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PhD. - Gender and Representation in Students for a Democratic Society

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This project is a detailed study of gender and representation in the foremost group of the American New Left, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The thesis charts the progress of the organisation, from the publication of its unofficial manifesto, the *Port Huron Statement*, to the group's descent into factionalism and its demise by 1970. This study is more than an organisational history, however, and reflects on broader areas where SDS was active and where gender proved particularly salient. These include SDS's relations with black nationalism, the organisations' participation in the movement to resist the Vietnam War draft and the group's involvement with the counterculture. It also charts the rise of feminist thought within the New Left and considers the emergence of women's liberation groups.

The thesis takes a gender history approach, moving away from the narrow confines of women's history, which considers women in isolation. Thus, by focusing on social constructions of masculinity and femininity and by considering the ways in which men and women in this highly influential group related to each other, allocated sex roles and used sexual symbolism, this study aims to be a more inclusive history of SDS than has previously been written.

The thesis finds that gender relations were of great significance within SDS. The study accepts the generally held view that the New Left marginalised women, but also gave them opportunities to develop key skills and confidence. This ultimately resulted in women articulating their grievances at the sexism within the Movement, which saw the creation of women's liberation groups. However, this study advances the historiography of SDS in a number of ways. It reveals the important effect that elitism and intellectualism had on men and women throughout the group's existence and finds that the impact of sexual liberation had both an emancipating and repressive effect on gender relations. The study discusses the constructions of identities within the organisation and pays close attention to representations of machismo and within SDS. It looks at the violent and aggressive rhetoric at play in SDS as the decade progressed, discusses the creation of alternative masculinities in the anti-draft movement and considers the fashioning of macho personas and alternative approaches to femininities in the SDS faction, Weatherman and in certain black nationalist groups.

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For Grandma, I know you would have loved to have seen this moment...

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Abbreviations

CADRE –Chicago Area Draft Resistance

COFO – Council of Federated Organizations

CORE – Congress of Racial Equality

CUAW – Citizens United For Adequate Welfare

ERA –Equal Rights Amendment

ERAP – Economic Research Action Project

GROIN – Garbage Removal or Income Now

HINLC –Hoover Institute of War and Peace Studies New Left Collection

ISL – Independent Socialist League

JAH –Journal of American History

JOIN – Jobs or Income Now

LID – League for Industrial Democracy

NC – National Convention

NLN –New Left Notes

NO –National Office

NOW – National Organization of Women

NYU NLC – New York University Tamiment Library New Left Collection

OHC CU – Oral History Collection Columbia University

OOI – Own Oral History Interview

PL – Progressive Labor

SDS – Students for a Democratic Society

SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

UFAF – United Front Against Fascism

WP –Workers Party

WSA – Worker Student Alliance

YAF –Young Americans for Freedom

YPSL –Young People’s Socialist League

Introduction

Gender and Representation in Students for a Democratic Society

Men have unrealised potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding and creativity. The goal of man and society should be human independence: a concern not with image or popularity but with finding a meaning in life that is personally authentic.

The Port Huron Statement June 16, 1962.

There can be no life – no culture – without the gun. We can be nothing but scared ass honkies if we can't face the pig and with the power of cosmic consciousness put a bullet through his racist belly.

A Weatherwoman, “War Report”, *Rat*, February 23-March 7, 1970. ¹

The 1960s continues to capture people's imaginations, and the decade, even as we reach the twenty-first century, still functions as a by-word for cultural and musical innovation, revolutionary social and moral attitudes and political activism, radicalism and protest. This project is a study of gender and representation in the leading American student and New Left group Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

¹ The Port Huron Statement in James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 329-374; A Weatherwoman, 'War Report', *Rat*, Vol. 2, No. 28 February 23-March 7, 1970, p.7, quoted in Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in the United States 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 133.

Some scholarship has emerged on SDS, yet very little attention has been paid to gender within the organisation. This thesis sheds new light on gender relations within the organisation and considers the way that masculinity and femininity were constructed and represented by men and women in SDS. The project is a detailed study of gender within SDS from the publication of its unofficial manifesto, The Port Huron Statement, in 1962, until its collapse into factionalism in the late 1960s and its demise as a recognised organisation by 1970. The thesis charts the progress of this organisation, which initially consisted of a few friends and acquaintances with a politically liberal outlook, through the rise in interest in SDS as a consequence of the Vietnam War, and its growth as an increasingly militant organisation to the mass organisation of over 100,000 members and a radical Marxist-Leninist philosophy by 1968. Moreover, the project considers SDS's descent into factionalism at the end of the decade, the split between the revolutionary communist group Weatherman and the Maoist Progressive Labor (PL), and Weather's ascent to control what remained of the organisation by 1969. Weatherman's subsequent descent underground in 1970 effectively heralded the end of SDS as a political force in American radical politics and highlighted the distance that the organisation had travelled from its modest, yet ambitious beginnings.

This study, however, is not solely an organisational history. It has a broader scope, including key crossover areas where SDS was active and where gender relations proved particularly significant. The thesis considers women's pivotal role in SDS's community organising projects, reveals alternative constructions of masculinity in the draft resistance movement and investigates liberating and repressive attitudes to sex within the counterculture. It also reflects on SDS's relationship with civil rights

groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party, paying particular attention to gender, race and constructions of machismo within the groups. Moreover, it charts the gradual rise of a feminist consciousness within SDS, which culminated in the emergence of women's liberation groups, and reflects on the factionalism and the Politico/Radical split within the women's movement.

This thesis reveals representations and social constructions of masculinity and femininity in SDS, investigating the ways that men and women in the highly influential movement approached gender issues and made gender-based assumptions. It considers SDSers' constructions of male and female identities based on assumptions made about masculinity and femininity. These assumptions, it will find, frequently emanated from traditional notions relating to men and women's prescribed role. Future SDSers were socially conditioned regarding gender identities as they were growing up in the 1950s, despite the fact that many came from a political family background. In a movement which saw itself as seeking to break the power structures of capitalism, and thinking through a view of inclusiveness, these traditional conceptions of gender would prove highly significant. The fact that SDS was an organisation in flux throughout the 1960s, as it moved from a liberal outlook in the early 1960s to an increasingly militant and radical stance through the decade, also had important consequences for gender relations and women's role within SDS.

This research offers significant new perspectives on SDS, going some way to remedy the lacunae in the existing literature. In posing sharp questions about gender and representation within SDS, the thesis seeks to make an important contribution to the

study of gender not only in the organisation itself, but in crossover areas within the New Left, and also within American society in the 1960s. The project is divided into six main chapters. Chapter One is primarily concerned with the period 1962-1965. However, the chapter reflects on the background of leftism in the United States, and traces the influences that the Old Left had on the New Left. It also considers the influence that liberalism had on early SDSers and looks at gender relations in the Cold War consensus culture of the 1940s and 1950s, assessing the impact that the domestic ideal had on men and women in the 1950s and discussing the effect that the 'feminine mystique' had on children who became part of the New Left.

Chapter One also charts the beginning of SDS and considers the political and social make up of early SDSers, christened the Old Guard. It includes a detailed analysis of SDS's unofficial manifesto, The Port Huron Statement, paying close attention to the language used and assumptions made as it seeks to establish the gender dimensions of the organisation from its inception. The chapter introduces important gender-related themes that resonated throughout early SDS, including the holistic notions of participatory democracy and the inclusive vision of the beloved community. It considers the significant impact which the organisation's intellectualism, use of language and allocation of gendered roles had on SDS's inclusiveness, and will show that, for women of the Old Guard, the early years of the organisation were times of both opportunity and oppression.

Chapter Two is also concerned with the early years of SDS. It is a detailed study of the organisation's community organising projects, the Economic Research Action Project (ERAP), where students went into urban disadvantaged communities in order

to assist with and organise around the issues that affected them on a day-to-day basis. The chapter emphasises the important impact that ERAP had on men and women within SDS. With its rejection of the cerebral in favour of action-based initiatives, women found a niche for their skills as organisers in projects, yet still had to contend with prejudice, often of an unconscious nature, on a daily basis. Moreover, the chapter will chart the increasing emphasis on machismo by male organisers who sought to prove themselves to the working-class youths within their macho-imbued environment.

Chapter Three is the half way point in the thesis, and in the wake of the profound influence that SNCC's community organising programme had on SDS's own ERAP, the chapter considers the major impact that black nationalist theory and action had on SDS as the decade progressed. In order to draw parallels between the two movements and to highlight the key influence that black nationalism had on SDS, the chapter delves more deeply into black nationalist groups such as SNCC and the Black Panthers' approach to gender relations. Chapter Three has, as its main focus, the influence that the Black Panthers had on Weatherman and charts the volatile and ill-fated alliance between the two groups. It highlights the similarities between Weatherman and the Black Panthers in their embrace of machismo, aggressive rhetoric and the necessity for violence, and considers parallels and differences between the two groups in their approach to gender relations, male chauvinism and women's liberation. The chapter also includes a detailed study of machismo and confrontational rhetoric and action, as it investigates black nationalist groups SNCC and the Black Panthers, and their influence on and relationship with SDS and Weatherman in particular. It considers black nationalists' use of aggressive

symbolism, rhetoric and action which glorified violence and reflects on the machismo that frequently accompanied it. Certain black nationalist women attacked the Black Panthers' machismo as evidence of men's need to oppress women as a way of proving themselves and their manhood. Moreover, certain black feminists and female Black Panthers, the chapter will reveal, suggested a further and controversial motivating factor in black males' hypermasculinity, a deep-seated fear of emasculation, which, they argued, was rooted in slavery. The chapter will consider the unique position that the Black Panthers held within black nationalism as they recognised the existence and oppressive nature of male chauvinism. Women, it will find, were not always cast in traditional roles within the Party – certain women held an elevated position of leadership and the Panthers recognised the contribution that women could make to the revolution – yet sexism was apparent in the group and machismo flourished.

Chapter Four investigates SDS's involvement in opposition to the Vietnam War, and is specifically concerned with the organisation's involvement in resistance to the draft. It considers the effect that men's position as primary targets of the draft had on gender relations within SDS, and within the wider opposition movement, and investigates differing reactions from female SDSers, those who viewed SDS's focus on the draft issue as according women secondary status, and those who emphasised that women could play a key role in the draft resistance movement. It also investigates the impact of Cold War ideology on constructions of traditional masculinity and reveals the way in which draft resisters constructed alternative masculinities which challenged these traditional assumptions and re-emphasised traits such as strength, courage and heroism as important attributes associated with draft resistance. The chapter also traces the development of machismo within the movement and considers the emphasis

on sexual prowess and the sexist attitudes and rhetoric that prevailed in draft resistance. Despite evidence of sexism, machismo and alternative masculinity constructions, the chapter goes some way to challenging Sara Evans' findings that draft resistance was a wholly negative experience for women, creating a more complex picture where women felt part of and were fulfilled by their anti-draft involvement.

Chapter Five focuses on SDS between the years 1966-1968. It considers the impact that the organisation's expanding popularity had on gender relations and charts the effect that SDS's increasingly radical trajectory had on SDS men and women. The growth of the movement, it will reveal, compressed areas where women had been active, and the militant, confrontational and aggressive rhetoric used in later SDS was often imbued with machismo and ego as SDSers tried to prove their revolutionary credentials. The counterculture had a telling effect on SDS at this time, and the chapter will investigate the liberating and exploitative approaches to sex which emanated from the counterculture. Chapter Five will also pay close attention to the burgeoning feminist consciousness within late SDS, as Black Power doctrine and SDS's own 'new working-class theory', that groups should organise around their own oppression, impacted on women's liberation and came at a time when women were becoming increasingly frustrated at their marginalisation within SDS. Women, the chapter will reveal, chose to meet inside and then away from the movement to discuss their oppression. The consequences of this split, and the schism between radical feminists and politicians, will form the final part of the chapter.

Chapter Six investigates the most radical and militant Marxist-Leninist group that was associated with SDS. The chapter is an in-depth analysis of the SDS faction, Weatherman, charting its rise to prominence within the organisation in the late 1960s, its conflict with the Maoist faction Progressive Labor and its contribution to the implosion of SDS by 1970. The chapter considers Weatherman's use of aggressive and confrontational rhetoric and action as it sought to overthrow American capitalism and imperialism through armed struggle. Weather's total commitment to the revolution, the chapter will reveal, had a key impact on gender relations within the group, as members, both male and female, indulged in machismo in order to prove themselves as revolutionaries. The chapter will also reflect on the effect that machismo had on women in the group, Weather women's embrace of macho and Weather's perception of women's contribution to the revolution. Weather documents did identify the presence of male chauvinism as a problem within capitalist society and asserted that members of the group suffered from chauvinistic outlooks through social conditioning. The chapter will consider in detail the ways in which group members reconciled their machismo with their anti-chauvinism and revolutionary intentions. It will also investigate Weather's rejection of monogamy, will show how this affected relations within the group and will look at opposition to Weather's stance, primarily from radical feminists.

Whilst literature on the New Left in the 1960s is extensive, there has only been one full-length monograph devoted to SDS: Kirkpatrick Sale's 1973 work, *SDS*.² Other scholarship on the 1960s has accorded considerable space to a discussion of SDS, particularly former SDS national Secretary Todd Gitlin's 1987 work *The Sixties*:

Years of Hope: Days of Rage and James Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets* (1987), yet, within the secondary literature, very little attention has been paid to gender within the organisation.

