained university approval within the first three months of the co-op's existence. The food and job co-ops were aimed at Athens residents more than students, since they provided co-op members with bulk food at reduced prices and assistance with finding employment, two issues of little interest or need among students. A real attempt at community-building, co-op organizers planned to add a music-art co-op, and a day care center. Most of the co-op programs fell away quickly but the food co-op proved a success, lasting well into the mid-1970s.<sup>8</sup>

The Free University of Georgia started in 1968 did not last very long. The free university concept, however, proved attractive enough that two attempts were made during the early 1970s to revive the program. In 1973, the Free University found new life as activists found that the university did not provide coursework that reflected their concerns. Courses offered by the new Free University reflected the changes in social activism since the 1960s. Instead of classes on politics and the Vietnam War, the Free University offered courses on homosexual and modern women's writers. Free University "Chancellor" Buck Pennington stated that he wished the Free University to be a "focal point" for "every counterculture activity."<sup>9</sup> The program, however, did not become

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<sup>8</sup> *The Red and Black*, 13 April 1971; Dennis Mullis, "Cooperative Buying," *Impressions* Vol. 11 No. 1 (Oct. 1976). The popularity of the cooperative concept, particularly food co-ops, has endured in the decades since the 1960s. Doug Rossinow notes that those who wish to defend the successes of the counterculture often point to the co-ops as one of "the most tangible legacies of 1960s radicalism." (Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 281). Athens still possesses a cooperative food store and in 2001 local farmers created a cooperative dedicated to "community, environment, health and education." <http://locallygrowncrop.com/>

<sup>9</sup> *The Red and Black*, 27 March 1973.

popular enough to achieve long term success. Just two years later, several students proposed creating a third incarnation of the Free University at UGa.<sup>10</sup>

The People's Park proved the most immediately successful of the 1970s countercultural undertakings. The concept of a People's Park emerged in 1969 at the University of California at Berkeley when several activists, concerned over urban decay and a desire to nurture a concern for the environment among local residents, turned an abandoned lot into a park.<sup>11</sup> The idea for a People's Park in Athens came from graduate student Jim Riordan. Concerned that the campus lacked natural areas, Riordan, a member of the Student Senate, proposed the creation of a committee to explore the possibility of the restoration of natural space on campus. Unlike in Berkeley, where park planners avoided cooperating with local officials, Riordan worked closely with the university and gained a good deal of support from the administration. A plan was approved to turn an undeveloped seven acre parcel of land south of Russell Hall into the park. Work, done mostly by students, began in the summer of 1970, with the hope that the park would be finished by the spring quarter of 1971.

The park brought together many parts of the university and Athens communities. Environmental activists worked on the project, students in the recreation and landscape architecture departments created the park's design, and several local merchants donated

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<sup>10</sup> *The Red and Black*, 21 May 1975.

<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the initial environmental and community-based focus of the People's Park quickly disappeared. The lot the Park was built on belonged to the University of California, which had not given permission for the park's construction. Shortly after the park opened, the university erected a fence around the area and began bulldozing the park. Berkeley was home to some of the most radical and violent of all 1960s activists and they responded accordingly. Riots erupted, California Governor Ronald Reagan sent in state troopers and the National Guard, and one person died after being shot by a police officer. See W.J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 155-166; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 353-361. People's Parks were created in other locations around the country. For a more positive history of a People's Park see Mary Ann Wynkoop, *Dissent in the Heartland: The Sixties at Indiana University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 106, 169-170, 173, 184.

time and materials. Taking longer than expected, construction on the park was completed during the 1971 fall term. People's Park included new tennis courts, a barbeque pit and trails through the wooded sections of the area. The only problem occurred early in the facility's development when residents of an adjacent street complained about the loud noise generated by rock concerts at the park. Riordan assured residents, however, that the main purpose of the park "was not to have concerts but to provide recreational facilities," a statement that proved true during the park's existence. For several years, the park provided a quiet recreational space on campus. By 1975, however, it had become overgrown and fallen into disuse.<sup>12</sup>

The development of People's Park represented the new approach of social activism in the 1970s. No longer confrontational or making demands for grand, sweeping changes, activists of the 1970s approached social change as something that started on a personal and local level, with the goal of improving self and community. As historian Doug Rossinow states, "reformist is perhaps the label that best describes the form taken by the later new left's cultural politics. New leftists pioneered a new kind of 'cultural liberalism,' pursuing local and piecemeal improvements in the quality of their everyday lives."<sup>13</sup> Education, social services and working within "the system" now characterized the New Left instead of mass demonstrations and revolutionary rhetoric. Most UGa New Leftists had learned to avoid confrontational tactics and radical rhetoric long before the rest of the New Left and, as a result, they began working within the framework of student government and attempted to educate the community about groups

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<sup>12</sup> *The Red and Black*, 29 Sept 1970, 5 November 1970, 20 April 1971, 18 May 1971, 1 October 1971, 29 January 1975; *Impressions*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (November 1970), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Doug Rossinow, "The New Left in the Counterculture: Hypothesis and Evidence," *Radical History Review* 67 (1997), 108.

of students asking for equal treatment, namely women and homosexuals. At the same time, politics and the Vietnam War still held the interest of UGa activists.

Nothing symbolized the changes occurring in the New Left during the late 1960s more than the death of SDS. The first and largest New Left student organization of the 1960s, its implosion in 1969 left many activists scrambling to find new organizations to join. But, however ineffective the national organization had become, many local chapters continued to operate into the 1970s. At the University of Georgia, UGa-SDS members played important roles in the May 1970 demonstrations. The disappearance of national leadership, however, did affect the chapter. During the fall 1970 term, the group determined that a reorganization was needed. UGa-SDS leaders decided the organization “would have no long range goals and that activities would be determined by the members ‘on the moment.’” The group also replaced the presidency with a five member council, arguing it would be more democratic and reduce the amount of harassment the president received as spokesman for the group. Most importantly, UGa-SDS sought to distance themselves from the radical remnants of national SDS. By 1970, the Weather Underground, the most violent group to emerge from the collapse of national SDS, had begun a bombing campaign against the federal government. UGa-SDS member Dan Eavenson made it clear that his organization “‘had no connection with any other political organization,’ including the Weatherman [sic].”<sup>14</sup>

While knowing what they were not, UGa-SDS had difficulty determining what they would become. The key problem became the group’s inability to develop a viable philosophy or agenda that could lead to long-term success. The group discussed the

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<sup>14</sup> *Veritas*, Oct. 1970; *The Red and Black*, 6 October 1970. The Weathermen, Weather Underground, and Weatherpeople were all variations of the name of the same group of ex-SDS radicals. For more on the group see Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 380-401; Sale, *SDS*, 579-657.



possibility of a “People’s Defense Fund,” a program that would provide bond money for students arrested for illegal offenses, as well as throwing its support behind the antiwar movement. Neither of these issues moved beyond the discussion phase. Hampered by their “spur of the moment” philosophy, the group revived its anti-ROTC campaign, a centerpiece of UGa-SDS activities since its inception. The campaign had garnered support among students when it had been focused on eliminating mandatory ROTC for all male Georgia residents during their freshman and sophomore years. This requirement no longer existed by 1970 and UGa-SDS had greater difficulty raising support for its revised demand that ROTC be banned completely from campus. In late October UGa-SDS reasserted its desire to “smash ROTC” on campus and planned to hold a rally on October 30.<sup>15</sup>

Far from generating support, the campaign created a backlash against the organization. Several students wrote letters to *The Red and Black* condemning the group. Campus police had to protect SDS member Lynn Baldschun from being attacked while handing out flyers for the October demonstration. Not surprisingly, then, the rally on October 30 was sparsely attended, despite a large slate of speakers, including Linda Jenness, the Socialist Workers Party’s gubernatorial candidate for Georgia. It had become clear that most leftist students no longer felt that UGa-SDS represented their interests. In January 1971, with twelve members remaining and lacking broader support in the student population, UGa-SDS voted itself out of existence. It was a quiet ending for the organization that created the New Left at UGa.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Red and Black*, 22 October 1970, 29 October 1970.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 October 1970, 3 November 1970, 21 January 1971; *Right On!*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (30 October 1970), 2; “Right On!”, Vol. 1 No. 3 (15 November 1970), 1. UGa-SDS, while going through several

The campaign to generate opposition to the Vietnam War among UGa students, an SDS creation, lived on, but just barely. Both on campus and nationally, despite the success of the 1969 national Moratorium campaign and the negative response to Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia in May, the antiwar movement across the nation was in decline by the fall of 1970.<sup>17</sup> The New MOBE had effectively died and no single group had risen to prominence in the national antiwar movement. At UGa, the New Left stayed in contact with the national antiwar movement, involving UGa in almost every nationwide antiwar event over the next several years, despite a declining interest in antiwar activity among the student body. The real accomplishment of the antiwar movement at UGa lay in the fact that, although composed of a variety of New Left groups that each had their own agendas, it managed to bring these groups together in cooperation and with a total absence of rivalry, something national antiwar groups found difficult to achieve.

