

THE APRIL 3 GENERAL MEETING

**the sound & the fury**

The fellows who beat me up were plainclothesed-men--some were on the San Jose Tac Squad, who came up to join the festivities--and if they had anything in common it was their "refrigeratorism." They all wore nylon jackets, or college jackets, surfing shirts or the equivalent and stay-pressed levis-- they looked like any young (nearing thirty) hipster of 1960, but most of all, they were built like refrigerators. You know, the kind of guys who hang out at bars and watch the Wide World of Sports and joke about all the ass they got when they were in college. Well the one thing I noticed about these guys all the time I was being held, was their spirit. I have to admit it, they had a helluva lot more spirit than the demonstrators did; and they seemed much more together than we were. Like I didn't hear them arguing which tactics to use-- they seemed to have settled that question long ago. They had a leader, the head refrigerator, and his name was Moose; he walked like a beast of prey and I kept looking at the floor by his feet for imprints in the concrete.

Let me return to the words of President Pitzer. First he attempted to calm the nervous liberal Faculty by insisting that there had been no police beatings. I offer my scars as proof that this was not so--in fact at least four demonstrators were beaten by the police. Pitzer then said that he hated to call the police on campus. Sure he did; the University hates to get caught with her pants down. It's much nicer to project the Country Club image, that parents and alumni look to with pride, Pitzer doesn't want Stanford exposed for what it is: an armed camp if necessary in order to protect the vital centers of military research and imperialistic production. Finally, he implied that the radicals initiated the confrontation and provoked the police (into the violence that didn't take place) in hopes of creating martyrs who would manipulate otherwise peaceful students into joining the anti-ROTC movement.

I find all this a little difficult to believe. The radicals just aren't that cunning or malicious--it's taken five years for demonstrations to escalate into the window-smashing stage, which compared to the violence against the Vietnamese, Black Panthers or environment is infinitely miniscule--and Stanford is far from innocent--God only knows how many deaths all over the world can be traced back to Stanford, or how much damage to a weakening environment was done by Stanford hands. I'm waiting for Pitzer to accuse the radicals of creating ROTC, developing Coyote Hill, founding SRI, and building the Southern Pacific. You've got to realize that it's the radicals who are causing all this--they're simply a bunch of malcontents, who never appreciated what their parents gave them.

Well, speaking as one mal-content, I have only two thoughts: One is that ROTC still sits on Stanford land; and the other is that I could possibly be sentenced from one to fifteen years in prison for indicating with my presence one cold night that I don't want to live in a world with ROTC--it just isn't in my fantasy. Funny, but I still consider myself to be a patriot--I believe in the America of my dreams--but if my dreams can't come true, then I shudder to consider living in a world of nightmares. I am willing to fight for my dreams. Are you? OFF ROTC!

*At the April 3 General Meeting of the Free University, called to discuss among other things, philosophical questions of violence versus nonviolence in political demonstrations, a motion was made to exclude Terry Hansen, a Palo Alto Times reporter, from the meeting. Several members present feared that due to the state of the nation's conspiracy laws, and the eagerness of many authorities to prosecute under laws even when they know they won't get convictions, even an academic discussion of political violence could lead to arrests. In addition, these members and even several members opposed to the reporter's exclusion complained that the Times' reportage of the Free University is seriously biased, that the Times in the past has induced people to physically attack local radicals and their homes and offices, and that even unbiased reporting in the Times has led to the same results.*

*The meeting voted 22-to-12 not to exclude the reporter, and most of the members opposed to his staying then walked out themselves, saying that open discussion was impossible with the reporter present. This was the first meeting in the Free U's recent history to be disrupted by such a walkout, and the third in which excluding a reporter or any other person was suggested. The Free University's by-laws allow anyone to join the organization and require that meetings be open and announced in advance to all registered members, but there is no provision either allowing or preventing the exclusion of a non-member, or a reporter. Last year the Coordinating Council defeated an attempt to vote out a member who was personally annoying workers and guests in the Free University office. At this same April 3 meeting, a drifter who stole \$150 from a cash box in the office was permanently banned from returning to the office. The meeting took this action in the name of "people's justice"; justice of other sorts has also caught up with this person, however, in the form of a long stretch in the San Mateo County Jail for possession of narcotics.*

*The meeting was announced in advance to the membership and the public, in the Free You. In addition, it was announced on the marquee of Full Circle, with notice that political violence would be under discussion.*

*The departure of several activist members prevented anything more than a desultory conversation about political violence. The remaining members attempted repeatedly to tell Hansen that his biggest story was the fact that people had walked out on him and why, under the current political conditions, such a thing had to happen. Hansen's story, however, concentrated inoffensively but aimlessly on the original, more excitement-oriented violence-versus-nonviolence issue, with only passing reference to the walkout and the reasons behind it.*

*What follows is an excerpted transcript of the meeting.*

FN

CHAIR: The next item on the agenda is a discussion of a policy statement against violent tactics during political demonstrations.