It is possible to divide survey works on the New Left into three notional subsections or waves. The first wave in the historiography consist of either polemical works published during the existence of SDS, such as Paul Jacobs' and Saul Landau's *The New Radicals*, Jack Newfield's *A Prophetic Minority* and Christopher Lasch's *The Agony of the American Left*, or those written in the five years following the New Left's demise.³ The latter collections of works are distinguished by their overt and starkly contrasting opinions. Thus, Kirkpatrick Sale openly acknowledges the influence that SDS had on him and is particularly sympathetic to the early stage of the movement in particular, whereas Irwin Unger's *The Movement* published a year later, is highly critical of both the New Left and its lasting influence on the cultural milieu of American society. The absence of women from these histories of the first wave (with the exception of *SDS*) is immediately apparent, as women are either missing from the book's narrative, or, in Unger's case, are subject to sexist stereotyping as he argues that 'many movement women were little more than camp followers of a sort that always tag along after the men engaged in a dangerous glamour calling'.⁴

The second wave in the historiography of the New Left emerged in the mid-1980s as many former participants such as former SDS members Todd Gitlin, James Miller and

² Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973).

³ Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, *The New Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1966); Jack Newfield, *A Prophetic Minority* (New York: New American Library, 1966); Christopher Lasch, *The Agony of the American Left* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).

⁴ Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the New Left* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1974), p. 153.

Maurice Isserman all published works that presented their unique perspective of the New Left and the 1960s.⁵ Whilst women and their marginalisation within the New Left are accorded some recognition within these works, the second wave of scholarship has other preoccupations as its main focus. Gitlin's *The Sixties* has a wide scope and as an ambitious survey work considers the idealism and radicalism of all aspects of the white and black New Left. Isserman charts the development of the New Left out of the Old Left and identifies significant differences and similarities between the two. Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets* considers the rise of SDS and culminates with the Democratic Convention of 1968, where violent direct action was adopted as SDS's doctrine for revolution and the overthrow of American capitalism.

Winifred Breines identifies key themes within the second wave of literature on the New Left. As SDS was at the heart of the New Left, the organisation has a central role in the historiography. Gitlin, Isserman and Miller all highlight the year 1968 as a key turning point in the history of the New Left as it was at this point that 'the leadership turned towards militancy and violence'.⁶ The three works are hostile to the later, violent manifestation of the SDS, condemning the nihilism and terrorist tactics epitomised by Weatherman. All three authors were participants in the early SDS and this helps to explain their condemnatory tone of the movement's later phase. Indeed, Isserman, Miller and Gitlin's disapproval of the later SDS could be seen a result of the organisation's departure from the ideals of the Port Huron Statement and the notion of participatory democracy that must have profoundly influenced their thinking as early

⁵ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Press, 1987); Miller, *Democracy*; Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1993).

⁶ Winifred Breines, 'Whose New Left?', *Journal of American History* 75 (September 1988), pp. 528-45.

SDS activists. The literature of the second phase also places the responsibility of the downfall of the New Left with SDS, its largest and most recognisable constituent group. Gitlin, Miller and Isserman all identify fundamental problems within SDS's organisational structure, as it failed to create a leadership that was capable of surviving the challenges of a changing political climate in the United States. Thus, as the New Left grew in numbers and influence with SDS at the heart of this political groundswell, the failure to create a cohesive, disciplined and centralised infrastructure in the initial stages of its development ultimately contributed towards the rapid decline of the movement by the end of the decade. In this second wave, the dominance by white, male New Leftists of the field, mirrors the male intellectual bias apparent in the New Left itself. Breines asserts that the absence of a female perspective is, in large part, a consequence of this male domination of the historiography.⁷ Gitlin, Isserman and Miller do make reference to key female New Leftists such as Casey Hayden and Sharon Jeffry, but as their works have other subjects and themes as their main focus, discussions of women and their role in SDS and the New Left take the form of an appendage to the overall line of thinking. Women's influence comes as more of an afterthought to the main body of the text, rather than it occupying a prominent role.

The third wave in the categories of New Left historiography takes a more inclusive approach. This stage emerged in the second half of the 1990s, and is apparent in the works of Terry Anderson, Doug Rossinow and Rebecca E. Klatch.⁸ Terry Anderson

⁷ Ibid, pp. 528-45.

⁸ Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Doug Rossinow, 'The New Left in the Counterculture: Hypotheses and Evidence', *Radical History Review* 67 (Winter 1997), pp. 60-120; Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity*

has produced a general survey of many aspects of the New Left: the significance of the Port Huron Statement, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, draft resistance and the emergence of women's liberation. Hence *The Movement and the Sixties* reveals the inclusivity of this third wave. Throughout his narrative, Anderson devotes attention to both women's importance and to the sexism in the New Left, rather than treating 'the women question' as an additional concern. Thus, he highlights the sexism of the 1950s college system, the slowly developing underground women's movement, the sexism of counterculture and anti-draft slogans and the macho attitudes of later SDSers to sex, as he asserts that 'in some [revolutionaries' circles] female submission became "revolutionary duty"'.⁹ His work is particularly strong in his analysis of the counterculture, and although he generally favours the counterculture, he highlights its positive and negative aspects, particularly for women, emphasising the benefits of a questioning of traditional moral values such as marriage and virginity whilst also showing the sexism inherent within the demands for free love and women's domesticity within the communes.

Rossinow's book *The Politics of Authenticity* focuses on the emergence of the New Left in Austin, Texas, an oasis of leftist thought in the midst of a reactionary state. He presents a case study, utilising these localised findings to discuss significant national trends in the New Left movement. Throughout the book, Rossinow places great emphasis on the importance of religion as a medium through which the New Left was organised and its leaders discovered, and recognises the strands of theological and institutional Christian liberalism that provided a model for the political liberalism and

and the New Left (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁹ Anderson, *The Movement*, p. 313.

dissidence evident in the New Left groups of the 1960s. Rebecca Klatch's *A Generation Divided* is a comparative study of SDS and the New Right group Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), considering both the life histories and ideological values of the individual participants, and placing these testimonies within an overall analysis of identity issues posed in the turbulent times of the 1960s. The strength of Klatch's book lies in its understanding of the complexities of these two important groups, as she goes beyond a simplistic presentation of them as polar opposites, instead seeing common ground between SDS members and YAF libertarians in their approach to antiwar protest, hostility towards the state, drugs and the counterculture. Although these works have other primary concerns and do not have gender and New Left women as their main themes, they do include women in the main narrative and analytical body, rather than choosing to encapsulate a discussion of women in SDS and the emerging feminist consciousness in a single chapter. Thus, whilst Rossinow includes a chapter on 'The Feminist Left' in the *Politics of Authenticity*, women are also visible and active throughout the text. In *A Generation Divided*, Klatch accords equal weight to the oral testimonies of the New Left men and women whom she interviewed and as a result, women have an equal voice throughout her work.

The two key texts in the field of women in the New Left are Sara Evans' *Personal Politics* and Alice Echols' *Daring To Be Bad*.¹⁰ Evans' *Personal Politics* was a pioneering work on the emergence of the women's liberation movement from, and in, the Civil Rights movement and New Left and it sets out to provide the reasons behind this seeming paradox. The overall achievement of Evans' work is her emphasis that

¹⁰ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books 1979); Echols, *Daring*.

the New Left and the Civil Rights movement, despite their sexist attitudes, became key areas where women could seize the opportunity to develop their skills within a relatively secure milieu. She asserts that, although women were oppressed and suffered prejudice within these movements, they also gained the self-confidence and organisational and leadership skills in the Civil Rights and New Left organisations to articulate and air their grievances at their marginalisation within the New Left. The book successfully develops Evans' overall thesis: she initially traces the emerging feminist trends in the 1950s and the significance of the church, which despite its place as a bastion of racism and sexism, in the 1950s and 1960s accorded women space to work against equality and segregation. She then proceeds to discuss southern black, southern white and then northern white women in the Civil Rights movement, the significant impact of Black Power and women in the various groups under the New Left banner. She successfully argues that although women were marginalised within the leadership of the Civil Rights and New Left groups, and suffered oppression within the movement in general, they played a significant role in the grassroots organisation of these movements. Evans combines oral testimonies with contemporary documents to provide a coherent argument and analysis of the social action groups of the 1960s.

Alice Echols' *Daring To Be Bad* has the period after 1968 as its main focus and is a successful sequel to *Personal Politics*. The body of the work concentrates on the emergence of radical feminism, considering the rise of women's liberation groups and a new feminist consciousness from the New Left, the radical/politico split of the late 1960s, the importance of lesbianism to radical feminist thought and the rise to ascendancy of cultural feminism. Echols asserts that the continued sexism of the Left

as a whole had a significant impact on the ultimate estrangement of certain radical women from the established New Left. She is quick to note, however, that despite the radical women's groups' stress on autonomy, increased factionalism gripped the movement after 1970, when splits over class, elitism and sexual preference saw 'the radical feminist wing of the movement [become] so absorbed in its own internal struggles that it sometimes found it difficult to look outside itself, to focus on the larger problem of male supremacy'.¹¹ Echols presents a strong argument that, although radical feminists professed that their notion of sisterhood would overcome divisions caused by race, class and sexual preference, these significant schisms were as profound at the beginning of the movement. They ultimately caused open antagonism within the radical feminist movement, as black feminists were excluded and lesbian feminists challenged the notion that all women were fundamentally the same, and it was out of this discontent and disagreement that cultural feminism asserted itself and become the dominant ideology in the women's liberation movement by the mid-1970s.

My research aims to take the third of the notional phases of New Left historiography still further, by focusing on SDS and gender, rather than solely concentrating on women. By taking this approach and by considering the actions of men and women, and by focusing on social constructions of masculinity *and* femininity, the thesis aims to become a more inclusive history of SDS than has previously been written. Previous studies have argued that women played an integral role in the New Left, and my project does not seek to disprove this in any way. Rather this work will seek to consider male and female interaction with and representations of each other, rather

¹¹ Echols, *Daring*, p. 198.

than taking a separatist approach. This thesis, therefore takes a gender-based rather than solely women-based approach. Gender, according to Joan Scott, is the social organisation of sexual difference.¹² Gender history moves away from the narrow parameters of women's history, by stressing the relational aspects of men and women, masculinity and femininity. Thus, whereas women's history could be accused of treating women *in isolation*, which, to quote Scott again, 'could serve to confirm their marginalisation and particularised relation to those male subjects already established as dominant and universal', gender historians reject this process of ghettoisation, and broaden the spectrum, through their investigation of men and women's relations and interactions, based on perceived differences between the sexes.¹³ Thus, the employment of gender history facilitates a consideration of social constructions, both conscious and unconscious, of masculinity and femininity, looks at the way that men and women are defined in terms of *each other*, and investigates the creation of sex roles and the use of sexual symbolism.

This project has used an extensive range of primary sources. The microfilmed *SDS Papers* have proved an invaluable resource as they included, not only personal correspondence and communication between SDSers and other contributors at both chapter and national level, but also included official reports and documents on subjects such as The Port Huron Statement, an ERAP newsletter, the SDS official anti-draft statement, discussion of the new working-class theory and Weatherman and Black Panther proclamations, in addition to SDS's official newspaper *New Left Notes*. The New Left collections at the Tamiment Library, New York University, and the

¹² Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 3.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

Hoover Institute of War and Peace Studies at Stanford University, have been consulted in order to study SDS writings, speeches and correspondence, and the Oral History Collection at Columbia University proved essential for its holdings of SDSers' reminiscences from Old Guarders such as Leni Wildflower, to Weathermen David Gilbert and Jeff Jones. Also consulted were contemporary New Left publications, such as *Liberation*, *The Movement*, and *Radical America*. The *New York Times* has given the perspective of predominantly white, liberal opinion whilst also allowing access to key quotes from both prominent and grassroots New Leftists.

Oral history forms an important and substantial component of this research. It allows gender issues to be tackled directly and allows access to grassroots participants. A variety of oral histories have been employed. These include archival testimonies and the television documentary directed by SDSer Helen Garvy, *Rebels With A Cause*, which included reminiscences of many prominent and not so prominent SDSers. Secondary literature that contained oral history has also been employed.¹⁴ Works such as Rebecca Klatch's *A Generation Divided* and Sara Evans' *Personal Politics* contain significant oral testimonies, and published works by Paul Potter, Todd Gitlin, Susan Stern and Bill Ayers can be considered as published primary sources.¹⁵ Moreover, through the academic Internet discussion group H-women, contact has been made with men and women who were active in SDS. Respondents included women who attended SDS meetings, for example, or who participated in community organising, as well as Jane Adams and Heather Booth, key female SDS leadership figures. Jane Adams raised the issue of women's unequal status within the movement in a 1967

¹⁴ Helen Garvy (Prod./Dir.), *Rebels With A Cause* (2001).

issue of *New Left Notes* and became national secretary of SDS in 1968.¹⁶ Heather Booth was active in the early years of SNCC and became a prominent member organiser against the war, organising a women's workshop at the 'We Won't Go conference' in 1966. Both Booth and Adams raised the question of women's marginalisation within SDS and were also active in women's liberation. The oral interviews were undertaken through a questionnaire. (see Appendix 1). This was sent out to the email addresses of those SDSers contacted via H-Women. It is not the intention to treat the oral histories as representative of all male and female experiences in the New Left, and they are perceived as individual perceptions rather than as examples of universal experiences. Oral histories are considered to be representations of truth, memoir, rather than actual fact, and those used in this project have been analysed with this in mind.