UGa antiwar activists focused on two events during the 1971-72 academic year. The first occurred in October. The National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) called for antiwar demonstrations to occur throughout the nation on October 31. In Georgia, activists planned a major march in Atlanta and went about trying to recruit support. On October 5, Don Gurewtiz from the national Student Mobilization Committee (part of NPAC), in a talk sponsored by Phi Kappa, encouraged those in attendance who opposed

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transformations, existed for almost five years, a impressive lifespan given that the national organization lasted for nine years and many university chapters, even outside the South, had far shorter lifespans.

<sup>17</sup> Various reasons exist behind the decline of the antiwar movement. While the Nixon administration engaged in attempts to infiltrate and discredit the movement, a more significant problem was the splintering of antiwar leadership. By 1970 no one group led the movement and, more importantly, the organizations that did exist had difficulty cooperating with each other. Finally, Many Americans perceived the war as "winding down" and antiwar groups had difficulty finding support for their position of immediate withdraw from Vietnam. See Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors*, 129-157; Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 343-399; Tom Wells, *The War Within*, 461-558.

the war to participate in the Oct. 31 march. A week later Frank Grinnon of the Atlanta SMC visited campus in an attempt to encourage student participation in the march. The Georgia Moratorium Committee (a UGa New Left group) called for a boycott of the October 31 homecoming football game but decided against demonstrating, expressing concern that “the rowdiness of the spectators . . . would prohibit a peaceful protest.” The group instead decided to attend the Atlanta march. Across the nation, to the disappointment of NPAC, few turned out to march on October 31. In Atlanta, only two hundred people participated, sixty of them UGa students.<sup>18</sup>

The spring of 1971 saw a brief increase in antiwar activity, due in large part to Nixon’s successful attempts at orchestrating the invasion of Laos in February. Using U.S. equipment and support services but South Vietnamese military troops, Nixon turned the Vietnam War into a broader Southeast Asian conflict. Various antiwar groups planned national protests against the invasion during April and May. Local antiwar groups around the country also planned to participate in moratoriums on May 5 to remember the students killed a year earlier at Kent State and Jackson State University in Mississippi. In Athens, the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC - the new name for the Georgia Moratorium Committee) planned several events for May 4 and 5. The SMC steering committee, a group composed of members from various New Left groups, met with school officials in late April and convinced them that the event would be a “peaceful and dignified event,” alleviating possible concerns among the administration that the Moratorium would devolve into a spontaneous mass demonstration, as had happened the

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<sup>18</sup> *The Red and Black*, 6 October 1970, 13 October 1970, 22 October 1970, 17 November 1970; *Veritas*, November 1970; *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 November 1970, Tom Wells, *The War Within*, 462.

previous year at UGa, or into riots, as had happened at antiwar rallies in Washington, D.C. earlier that month.<sup>19</sup>

Events began on the evening on May 4, with a candlelight march. Approximately nine hundred marchers proceeded from the Myers Hall quadrangle to Old College. Afterwards, school ministers conducted a memorial service on the steps of the University Chapel. The following day several professors cancelled their regular morning classes and held antiwar-related seminars on such topics as “Non-violence as a Viable Alternative,” “the Logic of War and Peace,” and “The Origin of American Involvement in Vietnam.” A rally in the Reed-Memorial Hall quadrangle acted as the centerpiece of the day’s events and featured speakers from Atlanta antiwar groups. The Moratorium concluded that evening with a production of “the Cantonsville Nine,” a play written by antiwar activist Daniel Berrigan, and the annual Anti-military Ball, held despite the disbanding earlier that year of UGa-SDS, the event’s traditional sponsor. The turnout, particularly for the candlelight march, surprised organizers and caught them unprepared; having brought only two hundred candles to the march’s staging point. The event also rejuvenated the campus antiwar movement, at least temporarily, which appeared over the past several months to have suffered from a general apathy among the student population towards activism.<sup>20</sup>

Antiwar supporters received encouragement the following September when the War Resisters League (WRL) held its annual convention in Athens. Since its founding in 1923, the WRL “has been the most important secular, mixed-gender, radical pacifist

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<sup>19</sup> Inter-office Communication, Paul Dumas to Edward Kassinger, 28 April 1971, Davison Papers, Box 55.

<sup>20</sup> *The Red and Black*, 4 May 1971, 11 May 1971, 17 November, 1970, 19 November 1970, 11 February 1971.

organization in the United States.”<sup>21</sup> Inspired by the WRL’s visit, several UGa activists founded a campus chapter. Group spokesman David Rosinger stated that there existed on campus “the need for a nonpolitical group based on opposition to war and its causes and no other principle.”<sup>22</sup> Rosinger’s assessment of the campus antiwar movement was not far off the mark. While one variation or another of a student mobilization committee had existed on campus for several years, the group’s leadership invariably came from other campus political and New Left groups who considered antiwar activism a political issue and part of a larger agenda, such as UGa-SDS, SSOC, and the Young Democrats. The addition of the WRL to the campus New Left meant that a group now existed that took as its sole objective the end of the Vietnam War.

The antiwar movement also saw the addition to its ranks of a campus chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Initially founded in 1967, VVAW remained a small organization until the fall of 1969, when the Moratorium campaign focused national attention on antiwar activity and brought large numbers of converts to the antiwar cause, including veterans. In 1971, VVAW conducted its two most well known events. The Winter Soldier Investigation, held in January, tried to educate the public about U.S. military policies in Vietnam that encouraged the inhumane and potentially illegal treatment of Vietnamese noncombatants. In April, VVAW organized Dewey Canyon III in Washington, D.C., a week long series of demonstrations, meetings with government officials, and testimony before Congressional committees. The event produced some of the most memorable images of the Vietnam era when, on the final day

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<sup>21</sup> Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), xiii. It is unclear why the WRL decided to hold its annual convention at UGa, although the most likely explanation is that well known and long time pacifist Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin lived in nearby Watkinville.

<sup>22</sup> *The Red and Black*, 17 November 1971.

of the event, hundreds of veterans threw their military decorations and medals onto the steps of Congress.<sup>23</sup>

The UGa chapter, along with another in Atlanta, formed in the aftermath of Dewey Canyon III, a period of intense growth for the VVAW. Co-founder Chuck Searcy, a Vietnam veteran, had been a UGa student before enlisting in the army in the fall of 1966. The military trained him in intelligence and he spent a year in Saigon, editing reports about combat operations. Searcy's conservative family background influenced his politics. He supported Barry Goldwater for president in 1964 and was strongly anti-communist but his experience in Vietnam forced him to rethink his political beliefs. "The army showed me for the first time what Americans are like outside America," Searcy said, "the flagrant contempt we have for other people. We treated the Vietnamese the way blacks have been treated in the South for generations."<sup>24</sup>

Searcy and the other members of UGa-VVAW jumped quickly and enthusiastically into the campus antiwar movement. But, while UGa-VVAW participated in and helped plan many of the antiwar rallies during the 1971-1972 school year, it also focused on programs that educated people about the war, the plight of returning soldiers, and basic civic responsibility. On campus, UGa-VVAW would set up "Straight Scoop" tables in the vicinity of armed forces recruiting stations, providing an alternate view of military service. The group also participated in the October Atlanta Winter Soldier

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<sup>23</sup> For more on VVAW see Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Richard R. Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Gerald Nicosia, *Home to War: A History of the Vietnam Veterans' Movement* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001); Melvin Small and William D. Hoover, eds, *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 129-154.

<sup>24</sup> Meryl Nash, "How Luck, Pluck and a Truck Changed the face of Athens' Media: A Look at the Athens Observer," *Impressions* Vol. 9 No. 2 (Spring 1975), 51.

Investigation, part of a regional series of investigations based on the original held in Detroit earlier that year.