CULLY: At this time, violence in political demonstrations is counterproductive to any kind of change...whether you call the change revolution, reform or whatever.

# THE FREE YOU

The whole side of political activity that says break bank windows, or firebomb somebody because they're a member of the establishment, or because they're being oppressive, or cops, or whatever, all it can possibly do is create that fascism that we're all afraid of. The way any kind of change is going to come in this country or this town, is with the support of an awful lot of people. Right now, the politics of violence don't lead themselves to getting a lot of people together. In fact, people are alienated by it. A lot of people in this country are really unhappy right now. They're not just radicals. Not just revolutionaries. A lot of average people are really unhappy. They're frightened, they're upset, they're unhappy with the government, they don't like the war in Vietnam. When demonstrations turn violent, when police stations get bombed, and when this happens, these people who are unhappy are going to turn against those of us in society who have been calling for change. The Human Institute got firebombed. Now, here's the Human Institute. Great political institution. (ironically) Look, I think that's what's going to happen, and the net result of that isn't going to be what we want. It's not going to be some glorious revolution with a new, decent government that treats people in a human way. It's going to be a fascist dictatorship, and it's going to be supported by a vast majority of the American people. The American people are unhappy, and I think they can make a different choice than such a dictatorship, but I think that violent demonstrations will make them make that choice, in which case we all lose. The masses of the people lose, and particularly, and most immediately, we'll lose. I think it's a bad trip, and we ought to stay out of it.

VIC LOVELL: I'd like to move, before we go any further, that we exclude the Palo Alto Times from this meeting. (Several members seconded the motion.)

FRED NELSON: I want to speak as the "in-house" reporter. I have a tape recorder here, to record this meeting with the assumption that since the Palo Alto Times reports it wrong, we'll report it righter. If the PAT reporter is excluded from this meeting by a vote, I will also leave. I think it's absolutely fascist to do this sort of thing. We have an open organization, we have open meetings, and I, for one, don't care who hears what I have to say. The whole point of the Free University is that we, unlike other parts of the society, and I hope the Times gets this down, are open. The minute we start throwing any one person out of a meeting we're taking the first step toward booting whole groups of people out of here. I think it's absolutely unheard of. I think it's unprincipled, it's unethical, and if he goes, I go.

JOHN DOLLY: I want people to be able to speak their minds. I think there are a lot of people in this room who would really like to talk about violence, and they'd probably like to advocate violence, and I don't want that guy (the reporter) in here. We've had this trip before. Ours isn't an open society or anything. The vast majority of American people dug My Lai, and believe me, things like that are very, very easy to get out. I'd also move that Fred turn his tape recorder off.

PHIL TROUNSTINE: I don't know whether anyone in this room reads PAT, but it's pretty clear to me that the PAT is NOT a very favorable organization to discussions like this, and this discussion is meaningless if a member of the press is attempting to slander all of the Free University. When we walk down the street we're made out as communist dupes, as freaks who are about to take over the entire society.

GRACE OLSEN: Anything that you cannot say in front of anybody, you're pretty damn well not sure of yourself.

CHAIR: Does the PAT reporter have anything to say?

He ought to be able to relate to this discussion.

TERRY HANSEN (PAT): We'll, if I'm going to stay, I'm going to report on what action you folks decide upon. I'm not here to interpret what the PAT feels about this situation.

JEAN TARSHIS: We're in a double-bind. If he stays, and certain things come down and get misreported, we're fucked anyway. Like the whole thing that happened when Culley was busted on the flag. If we throw him out, then he's going to report that we're doing something that we can't have printed, and it's going to come down even heavier on us. I move that we don't have the discussion this evening.

LOVELL: Here's the kind of thing the PAT does. Last year during the April 3rd Movement, the PAT identified a commune in Portola Valley, said that the people in Portola Valley should throw those guys out. I hold the PAT largely responsible for us getting bombed because of the kind of publicity they gave us. I don't feel free to speak either way. I don't think anyone seriously thinks we're going to talk about doing anything. It's a philosophical discussion, and I still don't feel safe. That's how they got the Chicago Seven: for what people say they said when they were just sort of philosophically rapping. If some kind of thing comes down in this country, I don't want that quote in the paper that I said this, or I said that, or I said that, or I said anything. This meeting is open to Free U members. Anyone else can come if we want him here, and not if we don't.