¹⁵ Paul Potter, *A Name For Ourselves*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1971); Gitlin, *Sixties*; Susan Stern, *With the Weathermen* (Doubleday Garden City: New York, 1974); Bill Ayers, *Fugitive Days* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

¹⁶ She urged that women refuse 'to be intimidated by the male chauvinism which does exist, even within the movement', quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 187.

Chapter One

SDS 1962-1965

This chapter will introduce key themes and ideologies which helped to define SDS in its early years, and to some extent, impacted on the organisation throughout its existence. It will find that from the release of the Port Huron Statement at the 1962 conference of the same name, the organisation's intellectualism, its use of language and its role allocation had a significant impact on gender relations and on representations of masculinity and femininity within SDS. The initial years of SDS were ones of both opportunity and oppression for women. Men dominated the positions of power in an overtly intellectual organisation, whilst the majority of SDS women undertook administrative and mundane menial tasks, and were reluctant to speak in the intimidating cerebral atmosphere of SDS meetings. Women's marginalisation was reinforced by their absence from the rhetoric of the organisation, as official and unofficial documents employed gender-exclusive language. Although women played a crucial role within SDS, often their only access to the upper echelons of power was through their relationships with male leaders. However, the chapter will also highlight the exhilaration and sense of community that male and female SDSers felt in belonging to an organisation that preached inclusivity. Both male and female members of SDS, it will reveal, were conditioned into social roles. Much of the sexism that existed within the organisation was unconscious and inadvertent, and the spirit of friendship and camaraderie that existed amongst members of early SDS blinded many women to the chauvinism, unconsidered or not, which existed in the

organisation. Women, however, were also empowered by the camaraderie and new experiences that early SDS provided.

In January 1960, the organisation Student League for Industrial Democracy was renamed Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). SDS's name change illustrated its intention to move away from the narrow focus on labour suggested by its previous and rather cumbersome title, and indicated its desire to broaden its horizons to embrace a wider set of issues. Moreover, in its rejection of the name of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), SDS signalled its progression away from the Old Left and its embrace of the politics that would define the new decade.¹ As its new title suggested, the untapped reserves of American youth would be SDS's primary target audience, as the campuses of US universities became the new arenas of political activism and protest in the 1960s.

This is not to say, however, that the New Left had nothing in common with the Old. There is a long and vital history of leftism in the United States. This ranges from the ideas of Marx and Lenin brought by the wave of East and Southern European immigrants in the latter half of the nineteenth century to the International Workers of the World (or Wobblies) in the early twentieth century and the 'red decade' of the 1930s, where the achievements of the American Communist and Socialist parties saw the young, in particular, flock to the cause. The years after the Second World War continued to see sectarianism and factionalism beset the Old Left, as radicals split over Stalinism and their support of communism and were further affected by the international and domestic consequences of the Cold War. The CP had squandered the

¹ Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 16-17.

political goodwill of the war years, and the decade 'up to 1956 had not to be a good one for the American Communists', as they failed to mobilise New Dealers around an anti-Cold War banner.² The post-war Red Scare also had a profound effect on the diminishing fortunes of the CP. McCarthyism created an environment where Communists were presented as a subversive and seditious force and many lost their jobs, were denied social security and passports, and risked jail under the Smith Act. Moreover, as Party headquarters and meetings were targeted by anti-communist vigilante groups, many Communists disappeared underground.³ By the mid-1950s, the American CP was also racked by factionalism as dissenters and the Old Guard within the Party split over events of the Stalin years, and then in 1956, were dismayed by the Soviet Union's incursion into Hungary. In the aftermath of 1956, 'the United States was left without any significant nationally organized party espousing socialism'.⁴ There remained, however, life in the Old Left, and despite the CP's demise, it was from the 'alphabet soup of tiny self-fissuring socialist and Trotskyist sects'. Further there were 'grouplets who tried in competing ways to find a voice for becalmed socialism, to wind their way beyond Stalinism and liberalism'.⁵ It was in these groups that we can trace the influences on the emerging New Left.

Maurice Isserman outlined the links between the Old and New Left in his work, *If I Had a Hammer*. Many of the anti-Stalin, anti-communist radicals of the 1940s and 50s gravitated to the orbit of Max Shachtman. His mentoring of young protégés Irving Howe and Michael Harrington (themselves influential on New Leftist ideology), for

² Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 4.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁵ Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 76.

example, caused Isserman to comment that Shachtman's 'single-minded fervor [acted] as the midwife at the birth of a new American Left'.⁶ Shachtman's leadership of the Workers Party (WP) which became the Independent Socialist League (ISL) in 1948, with the youth affiliate the Socialist Youth League, saw these small groups display an unusual propensity in the Old Left for introspection, internal dissent and questioning their own political assumptions, whilst still retaining cadre discipline. Shachtmanites also drew supporters from a radical bohemian milieu in Chicago and New York with, for example, Beat poet Allen Ginsberg giving readings at meetings.⁷ The Beat culture of the 1950s, which was a notable influence on teenage SDSers, provided another bridge between the Old and New Lefts. Works such as *Howl* and *On the Road* influenced the young growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. The Beats had a further influence, however, on the political, rather than the cultural growth of the New Left and SDS. Michael Harrington, the Shachtman protégé, who would become the most influential Old Left essayist within the formative years of the New Left, also had a bohemian background within 1950s beat culture, as he became 'a kind of Bolshevik version of Kerouac's "Dean Moriarty"'.⁸

In the works of the New York Intellectuals, it is possible to trace the similarities and influences that the Old Left passed to the New. Alongside Michael Harrington, future darlings of the New Left C. Wright Mills and Paul Goodman were both closely associated with *Politics* in the 1940s. Moreover, the New Left, Hugh Wilford contended, shared the *Politics* intellectuals' 'abhorrence of collectivism, technology and bureaucracy [and] also their emphasis on the values of the community, the physic

⁶ Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer*, p. 37.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 61.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 61.

and bodily needs of the individual, and personal empowerment'.⁹ Howe's *Dissent* also shared political themes such as an emphasis on values, decentralisation and the link between the political order and personal life that also characterised and resonated in the New Left.¹⁰ The closeness of the links between the New York Intellectuals and the New Left caused a blurring of the lines between the beginnings of the New Left and the end of the Old. SDS, it appears, did not emerge in a vacuum. '[T]he early New Left', Maurice Isserman maintained, 'had emerged from the Old Left in ways that made it difficult to perceive exactly where the one ended and the other began'.¹¹ In 1968, Hannah Arendt commented on the similarities between the discourses of the Old and New Left, asserting how many articles, essays and comments in *Politics*, 'read as though they were written today or yesterday'.¹² Red-diaper babies (children of radical leftist parents) were often attracted to New Leftist groups such as SDS and Old Leftists Steve Max, Bob Ross and Dick Flacks held key positions in early SDS. Moreover, by the beginning of the 1960s, Max Shachtman's attempts at opening up the Socialist Party had seen a merger between ISL and the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL). This group enjoyed success on campus amongst the same elements that brought future recruits to SDS and other New Left groups. Indeed, at the beginning of the sixties, YPSL and SDS were competing for the same campus support and SDS was initially regarded by YPSL as more of a recruiting pool than a serious political rival.¹³

⁹ Hugh Wilford, *The New York Intellectuals* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 155-6.

¹⁰ Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer*, pp. 117-8.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. xiii.

¹² Wilford, *New York Intellectuals*, p. 156.

¹³ Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer*, pp. 185-6.

Old Leftists did engage with their potential successors. In 1961 Steve Max (YPSLer and future SDSer) identified SDS as the leader of the new radicals.¹⁴ Irving Howe and the New York Intellectuals, Isserman argued, had been waiting for the new generation of radicals to appear, and in a sense hoped to recreate them in their own image.¹⁵ 'Perhaps', Howe stressed, 'I should not have gotten so emotionally entangled in disputes with the New Left'.¹⁶ The main bone of contention, and the issue that caused the schism between the New Left and the Old, was their respective attitudes towards communism. At the behest of its founder organisation the LID, which, with its roots in the Socialist Party, was vigorously anti-communist and extolled trade unions, the Port Huron Statement included a passage asserting that,

as democrats [members of the SDS are] in basic opposition to the communist system. The Soviet Union...rests on the total suppression of organized opposition, as well as...numerous small and large denials of human dignity rationalized.¹⁷

However, the New Left was not as concerned about communism as the Shachtmanite anti-communists and the New York Intellectuals. Members of SDS had an alternative and more recent history than the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the de-Stalinisation crisis and the Hungarian invasion. Although Tom Hayden warned against both red-baiting and anti-anti-communism, for SDS, the anti-communism of the McCarthy witchhunts was a much more relevant recent experience, which shaped its political outlook more profoundly than the fear and threat of communism. Whilst the Old Left saw the dangers of a Soviet puppet regime in Castro's Cuba, the new generation of radicals

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 203.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 117-8

¹⁶ Howe, quoted in *ibid*, p. 116.

¹⁷ Port Huron Statement, in James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 350-1.

looked to Cuba as a third world revolution, evidence that the status quo and the old establishment could be changed. For the early SDSers who wanted to change the world, the Old Left ideologies and the Leftists themselves seemed to be tired and spent in a way that the third world's leftist revolutionaries and politics were not.¹⁸ Despite its significant influence in the birth of the New Left, the Old Left's 'tired heroism' was not the message that was going to inspire the new generation of radicals.

The women's movement, furthermore, was not an entirely novel departure. American feminism was an established historical trend. True, the 1950s had seen a massive reassertion of patriarchy, but there were cracks in domestic containment. At first glance, as Elaine Tyler May asserted, it seemed that the Cold War was also being fought in the neatly trimmed gardens and sparkingly new kitchens of suburbanites' own slice of the American Dream. When, in 1959, Nixon visited Soviet premier Krushchev in Moscow for an acrimonious meeting, the two leaders played out their Cold War battle through the suburban domestic ideal. 'For Nixon', May contended, 'American superiority rested on utopian ideals of home, complete with modern appliances and distinct gender roles'. Suburbia, she added, was serving as 'a bulwark against communism and class conflict'.¹⁹ Moreover, familial and marital security emerged from society's anxieties over the fear of nuclear war. 'No man who owns his house and lot can be a Communist', suburban developer William J. Levitt stressed, '[h]e has too much to do'.²⁰ As one 1950s women's magazine put it, readers should be 'a partner of man...not his rival, his enemy, or his plaything. Your partnership in most

¹⁸ Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer*, pp. 122-3.

¹⁹ Elaine Tyler May, 'Cold War-Warm Hearth: Politics and the Family in Postwar America', in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (ed.), *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 158.

²⁰ Quoted in Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 12.

cases will produce children, and together you and the man will create a haven, a home, a way of life'.²¹

There were breaches, however, in this idealised, domestic bliss. In the 1950s, critical observers of this middle-class life were more keen to stress the disadvantages for men that emerged from strict gender role allocation, and examined the dehumanising way that men, in their public roles, were forced into large impersonal organisations. David Riesman recognised the manner in which the corporate structure forced middle-class males into 'deadening, highly structured peer interactions'.²² By 1960 twice as many women were employed as in 1940 and 40 percent of women over 16 held some sort of job, despite the fact that job opportunities for women were limited, wages were low and prospects mainly confined to menial employment.²³ The increase in women's employment was continuing, and, as William Chafe asserted, 'it was... being led by the same middle-class wives and mothers who allegedly had found new contentment in domesticity'.²⁴

Indeed, a growing number of women began to undermine this domestic ideal. The *New York Times* described the middle-class women who felt 'stifled in their homes....Like shut ins, they feel left out'. A 1960 CBS documentary also discussed the 'trapped housewife'.²⁵ Women in Levittown often complained that they felt trapped and isolated, facing endless chores and child rearing.²⁶ There were

²¹ Quoted in *ibid*, p. 13.

²² David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), quoted in Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books 1996), p. 16.

²³ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 126.

²⁴ Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, p. 127.

²⁵ Isserman/Kazin, *America Divided*, p. 13.

²⁶ May, *Homeward Bound*, p. 155.

disappointments and frustrations that arose out of the efforts to create the ideal home and, although women were keen to dismiss any sacrifices that they had made, common frustrations emerged describing their loneliness and lack of intellectual stimulation. Female students at Barnard College, Sociologist Mirra Komarovsky asserted, also often felt frustrated at the lack of opportunities to take their academic skills forward.²⁷ Some women did enjoy certain types of freedom. The increase in women taking jobs saw them develop an experience outside the home that would increasingly become the norm into the 1960s. Moreover, in the bedroom, the boundaries were being expanded: the Kinsey Report suggested that as many as half of all American women had sex before marriage and one-quarter of married women had had intercourse with men other than their husband. By the end of the 1950s, over 80 percent of wives between 18 and 44 used some sort of contraception.²⁸ Certain women openly contested the domestic consensus. Betty Friedan's work, *The Feminine Mystique*, was a major influence as it stressed to well-educated women that there was a world outside the home, and urged thousands of women to go back to school, pursue careers and revive female independence. Thousands of copies were sold, and millions of discontented housewives found their voice. Educated women who had struggled within the familial role berated themselves and their peers and many of these women expressed their hope that their children would avoid a similar fate. 'I want [my daughter]', one mother wrote, 'to grow up in a society where she will have a comfortable and important place'. Another urged other mothers 'to help their daughters to avoid the traps into which they had already fallen'.²⁹

²⁷ Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey*, pp. 125-6.