The veteran status of many of the group's members (membership was open to non-veterans) allowed them a certain respectability not afforded other campus New Left groups. UGa-VVAW took advantage of this attitude among the university community and spent the fall speaking to a variety of university and local organizations, including sororities, labor groups and churches. But, they still opposed the war, a position that caused local leaders and school officials to oppose the group's efforts on several occasions. Government officials in Athens refused to allow UGa-VVAW members to march in the town's Veteran's Day parade and university Athletic Director Joel Eaves refused to let the organization participate in the flag raising ceremony at the 1971 homecoming football game between Georgia and Auburn.<sup>25</sup>

During the spring of 1972 UGa-VVAW focused its attention on voter registration and various veterans' issues. Efforts at voter registration actually began the previous December, when UGa-VVAW members met with labor groups and community leaders in the Athens area about the best way to get a drive started. Meetings with the Athens Registrar of Voters, the County Commission and Judge James Barrow became somewhat contentious, though, since UGa-VVAW did not try to hide the fact that part of the goal behind the drive was to encourage young adults and students to vote in the hope that they would contribute to Nixon's defeat in the November presidential election.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Vietnam Veterans Against the War, University of Georgia chapter, "Newsletter," 1 November 1971, January 1972; *The Red and Black*, 15 October 1971, 11 November 1971; *The Great Speckled Bird*, 1 November 1971.

<sup>26</sup> *The Red and Black*, 5 January 1972; VVAW, UGA chapter, "Newsletter," January 1972.

VVAW also became involved in fighting for veterans rights. Several UGa-VVAW members visited the Atlanta Veteran's Administration (VA) hospital to investigate facility conditions and the care patients received. While they praised the quality of treatment veterans received (something that could not be said about many VA hospitals in the early 1970s), the UGa-VVAW took issue with the complicated and time consuming administrative processes, noting that it took the hospital a day and a half to admit one injured GI. UGa-VVAW also fought to improve the educational benefits Georgia veterans received, pushing for tuition payments to be deferred until after GIs received their first educational benefits check each semester. UGa-VVAW members spent the first six months of 1972 researching a bill that would call for an increase in educational benefits, which they hoped to eventually present to the Georgia Assembly.<sup>27</sup>

Starting in November 1971, the UGa-VVAW chapter began playing an increasingly larger role within the national organization. During that month four members of the UGa-VVAW--Tom Hill, Jim Lanzer, Chuck Searcy, and David Alonzo--attended the VVAW National Coordinators Conference in Kansas City, Kansas. During the meeting they submitted a proposal calling for a VVAW delegation to travel to Hanoi with the purpose of making contact with American prisoners of war and bringing information about the captives back home to their families. The proposal "was adopted as national priority by VVAW."<sup>28</sup> In January 1972, the national office approved Jim Lanzer as VVAW state coordinator and shifted the decision-making process regarding VVAW actions in Georgia over to the Athens chapter. This shift proved necessary since the Atlanta VVAW chapter had disbanded after it became known that a veteran involved

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<sup>27</sup> *The Red and Black*, 21 June 1972; VVAW, UGa chapter, "Newsletter," January 1972.

<sup>28</sup> VVAW, UGa chapter, "Newsletter," January 1972.



in the creation of the group, Bill Lemmer, had been an FBI informant. By June, Chuck Searcy had assumed the duties of regional coordinator, responsible for chapters in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama.<sup>29</sup>

The added presence of the WRL and UGa-VVAW to the campus antiwar movement did little to alter the steady decline in interest towards the war among the student population. In October antiwar groups conducted events in conjunction with a national Moratorium but few students showed much interest and the best that an activist could say about the event was that it “made people aware that there’s still a war going on.”<sup>30</sup> The UGa SMC and other antiwar groups also tried to recruit up to three hundred students to participate in a national “Peace Day” march in Atlanta but only sixty turned out for the event.<sup>31</sup>

By the spring of 1972 the antiwar movement on campus had, in any real sense, ceased to exist. The national SMC planned demonstrations in April in response to Nixon’s February decision to conduct two days of concentrated air strikes over southern North Vietnam but, despite a campus visit from Fred Lovgren, national coordinator of SMC, few seemed interested in attending the Washington, D.C. rally. By April, *The Red and Black* could report that “the University does not have a functioning SMC.” The reports of the group’s death inspired its members to reform and plan a rally for April 21. That same day across the nation over one hundred and fifty campuses participated in the student strike. At UGa, however, no antiwar groups advocated for the strike. Instead, the SMC and several other New Left groups organized a picket of Congressman Robert

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<sup>29</sup> VVAW, UGa chapter, “Newsletter,” January 1972; *The Great Speckled Bird*, 11 October 1972; *The Red and Black*, 21 June 1972; Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning*, 147-153.

<sup>30</sup> *The Red and Black*, 14 October 1971.

<sup>31</sup> *The Red and Black*, 9 November 1971.

Stephens' district office in Athens, who was an ardent supporter of the Vietnam War. The picket generated little interest among students.<sup>32</sup>

On May 8, Nixon announced a renewed bombing campaign against North Vietnamese cities, including Hanoi, and the mining of Haiphong's harbor. The announcement resulted in antiwar demonstrations across the nation. In Georgia, several colleges and universities planned protests. At UGa, activists organized what would become the last sizable antiwar demonstration of the Vietnam era on campus. On May 11, three hundred protesters chanted antiwar slogans and listened to several speakers, including history professor Charles Crowe, rail against the war and Nixon. Although several demonstrations in other parts of the country turned violent, UGa's remained peaceful and orderly.<sup>33</sup>

Antiwar activity at UGa failed to resume during the fall of 1972, the result of the war's de-escalation. On August 12, the White House announced that the last ground combat troops had left Vietnam. Throughout the fall Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese representatives had been meeting in Paris, trying to come to terms on a peace agreement that both sides could accept. Finally, on January 23, 1973, North Vietnam and the U.S signed the Paris peace agreement, ending American involvement in Vietnam.

A postscript of sorts to the Vietnam era occurred at UGa on November 11, 1973 when the Indochina Peace Campaign (IPC) visited campus. Originally organized in 1972 by a group of activists dedicated to ending direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam, by fall 1973 it focused on eliminating all U.S. support to South Vietnam and ending the fighting between North and South Vietnam. Headed by Tom Hayden and his wife, actress Jane

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<sup>32</sup> *The Red and Black*, 14 April 1972, 7 April 1972, 21 April 1972, 25 April 1972.

<sup>33</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 11 May 1972, 12 May 1972.

Fonda, the IPC presented an evening of talks regarding the situation in Vietnam. The highlight of the event, however, came when Fonda approached the podium and the atmosphere inside the auditorium became “electric.” While many in the crowd of one thousand may have been more interested in seeing a film star in person than in discussing geopolitics, Hayden did note that “the crowd at UGA was one of the most enthusiastic that they had seen on the entire tour.”<sup>34</sup>

The end of the Vietnam War did not create a large hole in the UGa New Left. The SMC had always been a coalition of other leftist groups with agendas beyond ending the war. While this wasn’t the case for VVAW and the WRL, both of which disbanded soon after the peace was announced, most of the other groups simply continued onward, fighting for a new set of issues, centered mainly on gender and sexual orientation. But, as in the 1960s, the campus Right opposed these issues with the same amount of energy that the New Left put into them.

In October, 1970 UGa-YAF burned its charter and changed its name to the Campus Conservative Club (CCC). According to Steve Barnes, a member of the new group, several factors influenced the decision to sever the connection with the national YAF. “There is too much national level power,” Barnes stated, “They wield this power without regard to the local chapter.”<sup>35</sup> By 1970, YAF’s national leadership had acquired a reputation for authoritarian behavior. At the 1969 national convention, the group had expelled its libertarian members and over the next year shored up power in the national

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<sup>34</sup> *The Great Speckled Bird*, 26 November 1973; Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988), 448-466.

