



John Dolly

(Editorial Note: The night before the final deadline of this issue was March 26, a Thursday night and a Free University General Meeting. The events of this meeting caused Dolly, the majority of the paid staff and a former coordinator, along with the White Panthers to walk out. Dolly felt that it was more important that he speak to this than run his originally planned interview.)

Q. What came down at the meeting prior to the walk-out?

A. After approving the Spring budget, we were about to move on to the next agenda item: Should the Free University condemn the violence in Santa Barbara, when it was pointed out that a Palo Alto Times Reporter was present at the meeting. A motion was made that the reporter be asked to leave. Others proposed that the meeting be cancelled, others moved that he be allowed to stay for the discussion. Strong reference was made by the throw-him-outers to the problems that the Free University and its past and present staff have had to face due to the biased "reporting" of the Times. (Such as the bombing of the Free University itself and attacks on the homes of some staff, as well as threats directed at our members or their families. These events occurred after a Times story on one thing or another about the Free U.) Others present at the meeting feared a conspiracy rap, similar to that which put the Chicago Seven in jail. Some felt damned by the Times whether or not the reporter stayed, others

'our fears aren't fantasies'

supported "the freedom of the press", trying somehow to squeeze a favorable story out of him, or advocated that any publicity, good or bad, was worth having. The long time member, who made the motion for the reporter to leave stated that he would be forced to leave if the reporter stayed and urged others to follow. The freedom of the press people said that anyone who would be dumb enough to say anything that would get them in trouble should leave. Which I feel was a way of saying, "If you aren't going to come out against violence, leave so that we may pass a peaceful resolution and impress the reporter".

Insults flew between the leavers and the stayers, and a few people present took their own golden opportunity at attacking the Times face-to-face. When questioned on his object as to being there and his feelings about what was coming down, the reporter took his opportunity of asking for our pat on his back for the "unbiased" stories that he had written about Be-Ins and other Free U events. The White Panthers booed. (If you read the Be-In stories you will recall that they were far from fair and spent most of their content on rapes and a few other subjects of violence, allegedly connected with the Be-Ins.)

Later, after the walk-out, he was seen to feverishly copy down any defenders of violence words, while Roy Kepler's statements on non-violence were ignored.

The question was called, the motion to have the reporter leave failed 22 to 12. I then walked out.

Q. Why did you leave?

A. My reality is quite different than most of the Free University members at that meeting. Our commune was firebombed last fall and my motorcycle, along

THE COORDINATOR: AN INTERVIEW WITH PART II JOHN DOLLY

with 3 cars, was badly damaged. Last night, The Human Institute, the only other group in the area as heavily into psychodrama as our commune, was also firebombed and just about put out of business. I am a target, and my commune is a target. I make myself more of a target by writing this article, but if I can get to you, to a lot of you, then I think the gamble is worth it. I chose to write this article, but I did not choose to be slandered by the P.A. Times. If I am going to gamble with my life, I think I have a right to choose what that gamble will be. When the liberals voted to allow the Times reporter to stay at our meeting, they told me to shut up, or risk my name and address in the P.A. Times the next day. I didn't think the gamble was worth it. I don't want to risk my life for slander and misquotes by the Times. And what about those who wanted to try to radicalize other Free U members at

the meeting. We communicate the best when we are honest. No one should be required to risk their home and life, or risk that the government will charge them with conspiracy, when they speak their mind at a Free University meeting.

Q. What about Roy Kepler, he's a pacifist, and his life has been threatened several times.?

A. Roy Kepler's life was threatened yet he continued to speak out. I admire Roy for that but that still gives him no right to require others to risk their lives. For every Roy Kepler I can name you 10 Fred Hamptons.

Q. And what do you gain by letting the P.A. Times stay. Freedom of the press?

A. Are you kidding, in Palo Alto? They are free to slander us everyday to 100,000 readers and we are free to defend ourselves to 4000 readers once every six weeks. Your talking about laisses faire liberalism when you talk about freedom of the press and I'm telling you that the P.A. Times has a monopoly on communications in this entire area. And what do they do with that tremendous amount of power. They're peddlers of hate for the right wing and share more responsibility than anyone for right wing terrorism. Last summer they printed a story about the summer plans of a commune of SDS radicals. They printed the address of the commune and suggested that someone should "disrupt" it, since the radicals had disrupted Stanford. This was only a couple of months after the right wing bombers had been caught. Last Fall, they published a picture of our commune and the address and announced that a well known Free University radical, someone they frequently slandered, had signed a lease on the property and was living there. We were bombed shortly thereafter. Our Fears aren't fantasies.