²⁸ Quoted in Isserman/Kazin, *America Divided*, p. 14.

²⁹ Letter to Betty Friedan, quoted in May, *Homeward Bound*, p. 191.

Indeed, a number of these daughters were drawn to SDS by its inclusivity and openness. Those who were inspired to join SDS in its early years were children of the 50s, 'intellectual, idealistic and ideological',³⁰ The second wave of recruits to the organisation became known as Prairie Power. Much more radical than their predecessors, the later years of SDS (post 1966) were dominated by students motivated to join by the ongoing Vietnam war and by the black freedom struggle. These SDSers, unlike their liberal-inspired predecessors, were increasingly radical. They were unlikely to see value in their country, interpreting its dual battles in the jungles of Vietnam and in the black ghettos of America as symptomatic of the United States' racism and imperialism, which they increasingly identified as stemming from its capitalist ethos. In both waves of recruits to SDS, there were key similarities in backgrounds and political ideology as well as important differences in experience.

The majority of SDSers, both the first and second wave of recruits, were white. 'We were almost all white', confirmed Jane Adams.³¹ Politically motivated blacks, understandably, were overwhelmingly drawn to their own struggle for civil rights and joined organisations such as SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality. In terms of class backgrounds, Evans argued that '[s]tudies of the family backgrounds of student activists uniformly find them to be from middle- to upper-middle-class families'.³² Moreover, parents of SDS activists were, on the whole, educated, with 'both parents

³⁰ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), p. 14.

³¹ Jane Adams, Own Oral History Interview (hereafter OOI).

³² Sarah Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 105.

of over half...[having] completed at least some amount of college'.³³ Rebecca Klatch has published an important and ground-breaking study on the gender breakdown of activists' class backgrounds, based on an analysis of their parents' education and occupation. She shows that 'women... come from more privileged class backgrounds than their male counterparts.' Her sample also revealed that 'SDS women [had both] the most highly educated fathers...[and were] unique from other activists in that the majority [had] mothers who were employed during their childhood'. She contrasts this with her findings that 'while SDS men also come from homes with both highly educated mothers and fathers, the majority of their mothers stayed at home throughout their childhood.'³⁴ SDSer Jane Adams's parents were middle-class, and both worked for some time during her upbringing. Adams' father was a director of the Unemployment Compensation office and sometime farmer, and her mother worked as a bookkeeper in a Laundromat.³⁵ 'My family', Marilyn Katz asserted, 'was a typical...family...living in a middle-class, white neighbourhood'. Her 'father worked [and her] mother stayed at home'.³⁶ Both of George Brosi's parents, he maintained, were educated people (his father was a scientist and his mother was a teacher) although his 'mother was a full-time home-maker from the time of her marriage'.³⁷

Religion was another important category in the background of young SDSers. 'SDS members', Klatch found, 'were split evenly between Jews and Protestants'.³⁸ George Brosi told that, although 'he was brought up partly without a church', the religious

³³ Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 38.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 38.

³⁵ Adams, OOI.

³⁶ Marilyn Katz, OOI.

³⁷ George Brosi, OOI.

³⁸ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 39.

influence in his life was Unitarian.³⁹ Jane Adams' parents had Jewish backgrounds, but she 'began attending the Unitarian Fellowship...when [she] was thirteen', although she also stated that her family 'were oddballs in [their] rural upland community as intellectuals [and] non-believers'.⁴⁰ Marilyn Katz's family was also Jewish, although she asserted that she did not feel that religion was a relevant category. Apparently for her, religion was of little issue in SDS.⁴¹ Historian Doug Rossinow identified the important influence that the Baptist Church had in the radical oasis of Austin, Texas, particularly in combating the traditionally conservative values of the state as the advocates of a liberal tradition could appeal to the Baptist tradition 'which strongly favored separation of church and state'.⁴² Indeed, Casey Hayden, a key member in the early years of SDS and one of the first SDSers to push for women's rights in the Movement, was a student at the University of Texas at Austin and a Baptist.

'A significant proportion of the early new left', Sara Evans asserted, 'consisted of "red diaper babies"'.⁴³ Certain SDSers, particularly of the Old Guard, were raised by parents with socialist or communist leanings, and therefore were exposed to radical ideas from an early age. As Evans asserted, these radical parents were concentrated 'particularly in New York City, and not surprisingly also produced a high proportion of activist children'.⁴⁴ Jane Adams told of her family's background in the Old Left and in Civil Rights. Her 'parents', she explained, 'joined the Socialist Party during the 1930s where they met...and helped organise a chapter of the NAACP where they lived in Murphysboro'. Significantly, Adams also saw her mother as 'a powerful

³⁹ Brosi, OOI.

⁴⁰ Adams, OOI.

⁴¹ Katz, OOI.

⁴² Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1998), p. 45.

⁴³ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 119.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

influence on [her] life...a greater role model'.⁴⁵ Evans also argued that children of Old Left parents developed with a generic knowledge that oppression of all types existed. Moreover, 'daughters of the old left tended to grow up knowing, at least on some level, that women were oppressed'. The term 'male supremacy' was already in the common discourse of Old Leftists.⁴⁶ As two anonymous women quoted by Evans testified, feminist attitudes were already inbred in certain women who later joined SDS. 'I always knew that women were fucked over', said one. The second told of her mother's disgust when her daughter described her as a 'housewife'. However, she also expressed her belief that 'At the same time I also thought that I was never going to be a housewife...I was going to be a doctor...the idea of marriage and the family never hit me really until I got to college...'.⁴⁷

The Port Huron Statement, as we have seen, played a meaningful and important role in the history of early SDS, and, with a close consideration of the language in operation within the statement, much can be revealed about gender roles within the organisation in its early years. Women had a minimal, almost invisible, presence in the Port Huron Statement. This was in spite of evidence that women played a role in its drafting at the Port Huron Conference of 1962. 'A number of women participated in drafting sections of the statement', asserted historian and SDSer Sara Evans. 'Judith Cowan on foreign aid and economic development; Theresa del Pazo on economics. Mary Varela joined vigorously in a debate on religion. Sharon Jeffrey pushed for

⁴⁵ Adams, OOI. Other participants in my own sample, however, had no history of radicalism in their families.

⁴⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 120.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 120, 122.

broader integration of issues... [and, Evans maintained,] one may guess that Casey Hayden's "vocal role" was crucial'.⁴⁸ The document did begin in an inclusive manner. 'We are people of this generation', it announced, 'bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world *we* inherit', which suggested the authors' desires to engage their readers with the articulation of shared experiences and common goals.⁴⁹ Their language rejected the didactic, all-knowing tone of other political journalism, and focused on the similarities between the authors' and readers' background, education and attitudes to both their situation and to the United States. This vision of inclusivity, however, was quickly shattered. A gendered use of language became evident in the statement, unconsciously according men a voice whilst ensuring that women's perspective and participation remained unsaid or dismissed. 'We regard *men*', the document stated, 'as infinitely precious and possessed of unfulfilled capacities for reason, freedom, and love' and lamented the '...l[oneliness, estrangement, isolation [that] describe[s] the vast distance between man and man today'.⁵⁰ The exclusively male view of the Port Huron Statement is reinforced by the use of gendered terms 'fraternity' and 'brotherhood', which again isolated women from the narrative and thus from the new vision of society that the document was advocating. Women, too, have been omitted from the collective memory of the Port Huron Conference. As Sara Evans argued, although women were present at the gathering, 'when men in attendance are asked to recall women who were there, they have to rack their brains to remember'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 113.

⁴⁹ Port Huron Statement in Miller, *Democracy*, p. 329. My italics.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 332. No italics added.

⁵¹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 113. Interviews with Paul Booth, Steve Max, Sharon Jeffry, Betty Garman.

This is not to argue that the authors of the Port Huron Statement were deliberately alienating women in their choice of language, or that they were intent on presenting a vision of an exclusively male society. Indeed, despite the predominance of the male voice throughout the text, they stated that the 'goal of man and society should be human independence', and asserted that '[h]uman relationships should involve fraternity and honesty' (no italics added).⁵² The language evident in the Port Huron Statement was an unconscious form of prejudice, and the confusion in the language emphasised this, as 'man', 'people' and 'human' became interchangeable words to represent humankind. It is telling that the rhetoric utilised by its authors reflects the exclusively male language that was apparent in the wider society throughout the 1950s and early in the 1960s. This was an unconscious marginalisation of women, and the use of 'man' to refer to humankind was common practice at the time. However, in a movement that sought to implement participatory democracy and realise a more inclusive vision of society, the use of gendered language was significant.

The Port Huron Statement established SDS's early commitment to a theory-based, intellectual approach to political change. The role that intellectualism and the subsequent charges of elitism played in the early SDS is an important one. The statement highlighted SDS's emphasis on ideas, and the document revealed the intellectualism that was to be a key influence in SDS. The document stated that the first task of a social movement was 'to convince people that the search for orienting theories and the creation of human values...is complex but worthwhile'.⁵³ Moreover, in its support of the ways that 'a revitalised Labor movement' can be included in the

⁵² Miller, *Democracy*, p. 332.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 332.

new politics, the statement firmly emphasised SDS's conviction that the student middle classes are theory-based first, whilst the labour classes are primarily action-based. 'Middle class students...must open the campus to labor...through publications, action programs, curricula, while labor opens its house...through internships, request for aid (on the picket line, with handbills...) [and] politics.'⁵⁴ The prominence of intellectualism and theory in the document was fully apparent in this suggested blueprint for direction that SDS and the generic New Left should take. 'Any new left in America', the document stated, 'must be...a left with real intellectual skills, committed to deliberativeness, honesty, reflection as working tools'.⁵⁵

The statement was also couched in a cerebral language that established the precedent that SDS, particularly the National Council and leadership, would utilise an intellectual style to put forward its ideas. This emphasis on the intellectual and support for theory had a further effect, as the high-brow language of the Port Huron Statement combined with the male domination of proceedings at the conference to set another precedent in helping to establish a male-dominated and gendered culture within SDS. Whereas it acted as a stimulus for some SDSers, other testimonies from participants revealed many SDSers were intimidated by the cerebral atmosphere that emanated from the male-dominated SDS leadership and which predominated at National Council meetings. Barbara Easton, no stranger to radicalism as a Marxist and member of the Communist Party, described how she felt totally 'overwhelmed' by a National Council meeting in 1964 and 'there was absolutely no possibility that [she] would get up and say anything'.⁵⁶ Despite being involved with prominent SDSer

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 371.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 373.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 115

Rennie Davis, Leni Wildflower also found it difficult to speak. 'How many times' she said, '[that] I talked in an SDS meeting early on was limited'.⁵⁷ 'I never spoke up myself', she explained, 'everyone was bright and articulate, especially the male leadership'.⁵⁸ 'I often felt invisible', Vivian Rothstein recalled, 'in group meetings. The men mostly spoke and the women stayed silent. This', she explained, 'made me crazy, but I could never explain why'.⁵⁹ Marilyn Katz was daunted by the overall employment of cerebral rhetoric that was a particular preserve of early SDS meetings, stating that she was 'intimidated by the language, which seemed to [her] like a foreign tongue'.⁶⁰ 'SDS debates', Rothstein asserted, 'were very intense, very long, very thorough, with lots of discussion and debate. I didn't feel I could participate in the larger group discussions'.⁶¹

The pre-eminence of the cerebral in early SDS was frequently perturbing to female SDSers who recognised disturbing similarities between SDS's intellectual bias and the gendered cerebralism that was particularly evident in the Old Left. The male leaders of SDS, as Paul Potter maintained, were 'highly motivated, success oriented, competitive men...it was both fraternal and competitive, but everyone talked about fraternalness, nobody talked about competition'.⁶² 'There were these New York Jewish intellectuals', Prairie Power leader Greg Calvert asserted, 'who [thought] that everyone west of the Hudson [was] an ignoramus'. 'Early SDSers', he added, 'displayed enormous upper middle-class arrogance...intellectual superiority [and]...

⁵⁷ Leni Wildflower, Oral History Collection Columbia University (hereafter OHC CU).

⁵⁸ Wildflower, OOI.

⁵⁹ Rothstein, OOI.

⁶⁰ Katz, OOI.

⁶¹ Rothstein, OOI.

