

## ARTICLES

Note: The following article represents one individual's thoughts about the Free University. Other contributions to the theory and practice of the Free University are solicited for printing in these pages. The following article is written in response to Mike Pincus' article in April's Newsletter. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Free University or of its members.

### THE FREE UNIVERSITY'S DILEMMA.... Nick Simon

Mike Pincus' recent contribution to the "Free University News" reveals the horns of the university's dilemma. No one participating could possibly disagree with his contention that "through education comes conviction, and through conviction, action." He even accurately qualifies (as far as I'm concerned) such action as "political action."

However, it seems to me that this raises a host of unanswerable questions unless Mike sees some one of the political philosophies represented in the FUPA (Free University of Palo Alto) assuming a dominant role. He refers to the "widely divergent ideas" now apparent and indicates that "some danger exists in such a coalition." Can there be any doubt of the intrusion of a much greater danger in any coalition of heterogeneous views somehow translated to the political field? The sad history of "united fronts" needs no repetition here. All this converges on Mike's central refrain that some uniformity of political thinking is essential if the Free University is not to "lose its vitality and die."

As most readers of this bulletin may know, the writer of this article is a member of the Socialist Labor Party and committed irrevocably to the proposition that we suffer from a social order that has outlived its usefulness. Furthermore, I am committed to the proposition which follows logically from that--there can be no permanent solution to the grave problems multiplying unless that social order, capitalism, is replaced by one in which the means of wealth production are held in common by, and used for the benefit of, society as a whole. Thirdly, I am committed to the next logical sequence in the process, that no such change is possible without a specific program which fits the requirements brought into existence by a fully-developed capitalist system. Implicit in the foregoing is the sound proposition that the lever for revolutionary change must be capable, as Engels described it, of replacing a "Government over men" by an "administration of things."

I, for one, could not possibly engage in any political activity which skirts, or avoids, or evades these essential guidelines for action. Whether my contentions are valid or not is beside the point. Their validity is subject to the forum of conflicting ideas which such agencies as the Free University might make available. Others in the FUPA have commitments to political action (or other forms of

(cont.)

action such as "non-violence") no less sincere than my own. I find it impossible to imagine that these others will accept what I consider to be the essential pre-conditions to intelligent political action. By the same token, there are those of us who would find it impossible to accept political views in basic disagreement with our own.

Does Mike think some form of compromise is essential, or does he believe that existing divergent views will have to converge into a single channel? What channel? What philosophy to guide the course? What political action to emerge? It is my own opinion that the best the Free University can offer is a comprehensive forum which gives the widest possible latitude to the confrontation of the conflicting philosophies which Mike sees as constituting a danger; to present, as it were, a "smorgasbord" rich in variety from which those who come to the feast may pick and choose.

Finally, it seems to me that the very nature of the Free University forbids it from moving as a unit in any one political direction. What it can do, and truly justify its title, is to facilitate a set of conditions which would make possible the frequent confrontation of widely differing philosophies. If and when political convictions are crystallized, they can then be transferred to the political field under whatever banner the individual may choose.

Nick Simon  
Socialist Labor Party Candidate  
Lieutenant Governor of California

Your thoughts on the matter discussed above would be appreciated. Maybe you have a new thought about the role of the Free University in the community. Other articles concerning current controversial topics are invited.

If you would like to contribute a few thoughts or an article, send to Free University News Editor, Nicki Furneri, 466 E. O'Keefe #307, Palo Alto. If possible, please type your entry. We cannot promise to print all material sent but we will print a representation of opinions.

Here is your chance to do some writing! Send your entry in by June 4.

Send in this form immediately if your mailing address will be changed and you wish to continue receiving your Free University News.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

FUTURE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Nicki Furneri, 466 E. O'Keefe #307, Palo Alto, 94301  
P.S. The Post Office requires a Zip Code.