<sup>35</sup> *The Red and Black*, 15 October 1970.

office in an effort to create organizational unity, a move they felt necessary if the group hoped to confront effectively the New Left.<sup>36</sup>

The position, however, ignored regional political realities and the nature of conservatism in the South. At UGa, YAF members felt constrained by the national office dictating which candidates the group could support. Southern conservatives held little allegiance to the Republican Party, a relative newcomer to the Southern political scene, and often preferred to support candidates that, regardless of party affiliation, reflected Southern values, such as George Wallace during his 1968 presidential bid. Barnes noted that the national YAF disliked local chapters acting autonomously and stated that, “one of the bases of conservatism is the worth of the individual [and] it seems that the national board is denying individual worth by not allowing local autonomy.”<sup>37</sup>

The break with YAF also reflected darker motives. Sam Dickson, a member of UGA-YAF since its inception and by 1970 a law student at UGa, played a key role in the creation of the CCC. For Dickson, the break occurred not only because of the national office’s authoritarian style but because it did not embrace real conservative principles. For Dickson, YAF “was as intolerant of real rightist opinions about race and racial mixing as the Communist Party.” Dickson also believed that it was a mistake for the United States to become involved in Vietnam, a sentiment, “most of us in the right-wing at UGa felt.” Forced for years to “dissimulate” their racist and isolationist views because they felt they needed “YAF as a vehicle,” campus conservatives finally had enough by the fall of 1970 and broke with the organization.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 134-141.

<sup>37</sup> *The Red and Black*, 15 October 1970.

<sup>38</sup> Sam Dickson, interviewed by author, 7 September 2005.

The CCC adopted several positions that reflected traditional conservative thought. They were staunchly anti-communist and spoke out against “internationalism” by opposing the United Nations. The group also favored a smaller federal government and changes to the nation’s monetary policy and tax system. In a carry over from the YAF days, the CCC continued to actively speak out against the campus New Left.<sup>39</sup> The group created real controversy, however, when it began publishing racist articles. In the November 15, 1970 issue of its newsletter “Right On!” the CCC questioned noted sociologist Gunnar Myrdal’s stance on the equality of the races. Myrdal had recently been quoted in the *Atlanta Constitution* as stating that those who still believed in the inferiority of blacks showed themselves to be “uneducated men.” The CCC questioned Myrdal’s assertion that equality had been scientifically proven and listed several social scientists who supported the belief in inequality, including William Shockley and Carlton Coon.<sup>40</sup>

The CCC’s support of racist ideology, hidden behind a thin veil of support for “objectivity in the social sciences,” generated a strong backlash against the group. While, not surprisingly, the campus New Left and several individuals from the student body quickly condemned the group’s racist rhetoric, an even stronger opposition came from the moderate conservatives on campus. The CCC did not reflect the views of all active campus conservatives and several, instead of joining the group, formed the core of a new campus YAF chapter, one that practiced a more moderate form of conservatism. These conservatives condemned the CCC’s racist position, claiming that “the views expressed in ‘Right On!’ can hardly be called those of a responsible conservative. They are tainted

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<sup>39</sup> “Right On!”, Vol I No. 1 (16 October 1970); Vol. I No. 2 (30 October 1970), Vol. I No. 3 (15 November 1970); Vol. IV No. 1 (19 October 1971).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, No. 3 (15 November 1970).

with racism and all other symptoms generally associated with super-right-wing paranoia.” Richard Meno, a member of the new YAF chapter, said that the CCC should instead be called the YRR – Youth for Reaction and Racism.<sup>41</sup>

The controversy lasted for several months, continuing into February 1971. The CCC tried several tactics to defend its position. It first claimed that the controversy was simply a creation of liberal media bias since the *The Red and Black* was clearly controlled by the campus Left, a tactic thwarted by the new YAF’s opposition to the CCC. The group then tried to downplay its racist stance, stating that “many members of the Campus Conservative Club do not believe in inequality,” and that the club “has no official position on the subject.” Far from being racist, the group was simply trying to keep the issue alive “for the sake of academic freedom and inquiry.”<sup>42</sup> The controversy died down during the winter term, despite the CCC ultimately maintaining its racist position. In a May 1971 “Right On!” article decrying the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold desegregation through busing, the CCC noted that desegregation efforts led to the physical endangerment of white, but not black, children. In the winter of 1972, CCC co-founder Martin O’Toole publicly admitted being a racist, stating that he believed in racial inequality “because of both scientific-historic reasons and a ‘gut feeling.’”<sup>43</sup>

Concerns regarding racism from within the campus conservative movement and among UGa’s New Left community diminished during the early 1970s as a fundamental change in the nature and philosophy of conservatism emerged on campus, presenting new challenges to the campus Left. Campus conservatives began addressing what they saw as a whole new set of social problems. While the fight against communism continued, a far

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<sup>41</sup> *The Red and Black*, 24 November 1970, 26 January 1971, 9 February 1971, 18 February 1971.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1971, 28 January 1971; “Right On!”, Vol. 11 No. 2 (3 February 1971), 1.

<sup>43</sup> “Right On!”, Vol. III No. 1 (1 May 1971), 1; *Impressions*, Vol. VI No. 2 (Winter 1972), 8.

greater amount of effort was put into combating the increasingly liberal nature of American society. This concern mirrored a shift in conservative activism across the nation. As historian Lisa McGirr has noted, “the center of grassroots activity moved away from the anticommunist study groups . . . of the early 1960s and towards new single-issue campaigns. As a result, various forms of ‘domestic corruption’ became the new targets of attack”<sup>44</sup> Of specific concern were abortion, women’s liberation and, especially at UGa, gay liberation. Dickson noted that, oddly enough, campus conservatives came to agree with “Marxist thinkers” that “culture controlled politics and not vice versa.”<sup>45</sup>

The campus right spoke out against these issues during the fall of 1971. In an issue of its newsletter, the CCC called for an end to support for abortion, two years before the Supreme Court essentially legalized the procedure in the *Roe v. Wade* decision. “Abortion is one of those subjects which the establishment liberals have surrounded with an air of intolerance,” stated an article on the subject. “Our journalists and professors dutifully attend to their assigned task of convincing the people that it is ‘chic’, and ‘in’, ‘progressive,’ or ‘tolerant’ to be for abortion. Nevertheless, the moral question remains

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<sup>44</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 217, 226. One of the most recent trends in 1960s historiography has been an exploration of the development of modern conservatism, which many see as coming to fruition with the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980. Particular attention has been placed on finding the roots of modern conservatism in the 1960s, a quest which has enhanced greatly our understanding of the period and how the Left and Right both interacted and, more often, clashed. In addition to McGirr see Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995); Jonathan M. Scoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Tom Wicker, “Lyndon Johnson and the Roots of Contemporary Conservatism,” in Alexander Bloom, ed. *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 99-121; David Farber and Jeff Roche, eds., *The Conservative Sixties* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003). For an interesting discussion of how conservatism has been addressed in American historiography see “The Problem of American Conservatism,” AHR Forum, *The American Historical Review* Vol. 99 (April 1994), 409-452.

<sup>45</sup> Sam Dickson, interviewed by author, 7 September 2005.

unanswered. When is the extinction of human life murder?”<sup>46</sup> The CCC also lobbed criticism at the newly formed Committee on Gay Education, stating that, “Now that homosexuals are fluttering around UGa with their gay lib movement . . . why doesn’t the University go really avant-garde? What about Necrophilia Lib?” Along with these new concerns, the CCC continued its position of racial intolerance by accusing the University Housing Office of making it difficult for white students “who do not desire the pleasure of rooming with a Black” to change room assignments.<sup>47</sup>

By the early 1970s, a small but vocal women’s liberation group had organized on UGa’s campus. Growing out of the campus’s New Left community, W.O.M.E.N. (Women’s Oppression Must End Now), reflected the larger national movement for female liberation. The roots of the modern women’s rights movement, or second-wave feminism, were located in two distinct groups of American women. NOW (the National Organization of Women) represented the first group. Organized in 1966, the group’s agenda centered on achieving equality in the workplace, universities and other social institutions. This brand of liberal feminism attracted mostly middle class and older women who, though they may have supported or sympathized with many of the youth-oriented social and political movements of the sixties, had little real connection with these movements.