⁶² Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 109-10.

snobbishness', treating him 'like some sort of ignorant bum'.⁶³ These sentiments expressed by Calvert were frequent criticisms levelled by the later SDSers at their predecessors, as SDS became a more diverse organisation.⁶⁴ Calvert identified the root of this language in the rhetoric of the Old Left. Although he asserted that 'there was no sense of anti-Semitism in SDS', he particularly lays the blame with the 'New York Jewish Intellectuals', who were 'frequently resented' for dominating debates 'with their Old Left schooling'.⁶⁵

The emphasis on action in the early years of SDS was stressed less obviously than the support of theory-based initiatives. However, early SDSers did not present their vision of the role of the organisation as totally intellectually driven without a regard for the role that action could play. Throughout the Port Huron Statement, there was a desire to reject apathy and become more goal-oriented. Although the document supported the strategy of non-violent action, employed in the Montgomery Bus boycott and the sit-in movement, its emphasis on action more directly alluded to the specific type of action that confronted apathy, such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's [SNCC] voter registration. The Port Huron Statement did allude to action-based initiatives but these were purely non-violent in their method. Indeed, the authors found 'violence to be abhorrent' and argued that it was imperative that 'the means of violence be abolished'.⁶⁶ This is a very different approach to the violent action that was to enrapture SDS in its later years, and underlines the liberalism that was initially at the heart of the beliefs of old guard SDSers. Those present, SDSer

⁶³ Greg Calvert, OHC CU.

⁶⁴ The success of this diversification, and the role that action played in the ousting of the intellectual slant in SDS will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

⁶⁵ David Gilbert, OHC CU.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Democracy*, p. 333.

Michael Harrington put it, 'were nonsocialists who took the formal promises of American democracy with deep and innocent seriousness'.⁶⁷ The early leadership of SDS, historian James Miller asserted, was made up of 'naïve reformers who grew more radical as they became disillusioned'.⁶⁸ In these precocious years of the organisation, attitudes were not those of the radicals who advocated revolution that were apparent in the latter years of the New Left.

Many of the Old Guard of early SDS were influenced by liberal ideas. Todd Gitlin remarked on the similarities between his own political outlook and that of the New Dealers. 'Reading [the political memoir of Samuel Beer – speechwriter for FDR], I am struck by the same mood which carried me into the early New Left almost thirty years later'.⁶⁹ The New Left's political culture, moreover, carried liberal traditions with it, from both the 'small-d' democratic tradition which, as Gitlin asserted, saw it as 'decisions made *by* publics, *in* public', and 'Kennedy's managerial liberalism', which implied the 'belief that political style is central to political substance'. Indeed, Gitlin suggested that the rise in the popularity of the New Left came partly as a result of Kennedy's brand of liberalism failing to deliver on its promises. As a result, he contended, two political cultures, liberalism and New Leftism, 'each claiming the same political ground, were on a collision course'.⁷⁰ The early years of SDS highlighted this, and James Miller outlined key Port Huron participants Dick Flacks' and Tom Hayden's gradual flight from liberal influence towards a more independent position, which was, in part, influenced by sceptics of liberalism such as C. Wright

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 143.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.143. Whether or not these later radicals and revolutionaries were any less sexist will be discussed in future chapters.

⁶⁹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 59.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 134-5.

Mills and the journal *Studies on the Left*. These theorists argued that New Deal liberalism had 'issued in an oligarchy of "business and labor as systems of power"' and asserted that liberals '[a]s the architects and custodians of the warfare state...[had] been the primary generators of the anti-democratic trends in American society'.⁷¹

In its early years, SDS trod a line between liberalism and radicalism which was highly distinctive. This absence of overt radicalism in the Port Huron Statement was particularly apparent in the document's most celebrated theme, participatory democracy. Participatory democracy was fundamental to the ideals inherent in the Port Huron Statement and, indeed, to the beliefs of the New Left, certainly until the end of 1965. James Miller highlighted the New Leftist political leanings of the early SDSers in their employment of the notion of participatory democracy, and argued that Tom Hayden's evocation of the American principle of democracy inspired a sense of patriotism to which he added 'a transcendent political vision'.⁷² Moreover, the absence of a radical zeal in the Port Huron Statement is apparent by studying what role in the political process Tom Hayden envisaged participatory democracy as playing. Miller asserts that Hayden's hopes for participatory democracy were 'supplementary to representative democracy', intending the idea to work alongside, rather than supplant, the established democratic institutions in the United States. This view is supported by many key participants at the Port Huron Conference. Richard Flacks saw participatory democracy as not 'abandoning organizational structures of the usual sort, like elected officers and parliamentary procedure'.⁷³ The language used

⁷¹ Miller, *Democracy*, p. 169; C. Wright Mills and 'The Ultra Right and the Liberals', *Studies on the Left* editorial, Autumn 1962, quoted in *ibid*, p. 169.

⁷² Miller, *Democracy*, p. 142.

⁷³ *Ibid*, pp. 142-3. Tom Hayden was one of the document's authors and one of the most important figures in SDS for the duration of its existence.

in the Port Huron Statement, and early SDSers' commitment to their democratic principles and traditions of the United States' political system, emphasised, however, early SDS's similarities with the traits of social reforming liberals, as Todd Gitlin outlined, rather than the revolutionary attributes of many SDSers post-1965.

The idea of participatory democracy also played an important role in terms of gender and in the development of a feminist consciousness in the latter part of the 1960s. Paradoxically, whilst the statement accorded women little voice within the text and its vision was predominantly couched in male-exclusive terminology, the support for a more participatory type of democracy proved the initial spark towards a more inclusive politics which was adopted by women within SDS by the mid to late 1960s. Thus, participatory democracy, despite its seemingly rather limited vision, provided limitless inspiration for women seeking a new stance that would facilitate a more egalitarian approach to the political processes of the left.⁷⁴

It is evident, therefore, that feminist ideas were apparent within the consciousness of certain SDSers, yet it took some time for these sentiments to materialise and become areas for discussion within the wider SDS arena. As with their apparent failure to recognise the invisibility of women and the use of sexist discourse in the Port Huron Statement, women's awareness and judgement were clouded by their elation at joining SDS and the community spirit and experience of belonging that they argued the organisation gave. This sense of inclusiveness and participation in a beloved community was particularly apparent in the testimonies of SDSers who joined the organisation prior to 1966. Initially, participants at the Port Huron Conference

⁷⁴ The importance of participatory democracy to the emerging women's consciousness and the women's liberation movement will be discussed in further chapters.

frequently stated their sense of the existence of a community amongst SDSers and their participation in it. The Port Huron Statement, they maintained, presented men and women with an opportunity to radicalise the political institutions of the United States, through its vision of a new society and the 'establishment of a democracy based on individual participation'.⁷⁵ Thus, those present at the Port Huron Conference told of a feeling of empowerment that was augmented by the sense of community where SDSers would work in harmony to implement this ideal. 'We blessed our luck', Tom Hayden asserted, 'at being alive and together. We were truly in love with each other'.⁷⁶ The SDS circle, Todd Gitlin maintained, were 'a surrogate family'.⁷⁷ Barbara Haber emphasised her sense of a connection between the participants 'on a gut level' as, 'we see things basically the same way'.⁷⁸ The exhilaration that many SDSers at the Port Huron Conference experienced emanated from and, at the same time, augmented their sense of community. Barbara Haber encapsulated both the sense of elation and the thrill of belonging. 'I felt it was heaven', she remarked, 'the intelligence and the creativity and the sparkle and the energy and the humor were just great and wonderful'.⁷⁹ These SDSers believed that history was being made, and were excited at being participants in the community that created it. 'I think we knew it was historic', asserted Dorothy Burledge, and the newness of it 'made it more exciting in some ways'.⁸⁰ 'It felt like the dawn of a new age', Sharon Jeffry maintained, 'it was exalting'.⁸¹ This notion of harmony and feelings of optimism and elation diverted women's attention away from the sexism that existed within SDS, and their secondary

⁷⁵ Port Huron Statement, Miller, *Democracy*, p. 332.

⁷⁶ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 30.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 30.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 25

⁸¹ Anderson, *The Movement*, p. 65.

position within the organisation. Women's perception of, and commitment to, the idea of SDS's beloved community and the exhilaration at their participation in it, goes a long way to explaining women's initial failure to recognise their own oppression in the early years of SDS.

This sense of participation in treading new ground and feelings of enthusiasm and optimism were also prevalent in the early years of SDS, when the organisation was a small, tight-knit group. Face-to-face communication was common and people knew each other, dated and were married to each other and worked together in a community of friends. Heather Booth was particularly keen to stress her experience of the exhilaration and sense of belonging within SDS. 'You were finding new expression', she argued. 'We were all in this together, we were changing our lives, we were changing the world. It was very exciting...We were building everything totally in concert'.⁸² Although oppression and prejudice was apparent in SDS, women's testimonies show how they frequently were unable to look beyond the sense of community and see sexist attitudes and practices at work within their organisation. 'SDS folks', Helen Garvy maintained, 'felt like kindred spirits...it was a community of like-minded people. I totally loved it', she explained. 'I liked the searching for how to make the world a better place...the way people worked together and respected each other. I found', she added, 'people who shared my values and my passion'.⁸³ SDSer Jim Monsonis contended that 'there was a communal sense in which people cared for each other beyond simply as political comrades'.⁸⁴ 'I remember', recalled Leni

⁸² Heather Booth, OHC CU, p. 1–39.

⁸³ Helen Garvy, OOI.

⁸⁴ Jim Monsonis, OOI.

Wildflower, writing to my parents saying 'I'm home....[It was] absolutely a sort of a beloved community'.⁸⁵ For Vivian Rothstein, the spirit of the early years of SDS was 'more of a dedicated community of activists'. However, she also expressed some of the sense of a supportive communalism that other SDSers articulated. '[SDSers] supported each other and worked with a common goal. It felt,' she stressed, 'serious, focussed, dedicated and committed'.⁸⁶ George Brosi's testimony also supported the idea of camaraderie existing amongst early SDSers. 'We were almost a beloved community in most respects', he maintained. 'We really did love each other and we were inordinately considerate in a lot of ways'.⁸⁷

Throughout the reminiscences, identity played a key role. The organisation had given SDSers an important identity and this was something that they were unwilling to relinquish. For many, both male and female, this finding of an identity within SDS, which was both new and influential, was of primary importance and took precedence over, and often overwhelmed, their gendered identity. Some women, of course, failed to recognise the presence of gender-based difference. Whilst accepting that there was a discrepancy between the ways that people were treated and perceived in SDS, in hindsight they still put this down to differences other than gender. Tellingly, Andrea Cousins viewed the variation in treatment as 'more like the in-group vs. the out group...Betty Garman [and]...Casey Hayden seemed to me to be one of the boys...it seemed to me like it was more of a class thing than a gender thing'.⁸⁸ Helen Garvy 'saw it not as male-female, but as quiet versus loud and stylistic differences'. 'People

⁸⁵ Leni Wildflower, OOI.

⁸⁶ Vivian Rothstein, OOI.

⁸⁷ George Brosi, OOI.

⁸⁸ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 170.

who are loud', she argued, 'tend to get more credit than people who work quietly behind the scenes....I just happened to know a lot of men who never got credit for stuff who felt the same way'.⁸⁹

Other men and women were vaguely aware of elements of prejudice, but were more concerned with other values within SDS, and were reluctant to become concerned with what they perceived as a relatively minor issue. SDSers were not willing to rock the boat that gave them the feeling of security and belonging, nor did they want to break the bonds of community established between men and women in early SDS in order to challenge gender-based assumptions. Men who recognised the unequal position of women in the organisation often were also reluctant to challenge the status quo that supported their position within SDS as one of dominance and supremacy. Their identity as members of SDS again took precedence. As SDSer Dorothy Burlage asserted, '[e]verybody was so giddy with the opportunity to do something meaningful....It felt so good, we didn't pay a lot of attention to some things that you might have otherwise questioned, like men's and women's roles. It seemed', she argued, 'so insignificant compared to the general excitement and enthusiasm that it wasn't a big issue'.⁹⁰ Leni Wildflower recognised the function that a sense of exhilaration and community played in hiding the reality of women's position in early SDS. 'In early SDS meetings', she stressed, 'it was so intellectual...I think it was probably real interesting...and so my early memory is not that I was unhappy listening most of the time. I just felt I was learning and that was part of the whole deal'.⁹¹ Only in hindsight did Marilyn Katz identify the spirit in SDS as 'more like a

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹¹ Wildflower, OHC CU. p. 1-48.

nuclear family (explosive)', although she still presented a picture of the 'beloved community [which] was a world view...a way of seeing and being' and she told of her 'exhilaration' at joining SDS.⁹²

SDSer George Brosi argued that 'sexist attitudes were not expressed openly to [his] knowledge', yet his reminiscences reveal the sexualisation and objectification that was at play within early SDS. 'We did not use "politically correct" terminology', he maintained, 'and we talked to other men about how a certain SDS woman was a "nice piece" or whatever'.⁹³ 'SDS was sexist in that us guys wanted to get laid as often as possible by as many women as possible, the prettier the better...I think most of us guys would have been delighted if women in SDS had been as much "penis-freaks" as we were "pussy-freaks"'.⁹⁴ Thus, whilst highlighting an attitude quite contradictory to the idea of the beloved community, Brosi's reminiscences also introduced another dimension to the sexist language evident in early SDS. SDSers still possessed attitudes common in the wider society as a whole, evident in certain members' desire to portray women in a purely sexual light. As Doug Rossinow argued, 'it may seem that the position of women in the new left was no worse than in American culture at large, but in a movement that declaimed a radically egalitarian creed, this rationalization ultimately proved inadequate'.⁹⁵