ROY KEPLER: This was a publicly announced meeting, I understand, even to the extent of putting something up on the signboard on the corner. Even if we hadn't, it would be a real threshold in the Free U if we've reached the point where we can't have completely open discussions with anybody who comes. I think we can't avoid this discussion, but I think before we close this meeting to anyone, who says we're going to feel safe in a time of great social change, when we're going to have to take plenty of risks for our values. Whether they're violent or nonviolent values. If you're not willing to take some risks for it, then get out of the kitchen if it's too hot.

SOMEONE: I want to present a substitute motion that we ask people not to take notes, because as far as what people write about us in the PAT, there isn't anything we can do about it. I'm more concerned with the legal implications. I think the notes are a really serious thing from a legal point of view. People can be subpoenaed from them.

JIM MAYER: We started out this day by talking about repression in the future. And then we got into this thing about a reporter here, which can bring about more repression in the future. The fascist state is already here. No matter what we do, we're going to be countered. You've gotta be very careful that we do the least to bring the reactionary forces against us.

TROUNSTINE: I don't know if people really understood what I said before. What I said was if the PAT reporter is here, it seems to me that the discussion is meaningless, we can have any kind of discussion we want, but nobody can be out front. For us to take a vote on anything in that situation, or declare any sort of policy, is absolutely absurd.

NELSON: Here we are, we haven't even opened our community center, we've been spending most of our time talking about this place, it's the great vehicle for bringing allelements of the community together, and

responsible for bouncing somebody from the community center. I think that's absurd. If this man does write an incorrect story or that we don't like or that wrong... and sometime it's hard to tell whether something's wrong or whether you just don't like it...I think we're much better served by letting that happen and simply using that as proof that, well, here it's happened again after everybody's attention has been drawn to the possibility. Myron Meyers, who by my lights is one of the worst reporters in California, came to one of our meetings, was threatened with being thrown out, was not thrown out, and the day after that he was moved to write the most accurate story he's ever written about us. The *only* accurate story he's ever written about

CULLENBINE: The Free University should be an open kind of place, and that means that anybody can come and write anything they want to about it. If I'm teaching a class, together with the members of the class, we have the right to do that class any way we want to. That's a rule of the Free University. But as far as the Free University is concerned, I feel it should always remain open, it should be inclusive, people should be encouraged to come, I even asked a couple of cops to come tonight. I didn't have much hope that they would come. I think if we take on the attitude that we can throw people out of meetings because we don't like their politics or what they write, we really don't have much going for us here. To me, that is no longer the Free U. The Free University, is a certain kind of organization doing a certain sort of thing. We're concentrating on free and open education, and open decision-making meetings. Maybe it's unfair to try to have this kind of discussion, maybe it's unfair to some of the people in the discussion, but if it's not unfair, then I don't know how people can reach conclusions about this without knocking ideas off each other. If that has to be done, maybe it has to be done privately. Maybe people who believe in nonviolence might have to privately seek out people who believe in violence.

LOVELL: There are plenty instances of distortion for anyone with a good memory. That story you did on Culley getting busted with the flag was a total distortion. You didn't make any effort to contact him, you simply took the police version. Then there are the "rapes" at the Be-In and so on and so forth, but it isn't even really a question of distortion. The last time there was a story about me in the PAT I got firebombed the next week. There was no distortion, all they did was say where I lived. You can talk about freedom and openness and all that shit all you want, but I'm not going to open my mouth and get firebombed again.

GADUS: The Chicago 7 was on trial for meetings that they allegedly held before the Democratic convention where they were philosophically discussing the tactics of self-defense. If you're just talking about phil-

osophical things, it can be used against you. Even if he just hears it, even if he doesn't write it down. In a conspiracy proceeding, any philosophical discussion you've had can be used against you. JIM MAYER: If the Full Circle, and its community office, is a community center, it's in direct opposition to the community center over on Bryant Street, with its fountains and all that. You've got to remember that that community center is an enemy, and that PAT reporter is a member of that community, rather than ours. He's going to do his best to destroy us.

ROBB CRIST: The Free U is primarily an educational institution, and tonight we're going to discuss questions of violence, and we have a lot of people here who are going to learn about what goes on, the reasons for it, the reasons against it. One of the people here happens to be a PAT reporter, and he may learn a lot about the whole situation, violence, things like that. He may also learn about our community, and our primary educational technique in the Free U isn't ideas we put out, but the kind of community we have. We have a *man* here, maybe he also happens to be a reporter for the PAT, but the primary thing is that he's a guy like everyone else here, maybe he'll get turned on by our community just as many other people have. This is much more important than anything he might say in the course of his occupation.