The second, more radical group of women had been actively involved the Civil Rights and New Left movements and had come to the conclusion, based on their experiences in these organizations, that women represented an oppressed minority in America, much like the poor and African-Americans. The earliest stirrings of radical

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<sup>46</sup> “Right On!”, Vol. 4 No. 1 (19 October 1971), 1.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*



feminism occurred in 1965 with the publication of “Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo,” by Mary King and Casey Hayden, both members of SNCC. The memo chastised the men of SNCC for either ignoring women in the organization or relegating them to supporting roles. The memo had little immediate impact, however, and it wasn’t until the late 1960s that women in the New Left began to create organizations that addressed their concerns. Like King and Hayden, these women grew disgruntled by the role they had been given in male-dominated organizations such as SDS and the numerous antiwar groups. They considered it hypocritical that men who fought so earnestly for the liberation of oppressed groups around the world and who subscribed to revolutionary philosophies could still force women into traditional gender roles, where their contribution to the cause meant minding the children and making the coffee. Unlike the women of NOW, who believed that American society needed to make some adjustments in how it dealt with women, radical feminists believed that society had to be fundamentally remade in order to end women’s oppression.<sup>48</sup> But, while W.O.M.E.N. often followed some of the tenets of radical feminism and supported the major causes of the women’s movement during the first half of the 1970s, the group usually shied away from embracing the more radical ideologies and actions exhibited by groups in New York

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<sup>48</sup> The historiography of 1970s social movements is still largely in its infancy. Like the first wave of 1960s historiography, most works of note have been written by participants. For two of the best examples see Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Random House, 1980); and Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 2000). The experiences of women in the New Left were varied and are often hard to generalize. Recent works have detailed that not all women who later joined women’s liberation groups had negative experiences in the New Left and that when and where they joined New Left groups had a large impact on what they encountered. See Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Gregg Michel, *Struggle for a Better South*, 168-179; and Constance Curry, et al. *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2000). Second wave feminism, particularly the radical feminist portion, lacked a unified philosophy, which often kept the various groups from developing a sense of cooperation and common purpose. For an excellent study of this discontinuity and radical feminism in general, see Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

and on the West Coast. Throughout its existence, the group would insist it was not, “a radical, ‘bra-burning’ movement but consist[ed] of sincere, concerned people who happen to be born women.”<sup>49</sup>

During the 1960s it seemed that women’s issues often existed at the periphery of campus activism at UGa without ever emerging as a primary concern for activists. Even the 1968 sit-in for co-ed rights at the Academic Building failed to reflect a true concern for women’s liberation, as several have argued.<sup>50</sup> While the sit-in hoped to achieve changes in the rules that governed coed behavior, the rhetoric emanating from the movement’s leaders spoke more to New Left concerns as they existed on campus at that time, namely, ending the university’s *in loco parentis* policies and bringing campus regulations in line with federal and state laws. In other words, the goal was not equality for women as an end in itself (the purpose of the women’s liberation movement), but forcing the university to address students as adults and equal members of the university community and society.

Discussions regarding women within a feminist context occurred several times in the years between the 1968 sit-in and the formation of W.O.M.E.N. in 1971. A small group of female students met to discuss women’s liberation in March 1969 and a year later in February 1970 the women’s organizations on campus jointly sponsored a “Women’s Week.” Concern over admissions policies emerged in September 1970 when a report was published revealing that female applicants need higher high school GPAs and SAT scores than males to gain admission to the university.<sup>51</sup> But radical feminist

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<sup>49</sup> *Veritas*, #1 (October 1970).

<sup>50</sup> See Pat Nelson, interviewed by author, 9 March 2004; Gregg Michel, *Struggle For a Better South*, 178-79.

<sup>51</sup> *The Red and Black*, 24 September 1970.

rhetoric remained largely unheard, notwithstanding the occasional mention in the local alternative press. In October 1970, an article in the first edition of the short-lived New Left newspaper *Veritas* proclaimed that “it is an established fact at the University that coeds are thought of as sex objects . . . intelligence is not considered as a qualification for a good date,” and that “women’s lib is not a joke. It is by no means meant to deprive women of their femininity, but to give them their deserved freedom.”<sup>52</sup>

Five female students formed W.O.M.E.N. in the spring of 1971, roughly a year after the women’s movement had erupted and feminist groups had begun forming across the nation. Like many activists in women’s liberation groups, several of the founders had been involved in, and disgruntled by, the campus New Left before forming W.O.M.E.N. “I started out in the peace movement,” group member Linda Chafin recalled “it just riled me the way the men acted toward women, even though we had the same concerns.” The women expressed concern that, despite forthcoming recruiting efforts, the group would remain small. “I don’t believe that women’s interests [on campus] are that much into it,” said group vice-president Vicki Webb. The timing of the groups founding did not help, either. Formed at the end of the academic year when students’ minds were on final exams and summer break, the group would have to wait until the fall semester to gain any momentum.<sup>53</sup>

In October 1971, the group adopted a two-prong approach at educating campus women and fighting for their rights. “Consciousness-raising” acted as the main focus of the group’s educational efforts. A key component of many radical feminist groups, consciousness-raising allowed members to talk about their experiences as women and to

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<sup>52</sup> *Veritas*, #1 (October 1970).

<sup>53</sup> *The Red and Black*, 4 May 1972; 25 May 1971.

help them come to an understanding of their female identity. As Chafin noted, “Women have no real concept of what womanhood is. No one really knows her as a human being outside of a social/sexual context. That’s what the consciousness-raising sessions are all about.”<sup>54</sup> The ultimate goal of consciousness-raising was not the personal betterment of the individual, however, but to “awaken the latent consciousness that . . . all women have about [their] oppression,” and to spur them into political activism.<sup>55</sup>

The second component of W.O.M.E.N.’s agenda focused on attempts to alter the social and political landscape, the root cause of their oppression. The group first became involved in the campaign to liberalize abortion laws. Several members worked with various pro-abortion groups in Atlanta and even traveled to Washington, D. C. for the November 1971 national march for the legalization of abortion. On campus, the organization protested the yearly bridal fair in March of 1972 and, maintaining ties with the New Left from which they emerged, co-sponsored the November 1971 Peace Action Day and the April 1972 Moratorium.

By the spring of 1972 W.O.M.E.N. had experienced some success in its efforts at consciousness-raising. Not only had a consistent number of women been attending the sessions but the group witnessed an increase in its numbers.<sup>56</sup> In April, the group decided it needed a “reorganization.” Chafin and the other members voted to “turn outward” and embrace a new “action orientation.” The proposal for the new approach stated that, “we will fight against every manifestation of our oppression utilizing every tactic available to us as a women’s liberation group.”<sup>57</sup> The group quickly embraced the new approach,

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<sup>54</sup> *The Red and Black*, 4 May 1972.

<sup>55</sup> Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 83.

<sup>56</sup> Linda Chafin, interviewed by author, 22 July 2005.

<sup>57</sup> *The Red and Black*, 4 April 1972.

participating in the Atlanta march during Abortion Action Week, a campaign sponsored by the Women's National Abortion coalition. In the days before the march the group was active on campus, distributing pro-abortion material and organizing panel discussions on abortion and birth control.

Of equal importance to the group's new move toward action was the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment by Congress in March 1972. A remnant from the first wave of feminism during the early twentieth century, the ERA had been introduced into, and failed to pass, every Congress since 1923. But, in 1970, the House of Representatives passed the measure with a large margin and the Senate followed two years later. The issue didn't generate a great deal of activity at the local level, however, until January 1973 when the Georgia legislature began debating passage of the amendment.

The main cause for this lack of activity regarding the ERA lay in the fact that, besides the abortion campaign, W.O.M.E.N. spent the fall of 1972 planning a Women's Symposium, a week long event scheduled for November 12-16. The symposium sought to direct attention to women and their activities. "This symposium and the effect it has on people is serious," stated Betsy Bean, the event organizer. "I want people to feel the power of women. We're doing things; we're moving." The schedule of events reflected the varied interests of activists involved in women's liberation. An art show highlighting women artists kicked off the symposium. Several discussions focused on women in the workplace and a self-defense demonstration was given by a UGa Physical Education class. A panel entitled "Concepts of Sisterhood" presented a discussion between members of W.O.M.E.N. and the Phi Mu sorority based on the question, "Are we

stereotyping each other and thus hurting our chances for strength through cooperation?”

The ERA was not totally ignored. A panel on November 16 discussed possible implications of the amendment’s passage and asked if the ERA was really necessary.<sup>58</sup> W.O.M.E.N. was pleased by the turnout and several members noted the significant number of women who became interested in women’s liberation for the first time after attending the event.<sup>59</sup>

Coming off the success of the symposium, the members of W.O.M.E.N. entered the struggle to get the ERA passed by the Georgia legislature. Several events bolstered their optimism, creating a feeling the amendment could be approved in Georgia.<sup>60</sup> In January 1973, the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, legalizing abortion. Many of the members of W.O.M.E.N. had fought for the legalization of abortion, and the decision not only generated feelings of success within the group but allowed them to focus attention solely on the ERA debate. Also, the amendment had encountered a great deal of success since its passage by Congress. Within the first year, twenty-two of the required thirty-eight states approved the amendment. On campus, supporters of the amendment, both male and female, wrote editorials to the student newspaper supporting the ERA and initiated petition drives in an attempt to generate support among the student body.