The notion of objectification and sexualisation is a significant one, and although this was not necessarily recognised at the time, certain people have since testified to a perceived image of women within SDS as being primarily sexual beings without

⁹² Katz, OOI.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Rossinow, *Politics*, p. 181.

intellectual capacity. The ideas of SDS were couched in almost exclusively masculine and intellectual language, and this overwhelmingly 'male' atmosphere was also extended to attitudes to women. '[Guys]... couldn't see beyond the fact', recalled Cindy Decker, 'that I was an attractive female to dealing with me as a person and dealing with my ideas'.⁹⁶ As male radicals sexually objectified women, they too often seemed to categorise themselves in overtly masculine terms, particularly evident in their use of hypermasculine language in their search for sexual gratification. Significantly, these displays of traditional manhood were apparent in the early, intellectually driven years of SDS as well as prevailing in the action-led initiatives of SDS post-1965. 'SDS men', George Brosi asserted, 'sometimes reacted to individual women by saying, "damn I'd like to fuck her"'.⁹⁷ One male leader also commented that '[t]he class struggle turned into the ass struggle when men tried to figure out how they were going to get laid'.⁹⁸ Todd Gitlin recalled the masculinised phrase, '[t]he movement hangs together on the head of a penis', which circulated around the time of the Port Huron Statement and after. Moreover, recounting a conversation with one of the few female members of the SDS inner circle, he stressed how [l]acking a language for her complaint in 1962, she still felt annoyed by this sexism.... But who', he emphasised, 'would have dreamed, then, of saying, "the movement hangs together in the depths of a vagina"?' Moreover, Gitlin tellingly introduced a further implication of this highly sexualised language. 'Such language', he contended, 'might have made the homoerotic implications of male bonding too uncomfortably stark'.⁹⁹ In his search to explain male SDSers' embrace of traditional manifestations of masculinity and

⁹⁶ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 169.

⁹⁷ Brosi, OOI.

⁹⁸ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 108.

manhood, historian Doug Rossinow dismisses the simplistic argument that 1960s radicals were 'rejecting the figures that their parents cut', instead asserting that the 'ethos of restraint' changed and '[m]en began to ventilate more easily long-simmering sentiments and to express them in new ways'.¹⁰⁰ However, it is important to stress that the women, as well as men in SDS, also sought to cast off the restrained sexual attitudes of their parents' generation, and often embraced the more liberated attitudes to sex that were in evidence in the organisation. Thus, for many women, although they were sexualised and subjected to sexism within SDS, female SDSers also found the more relaxed attitudes to sexual relations to be both liberating and empowering. As Marilyn Katz asserted, 'I felt [so] euphoric at the freedom that came with challenging all the notions and myths that I had grown up with, [that] I immediately went out and got laid'.¹⁰¹

The combination of women's sexual empowerment and their sexualisation within SDS was evident in relationships between male leaders and female SDSers in particular, as women were also represented within SDS as being the possession of certain male participants. Often, they were categorised only by their sexual identity and by whom they were sleeping with. Leni Wildflower told that being involved with 'men who had positions of authority in the organisation [Rennie Davis and Paul Booth]...gave [her] entrée into the discussions and what was going on'.¹⁰² Cathy Wilkerson indicated that this attitude to women, and their sexual objectification, caused her to drop out of SDS before her sophomore year. 'There were all these very articulate male leaders and the only women who seemed to be accepted were the women who were in relationships

¹⁰⁰ Rossinow, *Politics*, pp. 300-1.

¹⁰¹ Katz, OOI.

¹⁰² Wildflower, OOI.

with them – with some exceptions...If you wanted to make it in the political world, you had to concentrate on the relationships with men'.¹⁰³ Indeed, a list of prominent women in SDS's early years is evidence to support this point. Casey Hayden, Heather Booth, Mickey Flacks, Barbara Haber all had established relationships with key figures in the SDS leadership. Marge Piercy in her 1969 work *Grand Coolie Damn* referred to male leaders who could 'bring women into the organisation by sleeping with her', suggesting an alternative form of politicisation to the influence of radical parents or the ideals of the beloved community. However, she was keen to stress that 'it is not sufficient to speak of women as being recruited in bed'. Women, Piercy argued, were also attracted to SDS and its male leaders by their rhetoric and 'the ideas that they hear [them] spouting', raising the theme of the attractiveness of intellectualism combined with machismo that the later SDS faction, Weathermen, embodied.¹⁰⁴ Todd Gitlin saw that '[m]en sought [women] out, recruited them...honored their intelligence – then subtly demoted them to girlfriends, wives, note-takers, coffee makers'.¹⁰⁵

The intellectual emphasis of early SDS had a significant impact on many SDS participants. This stress on the cerebral was, as we have seen, initially apparent in the Port Huron Statement. This intellectualism, however, was a double-edged sword. Some testimonies, both male and female, regarded this ideas-based tendency as one of the key reasons that they were attracted to SDS, and made a large impact on why they continued to be impressed by the organisation. Two female SDSers commented that the National Council debates were '[V]ery, very impressive' and contributed

¹⁰³ Klatch, *Generation*, p.169.

¹⁰⁴ Marge Piercy, 'Grand Coolie Damn' in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 430-34. For an in-depth discussion of Weatherman, see Chapter Six.

¹⁰⁵ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 367.

'stimulation', 'zeal' and a sense of belonging.¹⁰⁶ SDS, Helen Garvy maintained, 'was a community of like-minded people and felt like my intellectual home'.¹⁰⁷ George Brosi asserted that he was attracted to the organisation because 'he felt that SDS kids were really smart and impressive'. He also recalled his sense of both exhilaration and awe when attending the Pine Hill National Council Meeting. 'I did not feel intimidated', he maintained, '[however] I did feel exhilarated because everything was on a much deeper intellectual level'.¹⁰⁸ Brosi's testimony also suggests that he experienced intimidation by the very intellectualism of the leaders that he so admired. 'I felt unable to get involved at leadership level', he insisted, 'because I felt like the leaders were a hell of a lot smarter...more articulate and knew more about politics. I imagine', he went on, '[that] many women had exactly the same feelings'.¹⁰⁹ Jim Monsonis also emphasised his mixed feelings. '[I was] intimidated', he asserted, 'they knew so much more...[but I was] excited'.¹¹⁰ 'SDS had many confident people', Helen Garvy maintained, 'who were not shy about speaking out. For some, that was exhilarating, for others', she stressed, 'it was intimidating'.¹¹¹

This is not to argue that intellectualism overwhelmed SDS in this era. There was a desire evident in SDS correspondence to complement thought with action. A document issued by SDS entitled 'Politics, the Individual and SDS' underlines this aspiration, as it emphasised the need to 'combine the capacity for intellectual honesty and clarity with the ability to persuade and accomplish'. The document stressed the importance of integrating theory and action, rather than concentrating on each

¹⁰⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁷ Garvy, OOI.

¹⁰⁸ Brosi, OOI.

¹⁰⁹ Brosi, OOI.

¹¹⁰ Monsonis, OOI.

¹¹¹ Garvy, OOI.

singularly, arguing that 'if only honest and clear the individual tends to be encased in an ivory tower...rather than a participant in the political process, he remains a witness'.¹¹² A letter from Al Haber to Barbara Jacobs in December 1962 asserted the need for 'hard organisational underpinnings' to be constructed to support 'our ideas'.¹¹³ A draft letter written by Rob Burlage to National Officers three years later, regarding the 1965 convention, reinforced the need for a fusion of theory and action-based initiatives. Burlage stated the necessity of holding 'issue discussions' as well as engaging in analytical investigations of 'political and intellectual snags and questions'.¹¹⁴ Burlage called for 'a good person to organise different workshops', and also advocated 'untitled and unstructured discussion'. 'We need', he wrote, 'small-group get-togethers...to allow people to get better acquainted with each other as people', and 'more recording of what different people in the organisation have to say about diverse issues'.¹¹⁵ This article's use of gender-neutral language and inclusive attitudes takes on more significance when it is remembered that the conference it was planning was the occasion when SDS women raised the issue of inequality for the first time at a national level. It is possible to argue, therefore, that the combination of the gradual deterioration of the influence of intellectualism and the appreciation of the need for a more diverse programme gave women the opportunity that they needed to seize the initiative and raise the issues of their marginalisation within SDS.

Overall, however, there was an obvious intellectual bias that was apparent in the official correspondence of the SDS leadership in the National Office. Official SDS documents were both highly cerebral and were also overwhelmingly written by men.

¹¹² *SDS Papers*, S1 No. 6.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, S2A No. 1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, S2A No. 14.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, S2A No. 14.

As Helen Garvy stressed, 'men talked and wrote more'.¹¹⁶ Moreover, much of the SDS correspondence utilised gender exclusive language, which hints at men's latent unconscious sexism, paralleling American society as a whole at that time. The exclusive term, 'fraternally', is apparent in correspondence throughout the early years of SDS, and actually is employed until as late as 1967-1968. A May 1962 document, 'Constitutional Revisions: General Comments', stated that the SDS chapters make up 'fraternal organisations'.¹¹⁷ The phrase 'yours fraternally' was also employed as signing-off technique in correspondence. A letter sent from Clark Kissinger to Pete Seeger on March 4, 1965, not only used 'yours fraternally', but also concluded with the phrase, 'and for the freedom of all *mankind*' (my italics).¹¹⁸ Tom Hayden also utilised language that excluded women and their participation from the SDS vision. In his 1962 article 'Who are the Student Boat-Rockers', Hayden wrote the phrase 'men are common sufferers...the world is too small for anything but brotherhood'.¹¹⁹ Another Hayden-authored essay, 'Where the Money Is', stated that 'society...has no place for the young man who wants a job that can be performed with honor'.¹²⁰

The visibility of women in SDS correspondence was similar to that in SDS as a whole and throughout the SDS papers the same women's names occur: Casey Hayden, Helen Garvy, Heather Booth, Dorothy Burlage. The names of the prominent men in SDS arose frequently, but the women are more obvious because there were fewer prominent women than there were key men in early SDS. Even so, despite this uneven distribution of women in the SDS leadership, individuals such as Hayden,

¹¹⁶ Garvy, OOI.

¹¹⁷ *SDS Papers*, S1 No. 6.

¹¹⁸ See for example. Rob Burlage (25/12/62). *Ibid*, S 2A No. 1; Kenneth McEldowney (30/11/64) *ibid*. S 2A No. 27. Kissinger to Seeger, (4/4/65) S 2A No. 35.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, S1 No. 11.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, S1 No. 11.

Garvy and Burlage had an apparent voice within the SDS Papers, and this reflected their visibility within SDS in general. These prominent women are given a certain amount of recognition in their varying positions in the SDS leadership. The presence of women's voice throughout official documentation and correspondence from the SDS leaders is unusual however and, to reiterate, their visibility is confined to a select few. Key women were also approached through direct correspondence to undertake certain organisational tasks. In 1965, SDS President Paul Potter wrote to Marilyn Young requesting that she 'take the initiative' on calling the meeting on the possibilities for student delegations to Vietnam.¹²¹ Furthermore, a 1965 letter from Paul Booth to Jeannie Varon requested her to 'set up a meeting of San Francisco people who might be interested in talking about SDS', although this was all under the guidance and instruction of the SDS National Secretary.¹²² However, the unconscious chauvinism within SDS is also apparent in this request, as Varon's task is clearly supportive, administrative and under direction, with little scope left for her own input, initiative and enterprise.

Women did have a role to play in the leadership of the organisation, and the male leaders accorded them certain responsibilities in terms of preparation and organisation. However, it was the men within the organisation who dictated the agenda of SDS, and who dominated the decision-making. 'I think it is fair to say', Helen Garvy maintained, '[that] men held most of the visible key positions'.¹²³ Leni Wildflower noted that 'the men took control, and the women for the most part handed

¹²¹ Ibid, S2A No. 29.

¹²² Ibid, S2A No. 19.

¹²³ Garvy, OOI.

them the reins'.¹²⁴ 'We were', Jim Monsonis explained, 'pretty top-heavy on the male side'.¹²⁵

These reflections mirror women's status overall. Certain women did hold positions of responsibility in SDS, but, in the early years of SDS in particular, women never reached the upper echelons of leadership and even the female elite of the organisation had to accept its supportive role. As Sara Evans asserted, 'public positions were virtually monopolized by the men.....The women's importance in lower-level positions was indicated by the fact that in 1964, while only one of seventeen nationally elected National Council members was a woman, five of the nine chapter delegates were female'. She goes on to stress the total absence of women from national positions throughout the time period of early SDS. Indeed, Evans argued '[m]ost startling is the fact that until 1966 no major national office was held by a woman'.¹²⁶ This statement is, however, debated by Helen Garvy. 'Sara Evans is two years off', she argued, 'I was elected [Assistant National Secretary] in 1964' (a claim confirmed by Kirkpatrick Sale). However, although this was a prestigious appointment, especially for a woman, and gave Garvy an unprecedented access to the SDS hierarchy, the position was still 'assistant', and women remained excluded from the very top leadership positions until Jane Adams became Acting National Secretary in 1966.¹²⁷

Whilst women were undoubtedly marginalised throughout SDS, they still contributed much to the organisation in terms of their skills, expertise and enthusiasm. Many

¹²⁴ Wildflower, OOI.