Q. Some say that it's silly to remove a reporter because that will still get us an unfavorable story.

A. Yeah, but you only have to bar them once, permanently, how many times can they write unfavorable stories then? Most of those who voted to allow the reporter to stay were really uptight about an unfavorable story. They choose a favorable news story to the silent majority over the right of a minority of its members to be free to talk without fear of retaliation. They champion the idea that they are protecting the freedom of anyone to join



“ I am a peaceful man.”

the Free University when, in actuality, they are telling the far left to stay away. Take the example tonight. The P.A. Times reporter wasn't a prospective member, he was doing his best to fuck us over, which is his job. The liberals say that barring him will give us an unfavorable publicity and discourage new members. Yet who was it that walked out tonight? The radicals have always been the minority in the Free U most likely to challenge the majority, the liberals. Some feel that the radicals have to be discouraged every once in a while by a deliberately offensive political statement. A condemnation of violence was supposed to do that. Instead, the Palo Alto Times did the job. We can win if we stick together.

Q. What would your stand on violence-non violence been if you hadn't walked out.

A. I am a peaceful man. I'm against violence. We need a world wide socialist revolution to get rid of the economic and political violence of capitalism and imperialism. I want to live to be eighty and the only way I see that possible is to avoid world wide famine and nuclear holocaust. A world-wide socialist revolution may be the only way around that.

I'm really skeptical about the value of terrorism by the left in the last few months. I think America is still pretty far from an actual revolution. I wonder if we can withstand the growing repression. The Weathermen are Kamakazie pilots and I hope I never get that desparate. Still, non-violence hasn't been a smashing success either. Success depends on much more than just violence or non-violence. Our biggest challenge is the heavy repression coming down all around. And one sure way of committing suicide is to begin condemning tactics of other groups within the movement. Historically, that's the beginning of the end. When we condemn a brother, we isolate him, and he's soon to fall.

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Then, we'll be next. And don't expect any sympathy from the Palo Alto Times, they know where they stand.

Q. John, this isn't going to fill the space that your first interview did. Should I go ahead and print the beginning of it?

A. Sure, there is no need to freak Fred out with empty pages!

Q. We are about to move our office to the Full Circle. There has been talk of this becoming a "Peoples Office". What are your ideas on this, what changes do you see coming?

A. Moving to the Full Circle has put us back in touch with the radical community and with the street people. We have things to learn from each other. We have a lot more resources than most of our brothers and sisters in the movement and we're going to have to start sharing those resources. We've just opened our bail fund to everyone, not just Free University members. We also have some job and housing listings which everyone should have a chance at. The other side of it is that we need community support for the bail fund, and lots more housing and job referrals.

The office is going to be a wild scene. I hope to be able to keep it open more hours into the evening. We're going to have seven or eight Free U people sharing three or four desks. And we're going to need a couple of desks for the Full Circle people. I'd also like a movement desk where you can call and find out where and when other movement groups are meeting, and whats coming down politically. And a telephone tree to get in touch with people quickly. There's going to be a lot of confusion but that's o.k.. There is a lot of energy in confusion and we need that energy now.

Q. A Palo Alto based operation can't help but be different. Do you see a new surge of MFU energy on the Palo Alto Streets?

A. Yeah, you can smell it in the air. But it's pretty hard to tell yet how that energy will be translated into action. My guess is that the Free U is moving to the left. A couple of weeks ago, I put an item on the Coordinating Council agenda asking people where their heads were at politically. (Editorial note: this meeting was several weeks prior to the one mentioned earlier, and because the P.A. Times missed it, things went a bit differently.) When the meeting started at 7:30 there were 20 or 30 people in the room, mostly Free University regulars. But by 9:30, we had 70 or 80 people in the room, and a strong debate coming down on violence and political repression. A lot of people just listened so it was hard to



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tell where their heads were at, but of those who spoke, most seemed quite a bit more radical than the regulars. One fellow, about 45 or 50 and with a gray flannel suit on, just sat against the back wall and listened for 3 hours. I thought he was a narc or an undercover agent. Finally, at about 11, he gets up and announces he was a member of the Communist Party in the 30's. And he tells us to stop shouting and start talking about specifics, and start to turn other people on, instead of turning each other off. Right on. Apparently, he was just walking down University Avenue and he heard us yelling and wandered in. We've got to make sure that we keep the windows open.

The week before that we had this sharp old guy watching us. I went over to him half way through the meeting and introduced myself. He said his name was Ned Billings. I talked to him for a while, and all of a sudden I flashed on his name. Mooney-Billings, that's a famous labor case around 1915. Ned Billings got 20 years in Folsom on a frameup. The nailed him for bombing a Military

Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco. He was in the IWW and the government was out to get them. He's teaching a course on the labor history of the Bay Area for the Free U this quarter. You can learn a hell of a lot from history, especially personal history from someone who's head has been in the same place as your own. One thing the left has got to realize about terrorism is that your giving the government a blank check they can cash in on anybody, anytime they want. And the right is much better at it than us. They never seem to get caught.

MFU Referral Service

Do you need professional help for an emotional problem? Call the MFU Nest (328-4941). If you can afford it, we will refer you to a shrink from our community. If not, we will try to send you someplace where you can be seen without a fee.