When debate began in February, however, it became clear that there existed a growing opposition to the ERA. In statements before the Georgia House Special Judiciary Committee, a steady stream of anti-ERA witnesses voiced their opposition to the amendment. One witness testified that, “the amendment is a satanic move toward

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<sup>58</sup> *The Red and Black*, 9 November 1972.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1972.

<sup>60</sup> Linda Chafin, interviewed by author, 22 July 2005.

communism,” while Mrs. W.W. Chichester stated the ERA “could lead to homosexual marriages.” Phyllis Schafley, who during the previous year had become a national leader in the fight to defeat the amendment, spoke about how passage of the ERA would subject women to the draft.<sup>61</sup>

Back on campus, a debate over the amendment erupted in the pages of *The Red and Black* after Phil Kent, a leader in the conservative student political party Union of American People (UAP), wrote an article entitled, “Women don’t want ERA.” A stream of letters over the next week, from both men and women, called Kent to task for his misrepresentation of the amendment’s effects on American society.<sup>62</sup> The ERA debate became largely dormant, however, when the amendment’s sponsor, representative Andy Roach, kept the ERA from leaving committee.

The amendment was scheduled for a vote during the legislative session that started in January 1974 and ERA advocates at UGa once again attempted to generate support for the measure. The Demosthenian Society and W.O.M.E.N. co-sponsored a debate on the ERA on January 10. Phil Kent and Martin O’Toole, another leader of the UAP, spoke against the amendment while the pro-ERA side was represented by Linda Chafin, Martha Gaines, the state coordinator of NOW, and Debby Bustin, a former mayoral candidate in Atlanta. The minutes of Demosthenian Society labeled the three women, “some socialist Marxist lesbians.”<sup>63</sup> On January 12, over one hundred students and Athens residents traveled to Atlanta for a march and rally in support of the ERA. The rally failed to change the minds of the majority of House members, however, and on

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<sup>61</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*, 8 February 1973.

<sup>62</sup> *The Red and Black*, 6 February 1973, 8 February 1973, 13 February 1973, 15 February 1973,

<sup>63</sup> *The Red and Black*, 8 January 1974; *The Athens Observer*, 10 January 1974; Demosthenian Society minutes, 10 January 1974.

January 28 the ERA was voted down by a 104-72 vote. The following February, the Georgia Senate also voted against the amendment, ending the issue in Georgia.

During the three year fight for the passage of the ERA, W.O.M.E.N. undertook several other projects that reflected concerns within the national women's movement. Disagreement over funding for women's athletic programs and the lack of courses for and about women bubbled to the surface between 1972 and 1975 and while W.O.M.E.N. would occasionally win concessions from the university, the more important issue proved to be the tactics the group employed. More and more, W.O.M.E.N. began looking to student government as a means of achieving its goals. The campus New Left had, almost since its inception, consistently disparaged student politics as ineffective or too liberal. With the direct confrontational tactics of the late 1960s falling out of style, New Leftists on UGa's campus re-entered student politics, seeing it as a viable and legitimate avenue towards achieving change. Susan Fansler, a member of W.O.M.E.N. and a student government officer in 1974, best expressed the New Left's return to "the system." "The open protest days are gone . . . and we have to work within the system. Working through the system is very frustrating; its like constantly pounding your head against a wall, but finally things give way." Fansler felt that, although student government used to be strictly a social organization, it had begun "accomplishing a great deal."<sup>64</sup> Chafin noted that student politics became the forum in which activists made contact with each other as other New Left groups became involved in mainstream campus politics.<sup>65</sup> Conservative student groups also considered it the new arena for its battles with the New Left, as did

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<sup>64</sup> *The Athens Observer*, 28 March 1974.

<sup>65</sup> Linda Chfin, interviewed by author, 22 July 2005.



members of UGa's gay liberation organization, The Committee for Gay Education (CGE).

The CGE organized in November 1971 and occupied an interesting position within the national gay liberation movement. While certainly not as conservative in its call for the equal treatment of homosexuals as the homophile movement of the fifties and early sixties, it also never adopted the social and political radicalism of gay liberation groups in Atlanta and other northern cities. While this certainly fit with the position that other New left groups at UGa took—shying away from extremes in order to win converts and victories from a largely conservative community—it should also be noted that, unlike members of the women's movement, members of the CGE had never been enthusiastically involved in the New Left, leading to an unfamiliarity with movement politics and strategies among gay activists.<sup>66</sup> And unlike the members of the campus women's movement or earlier New Left groups who moved fluidly between the various campus leftist organizations, the members of CGE focused almost exclusively on their own agenda.

These isolationist tactics can also be attributed to the negative and hostile attitude many in the New Left had towards homosexuals. In his work on the Venceremos

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<sup>66</sup> While there has been a growing historiography of gays and lesbians, very little has been written regarding where and how gay liberation fits within the New Left as a whole or, equally important, how the New Left approached homosexuality or how gay and lesbian members of the New Left felt about their experience within the New Left, which generally reviled homosexuality despite its constant call for equal rights for all humans. Several works, however, have explored this common ground shared by New Left and queer history. See Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 175-190; Saralyn Chesnut and Amanda C. Gable, "'Women Ran It': Charis Books and More and Atlanta's Lesbian-Feminist Community, 1971-1981," in John Howard, ed., *Carryin' On in the Gay and Lesbian South* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1970* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 223-239; Ian Lekus, "Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba," *Radical History Review* 89 (Spring 2004), 57-91; Robert McRuer, "Gay Gatherings: Reimagining the Counterculture," in Peter Braunstien and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation; Marc Stein, City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 315-340.

Brigades (trips taken during the late sixties and early seventies by New Leftists who wished to contribute to the revolution by working in the sugarcane fields of Cuba), historian Ian Lekus discusses how “the antigay vitriol and violence of some heterosexual *brigadistas* (Brigade participants),” led to a situation where homosexuals had to accept a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy if they wished to participate in the trips to Cuba.<sup>67</sup>

Closer to home, gays in the Atlanta New Left often had to deal with the homophobia of activists and liberals. In a June 1971 review of Yippie activist Jerry Rubin’s book *Do It, Great Speckled Bird* columnist Steve Abbott asked, in response to Rubin’s homophobic writings, “where is the public defense from my straight-identified sisters and brothers on the left? Would you be as passive if Blacks or women were attacked as ‘social pathological deviant?’” Atlanta journalist Tom Crawford wrote in July of the same year how, when assigned to cover a Gay Liberation Front press conference, his colleagues, “so-called liberals . . . who would sternly protest racism or discrimination against chicanos [sic] and other minorities, dragged out every old closet queen joke they could think of. . . .”<sup>68</sup>

The animosity towards gay activists occurred largely along gendered lines. In other words, straight men insulted and antagonized gay men. This was due to the fact that lesbians largely failed to join gay liberation organizations. Lesbians, despite the birth of gay liberation in 1969, believed that their interests were still best served by working within the women’s movement. In larger cities, lesbians would often form their

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<sup>67</sup> Ian Lekus, “Queer Harvests,” 58.

<sup>68</sup> *Great Speckled Bird*, 28 June 1971; *The Red and Black*, 14 July 1971.

own organizations, such as the Atlanta Lesbian-Feminist Alliance, but would generally avoid the male-dominated gay liberation groups.<sup>69</sup>

By January 1972, the CGE had ratified its constitution, a necessary step in order to be recognized as an official student organization by the university, and had elected officers. Group founders Bill Green and John Hoard served as executive director and director, respectively, while Kitty Richter, one of the few female members, filled the second director's position. Surprisingly, the group claimed forty to fifty members within two months of its inception, a rare feat for a New Left group at UGa. The group made plans to apply for official recognition by February and announced it would host a dance on campus on March 10.