¹²⁵ Monsonis, OOI.

¹²⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 112.

¹²⁷ Sale, *SDS*, pp. 127 and 164.

former SDSers stressed this significant contribution. 'Women were key on many levels', Helen Garvy emphasised. 'We were clearly better organisers, we were quietly influential in many ways....Large numbers [were] elected at the conventions, and many women [were] active on the chapter level'.¹²⁸ 'I think it's true that men held many leadership roles in SDS', Vivian Rothstein asserted, 'but there also were notable women in leadership roles as well'.¹²⁹ Indeed, both Garvy and Rothstein play down the restrictions that the sexism within SDS placed on their education in, and contribution to, the organisation. 'SDS', Rothstein contended, 'became the training ground for many women leaders, who got training in leadership, political strategy and organising that they wouldn't have gotten at that time in history'.¹³⁰ 'I was personally', Garvy maintained, 'never told I couldn't do something by any man in SDS. On the contrary', she stressed, 'I was given opportunities and responsibilities that let me grow and stretch and discover a broader range of my abilities'.¹³¹

SDS, therefore, in its early years was an organisation where men dominated the upper echelons of power, and the make-up of SDS supported an intellectual and a competitive atmosphere, both of which had been traditionally male preserves, and created an environment where women were immediately disadvantaged. However, women, although clearly underrepresented in the SDS hierarchy, did play a key role in the development of the organisation and gained important skills from this contribution. Sexism did exist in SDS and evidence suggests that it did impede many women's advancement in an organisation that introduced the idea of participatory democracy to the New Left. Much of the sexism and male chauvinism within the

¹²⁸ Garvy, OOI.

¹²⁹ Rothstein, OOI.

¹³⁰ Rothstein, OOI.

¹³¹ Garvy, OOI.

group occurred as a consequence of social conditioning in gender roles. The emphasis on the cerebral created an atmosphere of elitism and competition, which reinforced cultural perceptions of masculinity and femininity. The rhetoric used by SDS saw the masculine predominate as words such as 'fraternal' and 'brotherhood' joined the male pronoun to become the normal mode of exchange, and women became sexualised by attitudes and in language. These examples of maleness were encapsulated in the monopolisation of leadership positions by men, who, albeit often unknowingly, continued the sexist notions and practices of SDS.

Oral testimonies stressed the cultural conditioning that affected both men and women in SDS. Furthermore, many stress the unconscious nature of male and female SDSers' adherence to these social conventions. 'It was sexist', Leni Wildflower asserted, 'because none of us knew any other way to be'.¹³² Vivian Rothstein argued that 'in general the sexism was as much a part of everyone's consciousness (men and women), that it was...simply an expression of popular culture. Of course', she added, 'its overall effect was to intimidate women, but often that was not the considered intention'.¹³³ 'Was SDS an objectively sexist organisation? – Yes', Jim Monsonis contended, 'both in terms of numbers and power and in terms of the way issues – and which – issues were defined. Was this conscious and deliberate? I don't think so', he added.¹³⁴

Social conditioning proved to be significant. 'It is true', Helen Garvy stated, 'that SDS came out of a society where women were socialised to do more support roles, both

¹³² Wildflower, OOI.

¹³³ Rothstein, OOI.

¹³⁴ Monsonis, OOI.

men and women grew up with these ideas and it took a while to challenge them'.¹³⁵ 'Just as [women] were raised in the sexist society', Marilyn Katz asserted, 'so were [men]. We were who we were. Tom [Hayden] and Todd [Gitlin]', she added, 'grew up with older conceptions of women'.¹³⁶ Women often accepted that their opinions were not worth hearing, and it took time for this perception and women's passive attitudes to be broken down. Women, Marilyn Katz stressed, 'were raised to be passive'.¹³⁷ George Brosi noted that in the early 1960s, 'there was a lot of residual 1950s spirit of women trying to act unthreatening and unsmart because [men] expected that'.¹³⁸ 'It was a problem', Jane Adams maintained, 'of women having learned not to speak...although I met men as intellectual equals [this was] something few of [my] women friends did'.¹³⁹ Cultural conditioning also had an important influence on male and female SDSers when roles and duties were being assigned. The impact of received stereotypes of masculinity and femininity in many cases, led to the assumption, by both males and females, that women would fulfil the domestic role. From childhood women had been taught 'to immolate themselves to males and family', and men were also taught to accept this would happen.¹⁴⁰ Jane Adams described a meeting in Chicago with the Old Guard where 'women [were] on the outside, quiet, some serving food etc'. She emphasised the culture of conformity that existed for many women in SDS, despite their radical leanings. Both sexes were to blame for conforming to cultural stereotyping. '[Whilst] I', Barbara Haber recalled, 'expected to be valued, treated with respect, and welcomed into leadership circles...I started being treated like a secretary or something'. Even her husband, Al Haber,

¹³⁵ Garvy, OOI.

¹³⁶ Katz, OOI.

¹³⁷ Katz, OOI.

¹³⁸ Brosi, OOI.

¹³⁹ Adams, OOI.

¹⁴⁰ Piercy, 'Grand Coolie Dam' in Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful*, p. 436.

displayed signs of cultural labelling, as, she stated, he 'used to write me these little memos...and attach them to things...giving me these little instructions...in SDS I couldn't get no respect. I was constantly being diminished and often felt all confused and crazy'.¹⁴¹

The language employed by certain women revealed their reluctance to challenge these cultural assumptions of male and female prescribed roles. Whilst according to Marilyn Katz, 'men *claimed* the position of thinkers', Connie Brown illustrated the conditioning which influenced women's reluctance to seize the initiative. 'Like within the family you might think...Oh God he's the boss...here we had these very high-powered men...we might not like it, but we *would assume* that that was who was going to run things'.¹⁴² George Brosi's reminiscences supported the testimonies of Katz and Brown, asserting that women were both 'trying not to be too threatening' and were willing 'to do the shitwork'.¹⁴³ He does, however, illuminate an important point. Although cultural conditioning was a significant influence on attitudes and approaches to interaction between the sexes, an element of choice still existed. Men, for example, chose not to apply their vision of inclusiveness and their sympathy with the oppressed status of blacks in the United States to women's position in society and in their own movement. Moreover, certain women chose not to reject their allocated role in SDS that replicated the supportive position that they held in mainstream society. Helen Garvy's testimony supports this point. 'A lot of women's anger', she maintained, 'comes from doing things that they didn't want to do and resenting it...it goes back to a lot of the way women are socialised...It's true that a lot of the times if

¹⁴¹ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 167.

¹⁴² Katz, OOI; Brown quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 180. No italics added.

¹⁴³ Brosi, OOI.

cooking is needed to be done or coffee needed to be made, women did it...some woman would get up and volunteer [however]....It never occurred to me to get up; I was involved in conversation....I also know that a lot of the biggest male chauvinist pigs, so labeled in SDS...did their share of the cooking'.¹⁴⁴

The significance of SDS's Economic Research Action Project experience for women in particular, is the subject of Chapter Two. The emerging women's consciousness, with the publication of the anonymous 'Kind of Memo', which outlined important problems on the treatment of women in the Movement and stressed key concerns over relations between the sexes is also discussed at length in the succeeding chapter. It is necessary at this point, however, to recognise the important effect that ERAP and the emerging women's consciousness were consecutively having on gender relations within SDS as a whole. Women's growing disillusionment with the promises of participatory democracy and the realities of women's status within SDS, allied with the developing confidence found in their ERAP work and the articulation of grievances by women in other New Left organisations such as SNCC, came to a head at the 1965 SDS Rethinking Conference.

The conference was the first time that female SDSers had openly discussed grievances that had previously remained unsaid and often unrecognised. This was not the first time that issues of women's position in the New Left had been raised in the wider movement of leftist groups. Indeed, an anonymous article written in November 1964 raised the profile of both women and their oppressed status in the movement, by highlighting the existence of prejudiced attitudes and practices in SNCC. A further

¹⁴⁴ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 171.

article by SNCC activists Casey Hayden and Mary King, 'Sex and Caste', was published in November 1965. This article equated women's secondary position in the New Left with the position of blacks in society and drew parallels grounded in differing caste systems, raised important questions and issues and was discussed at the 1965 conference.¹⁴⁵ The 1965 Rethinking Conference was the occasion where, as George Brosi stated, 'the shit hit the fan' in SDS. It was the first time that similar issues to those articulated by Hayden and King had been raised by women in SDS, and can be pinpointed as the start of outward evidence of dissent and agitation by women to gain a more equal status in the organisation. Although Sara Evans' description of the conference emphasises the sense of alienation and marginalisation, the event also offered a new opportunity for like-minded women to meet in a workshop discussing women's role in SDS. Indeed, for some SDS women, the 1965 conference came alive only when they met on their own to discuss their position in the movement, and had a major politicising effect. 'Hundreds of other SDSers ate, talked and milled around during a break...but she did not know any of them', asserted Sara Evans, describing Heather Tobis (Booth)'s conference experience. 'The meetings that weekend...seemed confusing and acrimonious, and no one bothered to talk to her. She did not join in until the part of the conference she had come for, a workshop on women in the movement'.¹⁴⁶ 'In the 1965 national session', Leni Wildflower maintained, 'a group of us...started our own women's meeting, [and] didn't let the men join in'. 'It was', she added, 'a very exhilarating experience'.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous, 'SNCC Position Paper (Women in the Movement)' and Casey Hayden and Mary King, 'Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo to a number of other women in the Peace and Freedom movements', both in Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 233-8.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 156.

¹⁴⁷ Wildflower, OOI.

These workshops were the first time that SDS had offered the possibility for discussion of women's issues, and although the workshops were not included on the official agenda, the 'Sex and Caste' memo proved the final impetus to initiate a discussion. An autonomous group of women (which initially had included some men) split from the main group and convened their own all-female discussion group.¹⁴⁸ Subsequent discussions centred on whether there was a problem of sexism in the movement at all and also emerged from certain men's reluctance to see women-only groups being formed. Importantly, the workshops offered women a place to develop and then assert their identity as women in a safe environment, rather than reinforcing their identities as SDSers that occurred so often in the early years of SDS and is a recurrent theme throughout this chapter. Heather Tobis told Sara Evans that in one workshop that she joined along with New York regional co-ordinator Sarah Murphy and Nanci Hollander Gitlin '[w]hat we did there was trace back our own roots, and figure out what made us as we are, and then what are the forms of the ways we are not allowed to fulfil what we could be'.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, Booth saw that the group meetings not only developed a common social identity, but also contributed towards the emergence of a women's political consciousness, noting the growth of 'the feeling that women should organize women and that situations had to be developed so women could support other women'.¹⁵⁰ As Marilyn Katz stated, although she was fairly new to SDS, she 'was mostly fascinated by the discussions as it raised ideas with which I was unfamiliar'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Evans argues that some accounts assert that the split to a women-only group resulted after an angry walk-out, whereas others argue that the move was caused by one member who decided that she needed a cup of coffee and several others joining her, Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 163.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 164.

¹⁵¹ Katz, OOI.

This assertion of their female identity was threatening for some of the male SDSers, who sought to disrupt the single sex meetings by either opposing them, or by demanding to be allowed to participate. George Brosi, who was present at the conference, was 'very impressed with the courage of the women who spoke out' and 'thought that the reaction of the men who were against them was comical...wonder[ing] why they felt so threatened'. He acquiesced with women's need to meet with other women only, and had 'a positive reaction' to the women's discussion groups. His viewpoint is sympathetic to and accords with many women's perspective on the meetings. Whilst men were threatened by women's developing identity, the intimidation that women felt was a root cause of the discussion groups. 'One of the points', Brosi argued, 'was that women felt intimidated by the presence of men, not just in talking about how they felt they were exploited but simply in expressing *any* ideas. If men had been present then the problem would have been continued, not cured'. Brosi also highlights the opportunity open to male SDSers 'who were free to meet as men if they wished, and dual gender discussions were not prohibited'.¹⁵²

Sara Evans saw the emergence of a collective female identity, and the beginnings of discussion on women's inferior position within SDS as one of the few positives to emerge from the 1965 Rethinking Conference. 'While the rest of the conference dissolved into shambles, small groups – most composed only of women but a few including men – engaged in an exciting, searching, angry, and enlightening

¹⁵² Brosi, OOI.

conversation...'.¹⁵³ However, despite the initial pioneering efforts of women (and a few men) at the Rethinking Conference to draw attention to the prejudice apparent in an organisation that advocated equality and participatory democracy, and the intense reactions that these discussions generated, the 1965 conference was something of a false dawn. Faced with the desire of many to oppose the burgeoning war in South East Asia, SDS grew enormously in numbers, and the ramifications of the draft and the surge towards increasing militancy impacted at both national and local level and saw gender issues resume their previous status as inconsequential for many SDSers. It was not until 1967 that these issues re-emerged within a very different SDS, when women began to question their status and started to organise within the organisation to combat sexism and their marginalisation.