TROUNSTINE: A short while ago we voted that a guy who ripped \$150 off us showed up, we'd throw him out. The PAT has ripped off a hell of a lot more than that from the community. It's ripped off the entire Bay Area. Throwing the PAT out is a lot more honorable act than throwing a petty thief out.

*At this point, the meeting voted on whether to exclude the reporter and the vote went 22-12 in favor of his staying. About a dozen leave, some doorway debate.*

CULLENBINE: What are we going to do? A whole lot of people just walked out of our meeting over this issue. Sure it was their choice, but look at all the vacant chairs? What's that mean? It means we're fucked up.

NELSON: Maybe it means they're fucked up.

SOMEONE: It means Vic doesn't want to get gasoline poured on his cars again.

CRIST: The Human Institute was bombed last night...it has nothing to do with politics at all. If Vic's place is bombed, people say, wow, it's because the Palo Alto Times reporter was here.

SOMEONE: I don't know, man; the Free U gets bombed, Kepler gets bombed, Vic's gets bombed, the Human Institute gets bombed, a city councilman gets bombed...

KEPLER: Maybe this is where the Free U is at. We've played around with a lot of rhetoric, but there are some consequences of certain kinds of actions. And from certain kinds of rhetoric; sometimes you don't even have to act. There wasn't that much violence in Santa Barbara, for instance. There was less window-breaking than window-breaking rhetoric.

SOMEONE: (To the PAT) You must have an attitude you're not expressing.

PAT: Well, I came here to report. Obviously, the main topic was violence or nonviolence...

JUDY COSGROVE: Don't you think *this* is as interesting a story?

PAT: Yes, it's got tremendous impact, but uh, but this is something that's happening within the group, and not having been associated with the group very much,

SOMEONE ELSE: I don't think you're a good reporter... you display a lack of perception as to *why* the people left.

# the full circle

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GENERAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT ENCLOSED

CULLENBINE: What they're afraid of is that their freedom of speech has been abridged. They're living in a society which says, by their analysis, that if we freely express our ideas at an educational meeting to educate one another, we could have our notes subpoenaed. We're living in a society where men in a public forum are afraid to say what they think, because of the conspiracy laws, and they feel that the Chicago trial, as a good example, was where men said things in meetings which had nothing at all to do with advocating violence, and they spent five months on trial and now are getting years in sentences. That's what they're afraid of. Vic, obviously, is afraid of the fact that where he lives was firebombed. What happened in these last few minutes, man, is that a whole bunch of people we really want to be close with are gone.

CRIST: That's your story about violence in Palo Alto.

CULLENBINE: That's what violence has done to the Free University. That's what being bombed has done to us; that's what living today has done.

NELSON: Do you foresee the possibility that you could write something that wouldn't be printed?

PAT: We speak our piece through our editorials. I have nothing to do with them.

NELSON: Part of the problem with the PAT has been not with what they've said, but with what they've not said. In fact, there was an effective news blackout on the Free University, I truly believe this, for virtually a year, and there was very, very limited coverage on the bombings we were suffering even though a couple of reporters were diligently on to the story. These things weren't reported on as prominently as any other average firebombings, if I can be excused for that phrase. They were virtually unreported or buried way down on page 3 or page 4 until Kirke Comstock's house got bombed, then there was a big hue and cry in other newspapers, then the PAT weighed in. So the real question isn't whether you're censored, it's whether you have free choice about what you will write on.

PAT: Yes.

CULLENBINE: We never got coverage until we had to leak the story about who was doing it...until then a lot of us were the victims of an organized terror attack that went on week after week with no press notice.

PAT: Well, we've had a few holes put in our windows too...

*As the meeting dwindled on, several members noted that Hansen's pencil would move whenever someone would mention the words, "violence," "drugs" or the like, but would stop when people would advocate pacifism, or when people would try to tell him what the real story was that evening.*

*Free University attorney James Wolpman somewhat disagrees with the contention that "purely academic" discussions can be used as a basis for a conspiracy charge. The First Amendment successfully obtains in this case: "Free speech activities," says Wolpman, "can't be used to establish criminal conduct," although he recognizes that arrests can be made even when convictions are unlikely. He adds that while the Clear and Present Danger doctrine no longer completely governs this field, elements of it still exist. The actual facts of a discussion are important, as are the State's particular interests, and so on. Wolpman does warn that attendance or participation in such a meeting can be used as attempted proof of the agreement necessary for a conspiracy.*

F. N.