The dance, billed as "the first public gay function in the Southeast," met resistance from university administrators within days its announcement.<sup>70</sup> On February 28, John Cox, the Director of Student Activities, cancelled the dance. Cox argued that the CGE could not use university facilities because it had not yet submitted its application for recognition as an official student organization. The CGE protested the decision and Cox referred the group to Dean of Student Affairs O. Suthern Sims, who explained that the real issue was not a question of the group's status as a student organization but the more serious question of whether or not the university would be breaking Georgia state law by allowing the dance. Sims cited section 26.801 of the Georgia criminal code, which made it illegal to aid, abet, condone or solicit the practice of sodomy. Sims went on to state that "the only place the issue . . . can be settled is in court." Oddly, Sims and

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<sup>69</sup> The relationships between gay liberation and lesbian groups, and between straight women and lesbians in women's organizations has been explored in several works. See John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics Sexual Communities*, 236-237; Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 203-241; and Marc Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves*.

<sup>70</sup> *The Red and Black*, 24 February 1972.

several other administrators advised the students to go to court and seek a temporary injunction to keep the university from halting the dance.<sup>71</sup> UGa administrators did not wish to be seen as supporting homosexuality in any way and in a moment of candor Sims said as much. “At issue is not the dance itself, but the publicity surrounding it,” Sims admitted. “This issue is hot politically . . . I don’t think the University can be a true institutor of social change without reprisal.”<sup>72</sup>

The CGE took Sims’ advice and began the process of seeking a restraining order against UGa. Enlisting the help of the ACLU, the CGE went to court just days before the dance was to take place. Judge James Barrow, who had ruled against student demonstrators during the 1968 sit-in, presided over the hearing and this time, after hearing testimony from Sims and Cox, sided with the students and signed the order lifting the university’s ban on the dance.

As originally scheduled, gays and lesbians from the university, Athens, and Atlanta gathered in Memorial Hall on March 10. Over four hundred people attended, although some of these were heterosexual spectators. Two rock and roll bands played and the highlight of the evening occurred when well-known Atlanta drag queen Diamond Lil took the stage to “thunderous applause” and lip-synched three songs. The CGE was pleased with the dance and several of the heterosexual students in attendance stated that

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<sup>71</sup> *The Red and Black*, 29 February 1972. While it may seem odd that the university would encourage the students to seek a restraining order, it makes sense if the administrators wished to pass the final decision regarding the issue into the court system. In a similar case at the University of Kansas, administrators who banned a gay liberation group from campus, citing state sodomy laws, knew their position was legally untenable but encouraged the gay lib group to file suit against the university. Employing this tactic meant that when the court ruled against the ban, administrators could tell homophobic and potentially hostile parents, alumni, and state legislators that attempts had been made to keep gays off campus, but activist judges ruled against them. See Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 175-190.

<sup>72</sup> *The Red and Black*, 2 March 1972.

they had no problem with the event.<sup>73</sup> The CGE danced proved to be the catalyst for other gay liberation groups to form on Georgia campuses. By May 1972 groups had formed at Georgia State University in Atlanta and West Georgia College in Carrollton. Phil Lambert of the GSU Gay Liberation Front stated that, “the dance kicked off the big thing on the campuses.”<sup>74</sup> That summer, Bill Green traveled to Atlanta as a speaker at Gay Pride Week.

The restraining order issued by Judge Barrow had run out by the fall 1972 semester and, when the CGE made a request to hold another dance in November, administrators again attempted to ban the event. Before returning to court the CGE requested that the Board of Regents rule on the issue, but when they upheld the decision of university administrators, the CGE filed suit in Northern Georgia Federal District Court, claiming the ban infringed upon the group’s constitutional rights of freedom of speech and assembly. On November 9, two days before the scheduled dance, U.S. District Court Judge Sidney Smith issued a temporary restraining order lifting the ban and indicated he would deliver a final decision in a few weeks. In a decision issued in late December, Judge Smith ruled in favor of the CGE but did state that the university could deny the use of facilities under a few, well-defined conditions.<sup>75</sup>

The November dance was part of a larger two-day conference of gay activists that the CGE had organized. Representing almost every state in the South and places as far away as Detroit, the conference hoped to draw up a constitution for a “south wide organization of gays.” While the conference did lay the foundation for the Southeastern Gay Coalition, it also brought to the surface tensions between the radical approach of

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<sup>73</sup> *The Red and Black*, 22 March 1972.

<sup>74</sup> *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 28 May 1972.

<sup>75</sup> *Athens Daily News*, 11 November 1972; *The Red and Black*, 10 January 1973.

some gay liberationists and the more moderate approach of the CGE. At one point during the conference, the radical gay liberationist contingent from Atlanta walked out, upset by the fact that some at the conference still possessed a “pro-capitalist ideology” instead of a socialist one. A *Great Speckled Bird* article about the conference complained that too many at the event, especially the CGE organizers, possessed a “white middle class consciousness” and didn’t understand that “the system needs to be changed radically, to become socialist” before homosexuals could ever be truly liberated. CGE member Jodie O’Connell responded vehemently, labeling the critique a product of a “warmed-over radical” and warning that *The Bird* shouldn’t allow itself to be used “as a whetstone by someone with a very dull axe to grind.”<sup>76</sup>

The CGE, instead of being baited into a more radical position, continued its attempts at educating the UGa population about homosexuality, hoping to encourage tolerance in the university community. In May 1973 and again in November, the CGE hosted Gay Symposiums at UGa. The events were opened to the public and seminars dealt with such issues as gay history and “Homosexuals in Our Society.”<sup>77</sup> By the 1974 spring semester the CGE had wrestled a good number of concessions out of the university. In addition to gaining recognition as an official student organization the group had been given office space in the Student Activities Center at Memorial Hall, acquired funds from the university to set up a Gay Crisis Line, and regularly held social events on university grounds free from official harassment by the administration. The gay community had developed to the point that the CGE newsletter lamented the fact that

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<sup>76</sup> *The Great Speckled Bird*, 13 November 1972, 20 November 1972, 27 November 1972, 11 December 1972.

<sup>77</sup> *The Red and Black*, 16 May 1973, 2 November 1973.

Athens had three gay organizations that often had difficulty working together.<sup>78</sup> As with W.O.M.E.N., the CGE also recognized the importance of student government as a means of achieving its goals. In a newsletter issued before the 1974 student elections, the group encouraging its members to vote and explained the positions of the various political parties in relation to the CGE.<sup>79</sup> It would be in the 1975 elections that CGE would score an important victory, both literally and symbolically.

By 1975, members of the CGE recognized a change in attitudes towards gays at the university. To some, the change proved to be a drastic one. Jodie O'Connell felt that UGa and Athens were "exceptional places" to be gay. In its tolerance towards gays he believed that the "University is . . . unique in the Southeast." Another CGE member noted that the tolerant environment even impressed gays from New York City.<sup>80</sup>

In April, O'Connell ran for the presidency of the Student Government Association on the Coalition Party ticket. The Coalition Party had been in existence since the early 1970s and usually ran candidates who, if not members of New Left organizations, at least sympathized with New Left causes. O'Connell had been an active and vocal member of the CGE for several years, making it impossible to hide his homosexuality during the campaign, even if he so desired. Opposition parties, however, made sure as many students as possible knew of O'Connell's sexual orientation. In the weeks leading up to the election the Union of American People Party (UAP) ran advertisements on the college radio station that constantly mentioned O'Connell's homosexuality.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> "CGE Mouthpiece," Vol. 1 No. 2 (14 April 1974); *The Red and Black*, 14 February 1974.

<sup>79</sup> "CGE Mouthpiece," Vol. 1 No.2 (14 April 1974).

<sup>80</sup> *The Red and Black*, 12 March 1975.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 April 1975.

The UAP had existed for several years as the political version of the CCC, sharing many of the same members. Certain segments of the student body had been showing a renewed interest in conservatism and the UAP hoped to capitalize on this development and use it to destroy the New Left on campus.<sup>82</sup> The party filled its newsletter with vitriolic and slanderous attacks on any and all New Left groups but showed a particular interest in the CGE. In issue after issue, the UAP attacked the CGE, stating, for instance, that “the homosexual ‘flowering’” of the past few years is merely another example of the internal sickness and rot that is progressing through the University and society today.” In its official party platform, UAP decried that it “deplore[d] the trend . . . toward making homosexuality morally and socially respectable, instead of the illness that it is . . .”<sup>83</sup> Despite its claim that it represented the majority of students, the UAP failed to win the majority of votes. Neither did the other two parties and a run-off between the top two vote-earners, FOCUS and Coalition, was scheduled for April 16. The day before the runoff, crudely-written flyers appeared across campus asking “Do you want a gay for your Student Government Association president?” Despite the flyers and the earlier attack ads by the UAP, O’Connell won the SGA presidency.

The response to O’Connell’s victory varied. The UAP claimed that the “blacks, gays, and screwballs” won because they encouraged the “minority” to vote while the majority of conservative students stayed away from the polls (a statement that may possess some truth since the election had an unusually low turnout of 3846 students).<sup>84</sup> Others, however, viewed the victory as a positive step forward for the university community. *Red and Black* columnist Steve Oney noted that “there is something

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<sup>82</sup> Tom Steadman, “The New Conservatism 1974,” *Impressions* Vol. 4 No. 1 (Fall 1974), 29-32

<sup>83</sup> “The People’s Observer,” 13 May 1974, 2; 15 April 1974, 1.

<sup>84</sup> “The People’s Observer,” 14 May 1975, 2; *The Red and Black*, 17 April 1975.



inherently progressive in the election of a homosexual,” and that “O’Connell’s election depicts a good deal of forward-thinking movement for the University.” Another student felt that, “it is a tribute to the students who bothered to vote at all that they judged Mr. O’Connell not on the basis of narrow stereotypes . . . but on the basis of his qualifications.”<sup>85</sup>

The UGa New Left had undergone a great deal of change during the first five years of the 1970s. A politically-oriented movement in 1970, largely focused on antiwar activities and whose size expanded and contracted with each new military offensive, it evolved as the war deescalated and embraced the new social movements of the 1970s. Along with new causes came new tactics. The days of marches and confrontational rhetoric were gone, replaced by talk of cooperation, education, and working within the system. Viewing student government as the avenue to real change, New Leftists entered the political arena and by mid-decade, experienced victories that the New Left of the 1960s could never have envisioned or, maybe, even wanted.

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<sup>85</sup> *The Red and Black*, 17 April 1975, 19 April 1975.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

In the May 2, 2005 edition of *The Red and Black* an article appeared about the May 1970 demonstrations at the University of Georgia. The piece focused on the story of Mery Lynn McCorkle, a student who was photographed during the demonstration holding a hand-made sign saying, “Bless Our American Dead.” McCorkle and several other participants reminisced about their role in the demonstrations. At the end of the article McCorkle stated that, “this war [the Iraq War] is a folly. When the draft starts and your friends start dying, there will be an anti-war movement.”<sup>1</sup> It seemed that even after thirty years, a massive swing nationwide back to the right, and several generations of students, the UGa community was still trying to draw lessons from and understand its 1960s experience.

Despite the student newspaper’s visit to the past, the UGa community remains largely uninformed of the full story of the university in the 1960s. Even worse, by highlighting the two largest demonstrations, the 1968 sit-in at the Academic Building and the two days of demonstrations in May 1970, the 1960s experience at UGa gets cast as a sporadic, spontaneous and short-lived phenomenon. The true depth and scope of the New Left at UGa becomes hidden behind a few images of administrators with bullhorns and masses of students taking to the streets. The efforts of hundreds of students who, over a ten year span, dedicated themselves to improving what they considered to be a society,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Red and Black*, 2 May 2005.

culture and university in desperate need of repair are lost or disregarded. Dismissal by historians, however, does not change the fact that the New Left maintained a sustained and active presence at the University of Georgia for more than a decade.

More than just exist, the UGa New Left won numerous victories while becoming an important center of activism in the region. From its earliest days, UGa-SDS proved that it could confront the university and win. Not only did it achieve relatively small victories, such as the right to publish a newsletter off campus without interference from the administration, but also large ones, such as taking over the Academic Building for three days and leaving without coercion but under its own terms.

As the New Left grew during the late 1960s, incorporating the counterculture and the anti-war movement, it continued to apply the lesson that UGa-SDS had learned during its first two years of existence; it could be as radical as it wanted in intent but needed to be moderate in its method. While the 1968 sit-in demonstrated the ability of SDS to organize and sustain a large scale event that openly defied the wishes of the administration, the radical nature of the take-over of the Academic Building failed to win the group any converts. After the demise of SSOC-SDS in 1969, UGa-SDS re-emerged and adopted its “Smash ROTC” campaign. Espousing too radical a message for many, the group failed to recruit new members, organize a successful demonstration or develop a cohesive agenda. It quickly became irrelevant to the New Left at UGa.

Time after time, the New Left groups that achieved the most success were those that assumed a pragmatic approach to activism. Activists who understood the conservative nature of their environment knew that radical rhetoric and actions would not lead to success over the long term. The most successful antiwar events were those that

used memorials to the war dead and discussion panels as a means of changing people's minds about the war. The least successful were those that consisted of inflammatory speeches by young revolutionaries. The social movements of the 1970s employed almost exclusively the techniques learned by the New Left in the late 1960s. No less radical in their desire to remake American society than their politically-minded predecessors, the women's liberation and gay liberation groups utilized conferences, symposiums, consciousness-raising sessions and social activities as a means to effect change. Repeatedly they distanced themselves from the more dogmatically radical members of their movements, claiming that feminism at UGa didn't include bra-burning or that supporting gay liberation didn't require a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of oppression. By the mid-1970s, the New Left had even entered student government, a move that would have been unthinkable to UGa-SDS members in 1968. These acts, however, did not totally obscure the fact that UGa activists shared with activists outside the South the core belief that American society needed to be fundamentally changed in order to achieve equality for all its citizens.

That is not to say that confrontation completely disappeared as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s. When necessary, the New Left willingly confronted those trying to hold them back. Members of W.O.M.E.N. marched in support of abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. The Committee for Gay Education did not hesitate to take the University to court twice in order to hold social functions on school grounds. The New Right at UGa based its entire agenda on consistently confronting the New Left. While not out in the streets marching, conservative student groups drafted petitions, wrote letters to the newspaper, filled their

newsletters with anti-left diatribes and, on a few occasions, engaged in physical altercations with the New Left.

On the surface, the May 1970 demonstrations also showed that direct action could achieve results. The Board of Regents did agree to close the university for two days, the primary demand of the protestors. But a closer examination brings the assessment into question. Dean Tate, along with several professors, secured the release from jail of the three students arrested on the first night of the demonstrations, not the protestors. President Davison also refused to drop criminal charges against the students or sign the *New York Times* letter condemning the Kent State killings, the primary demands of the demonstrators on the second day. In the end, the decision to take to the streets proved only partially successful and the large number of protesters who had never before participated in a New Left demonstration may have hurt the situation as much as helped it.

The dedication of activists and their ability to organize successful campaigns and demonstrations helped turn UGa into an important gathering place for the regional New Left. Early UGa-SDS members Pat Nelson and David Simpson left the university to work for SSOC, but not before organizing a SSOC conference at the university in May 1968. VVAW members Chuck Searcy and Jim Lanzer served in prominent positions within the national VVAW organization. The Committee for Gay Education had the most success in this regard. Not only did it take the university to court twice and win, but the lawsuits focused attention on gay liberation at UGa and helped turn the university into a meeting place for gay liberation groups in the Southeast. Its struggle with the

university over holding a dance in March 1972 even inspired gays and lesbians on other college campuses in Georgia to form their own liberation groups.

In reviewing its achievements, it becomes clear that the University of Georgia possessed one of the largest and most active university-based New Left communities in the Deep South. Although the majority of UGa students in the 1960s and early 1970s remained wedded to the conservatism that defined the region, it is also true that an important number of students rejected the region's political and social heritage and instead embraced a radical belief system that called for a fundamental restructuring of the social order.

The history of the New Left at the University of Georgia demonstrates the difficulties of drawing conclusions about the New Left as a national movement. Early New Left scholars, focused on national organizations, saw the movement as a failure and dead by 1970. But, ignoring in large part the fate of national New Left and instead examining the movement at the grassroots level reveals the myriad ways in which groups successfully adapted to local environments in which they existed. As Maurice Isserman correctly states, "so much of the political energy of the decade arose spontaneously from the bottom."<sup>2</sup> At the University of Georgia enough political energy existed to create a New Left movement on campus that not only maintained a presence for over a decade but, along the way, achieved some important victories. The New Left at UGa helped shape and change the University in ways that can still be seen today. That fact, far more

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<sup>2</sup> Maurice Isserman, "The Not-So-Dark and Bloody Ground: New Works on the 1960s," *The American Historical Review* 94:4 (Oct. 1989), 999.

than the size of the movement or how well it is remembered, stands as the New Left's real legacy at the University of Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

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