SDS prided itself on being more open politically and its philosophy, rooted in the Port Huron Statement, was based on the idea of participatory democracy. Both male and female SDSers were inspired to join the organisation by these ideas, and many were exhilarated at belonging to SDS's version of the beloved community. However, at the same time, the Port Huron Statement set the tone for the women's secondary position within SDS. The document was written using gender-exclusive language which marginalised women from the organisation's founding vision. SDSers, it seemed, were not exempt from the social and cultural conditioning that cast women in a passive and sometimes sexual role. Women were alienated by the intellectualism of the leadership elite and reluctant to speak in meetings, intimidated by the male elites' cerebralism and confidence, and conditioned into assuming a domestic and passive role. Often women were sexualised by men within the organisation, and sometimes

¹⁵³ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 156.

women's only way to progress into the upper echelons of power was through their choice of sexual partner. The main body of SDS offered women little room to develop a new identity other than these allocated and assumed personas. Eventually women grew tired of these constraints in SDS and formed women-only groups to debate their position at the 1965 Rethinking Conference. Women were motivated by memos which circulated within the New Left which drew wider attention to their plight by drawing parallels between women's position and that of African-Americans in the United States. Women, however, outside of the main campus-based body of SDS had also been politicised and inspired by their experiences in the Economic Research Action Project. Away from the overt intellectualism of the main body of SDS, ERAP was action- and initiative-based, intending to help poor urban communities to organise around their particular concerns and grievances. Many women discovered that their particular interpersonal skills and organisational qualities were in demand in ERAP, and the initiative proved to play a pivotal role in the development of women's early consciousness (manifested at the Rethinking Conference) as women gained the confidence and attributes to challenge their secondary status within SDS.

Chapter Two

ERAP

SDS's community organising initiative began in the summer of 1963. The majority of the projects lasted until summer 1965, although projects in Chicago and Newark continued until 1967. ERAP (the Economic Research Action Project) heralded a new direction for SDS, as the projects rejected the organisation's cerebral foundations and embraced action-based initiatives, where SDS volunteers went into the communities in order to organise the predominantly urban working class around issues such as rent strikes, finding jobs, social security repayments and garbage removal. This chapter will find that the shift from theory to practice had a significant effect on gender issues within the projects, and within SDS itself. Moreover, community organising had a differing impact on men and women. ERAP proved, for the most part, to be liberating and empowering for women, yet there was an increasing emphasis on machismo by male organisers, and a conformity with prejudiced attitudes and beliefs. Women became active in ERAP, felt a sense of belonging within their peer groups and found a niche for their skills in the programmes, yet, in tandem, they continued to contend with not only the sexism of the wider society, but also the often unconscious prejudice of their fellow ERAPers. Understandably, this caused friction within SDS, which resulted in women speaking out to each other and to SDS about their oppression. ERAP proved to be a significant spur in the rise of a female consciousness.

SDS initially intended that ERAP would organise the poor and unemployed of the northern cities. By the end of 1963, the ERAP projects showed little sign of success,

and the leadership of SDS saw the need to clarify the project's goals. Using the example of Chester, Pennsylvania, the only positive ERAP experience of that summer of 1963, Tom Hayden and Carl Wittman's 1964 document 'An Interracial Movement of the Poor' changed the focus of ERAP. They argued that 'the job of organizing ought to be directed towards *all* the poor, black and white, young and old, and around *any* issue that moves them, not simply the question of jobs'.¹ Thus, the future ERAP projects had a wider range, and whilst still concerned with the poor of the northern cities, their action was focused on any concerns of any of the working classes, not merely the young white unemployed. Moreover, the document outlined the need for students to embrace a '*conscious cooperative practice [as their] main style*'.² In other words, to live where they worked, and to become fully immersed in the community that they were assisting. ERAP projects were established in deprived areas of northern cities, including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Louisville, Newark, Philadelphia and Trenton. Some projects only lasted one summer, five continued until the end of 1965; Newark and Chicago persevered until 1967.

The Freedom Summer was a major influence and politicising factor on future ERAPers. Taking place in the summer of 1964, the Freedom Summer was organised by the Civil Rights organisations SNCC and to a lesser extent CORE (Congress Of Racial Equality) under the banner name Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). COFO sought to register disenfranchised blacks in Mississippi to vote in what was a volatile atmosphere of violence and intimidation by many whites towards African-Americans who wanted to exercise their constitutional rights. Intent on attracting federal intervention to ensure that blacks could register without racist harassment,

¹ Kirkpatrick Sale, paraphrasing Wittman/Hayden, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 105.

² Hayden/Wittman, 'An Interracial Movement of the Poor', quoted in *ibid*, p. 106.

Bob Moses saw that enticing earnest, middle-class, predominately white northern students to help with the struggle in Mississippi would both promote racial integration and would focus media attention on this corner of the South.³ In order, leading ERAPer Tom Hayden contended, to 'will a country that [was] significantly prejudiced [to] respond...it would be necessary to bring the white sons and daughters of the country's middle-class...by the hundreds, by the thousands if possible, to experience the true nature of southern segregation....If you mobilised the North', he asserted, 'then pressure would be put on Congress and on the administration'.⁴ Many SDSers were amongst the estimated 650 students who travelled south to participate in the Freedom Summer. Significantly, perhaps over a third were women.⁵

As early as spring 1963, Tom Hayden wondered whether 'the methods of SNCC [might] be applied to the North'.⁶ He had been recruited to Mississippi prior to the events of 1964. However, the majority of future ERAPers were influenced by Freedom Summer, many of whom had actively participated in voter registration and were also alerted by their experiences in Mississippi to the need for an interracial movement of the poor in deprived areas of northern cities. Much of their experience in the summer of 1964 affected their decision to join ERAP projects. ERAP drew on the southern community organising activities of SNCC as its inspiration. George Brosi saw that 'ERAP was almost totally based on civil rights organising', and Helen Garvy also recounted the significant influence of civil rights. 'ERAP', Vivian

³ Robert Cook, *Sweet Land of Liberty? The African-American Struggle for Civil Rights in the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Longman, 1998), p. 166.

⁴ Tom Hayden, quoted in Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer (eds.), *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 185.

⁵ John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 244.

⁶ Hayden quoted in James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 187.

Rothstein asserted, 'was very much influenced by the southern Civil Rights movement in its emphasis on poor people's leadership and its goal of building an interracial movement of the poor'.⁷

The voter registration drive in Mississippi saw that, Sara Evans explained, '[f]or the first time large numbers of white women would be allowed to work "in the field" in the rural south'.⁸ Women's reaction to their experiences in the South expressed their exhilaration and sense of belonging. 'I'm sure you can tell', wrote an anonymous scribe, 'that the work so far has been far more gratifying than anything I ever anticipated'.⁹ 'I met those SNCC people and my mouth fell open', asserted Kathie Amatniek. '....They were so much more wonderful and exciting than anybody I had met in college'.¹⁰ Margaret Aley recounted that 'somehow I feel like I've found something I've been looking for for a long time. I feel', she added, 'like I've finally come home. I have no doubt that I belong here'.¹¹ One volunteer referred to her experience of the "freedom high". 'The group sang in one voice, each individual singing not for himself, but for the group. Tears ran down many faces'.¹² As Robert Cook argued, 'the Freedom Summer was the nearest the civil rights movement ever came to putting its concept of the beloved community into action, even though its ultimate effect was to exacerbate existing tensions within and between the cooperating organisations'.¹³

⁷ Brosi, Garvy, Rothstein, Own Oral History Interviews (hereafter OOI).

⁸ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 69.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹ Quoted in Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 68.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹³ Cook, *Sweet Land*, p. 169.

The students' experience of gender roles during Freedom Summer often proved to be replicated in ERAP community organising projects in which many SDSers also participated. Significantly, whilst the events in Mississippi offered women new experiences and the chance to challenge traditional notions of femininity, the voter registration projects also saw the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Certainly, both male and female Freedom volunteers were motivated by the opportunities that Mississippi provided for adventure and proving themselves. Whilst these new possibilities defied traditional femininity, they often reinforced masculine traits of confronting danger, and proving oneself and one's machismo.

Casey Hayden told how going south was 'exciting, liberating and spicy' as it 'was all underground, illegal and dangerous'.¹⁴ A white male northern student questioned whether racial equality was his sole motivation behind volunteering to go to Mississippi. He was keen to work in the most isolated areas of the state, which were also the most dangerous places to be a Civil Rights worker. '[T]his naturally suggests to me', he told his journal, 'some unpleasant and unresolvable questions about my own motivations for being down here....'[A]dventure', he added, 'isn't exactly the highest idealism'.¹⁵ Freedom Summer worker Stuart Rawlings described how another volunteer '[walked] through a white neighborhood singing freedom songs at the top of his voice'. Another volunteer 'used to cruise through the white section of town at night...Some of it was just wanting to be defiant.... But secretly... [he] loved the danger too'.¹⁶ Other white northern students' participation in Freedom Summer

¹⁴ Sandra 'Casey' Hayden, 'Preface', in Mary King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 8.

¹⁵ J. Lukas, *Don't Shoot: We Are Your Children* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 288-9, quoted in Dominick Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties In American History* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), p. 74.

¹⁶ Quoted in McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, p. 96.

stemmed from their desire for racial equality, but they also sought the adventure, danger and an opportunity to prove themselves that previous testimonies have displayed. Often, these testimonies displayed the machismo that was also to be apparent in the ERAP projects. David Harris needed to quench his thirst 'for adventure', to put himself on the line and 'be tested'. He longed for a 'hell bent, wildwest' sort of manhood.¹⁷ One project worker, after being knocked down whilst canvassing, stated in a letter home, that he was 'proud to see my name finally get into... the official record of the day's harassments'. Another told that 'when we come down here for the summer, our friends at home all expect us to get beat up or at least have something exciting happen to us. If we have no incidents', he stressed, 'our egos suffer no end'.¹⁸

On occasion, this bravado and machismo combined with traditional concepts of male and female spheres of influence to cause similar cracks to appear in the image of the Beloved Community that would also be apparent in ERAP. Assumptions were made in both the Freedom Summer and ERAP that women were housewives, typists and would perform traditional female tasks. 'Though both black and white women took on important administrative functions in the Atlanta office of SNCC', Sara Evans asserted, 'it was also true that virtually all the typing and clerical work was assigned to women'.¹⁹ Many female Freedom Summer volunteers came to realise that sexism was rife in the Mississippi projects. Joni Rabinowitz wrote as early as 1963 that '[t]he attitude around here toward keeping the house neat (as well as the general attitude toward the inferiority and "proper place" of women) is disgusting and also terribly

¹⁷ Harris on manhood, quoted in Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 75.

¹⁸ Anonymous, quoted in McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, p. 110.

¹⁹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 76.

depressing. I never', she maintained, 'saw a cooperative enterprize [sic] that was less cooperative'. 'We didn't come down here', commented another female volunteer, 'to work as a maid this summer'.²⁰ Women chose, or were given positions in Freedom Schools, where their supposed nurturing and caring traits could be implemented. 'There was very much a sense', Linda Davis, a Freedom School teacher commented '[that]...voter registration activity was where it was at. And since we had chosen teaching, we were sort of shoved to the side....You know, here [were the]... guys running out...being macho men...you know "we're going to go out and get our heads busted and we'll come back to here where you nurse us...and otherwise service us and send us back out again"'.²¹ A testimony by a male volunteer encapsulated the prejudice, the marginalisation of women and the machismo that was in evidence in the Freedom Summer projects. 'I remember', he contended, 'the voter registration workers being different from the Freedom School people. The voter registration workers were predominantly male...[and] adventurous, and they really wanted to do the nitty, gritty [work]. The Freedom School people', he added, 'tended to be women and I think...with some exceptions...tended to be more protective of their persons....So they'd go to a Freedom School and they'd teach the kids about black history. I think it was a very important part of... that summer... and yet it wasn't the same kind of, if you want, macho adventurism that I was into'.²²

The first official articulation of female discontent at their position in SNCC came with the SNCC Position Paper, 'Women in the Movement', written anonymously in November 1964. The author expressed many of the sentiments that the Freedom

²⁰ Quoted in *ibid*, p. 77.

²¹ McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, p. 110.

²² Quoted in *ibid*, pp. 109-10.

Summer workers had expressed. She complained that 'the leadership group in COFO is all men', and also noted the prejudiced representation of women where a 1964 personnel and resources report on Mississippi projects 'lists the number of people in each project. The section on Laurel, however, lists not the number of persons, but "three girls"'.²³ The paper also commented on women's unequal position as she asked readers to '[c]onsider why it is in SNCC that women who are competent, qualified, and experienced, are automatically assigned the "female" kinds of jobs such as typing, desk work, telephone work, filing, library work, cooking, and the assistant kind of administrative work but rarely the "executive" kind.' 'The woman in SNCC', she alleged, 'is often in the same position as that token Negro hired in a corporation'.²⁴

This was a sentiment that underpinned Mary King and Casey Hayden's 'Sex and Caste' memo a year later. In November 1965, their 'kind of memo' spoke directly to a number of other women in the peace and freedom movements, bypassing the men in the movement who had ridiculed and dismissed the 1964 position paper. 'There seem to be many parallels that can be drawn', the article stated, 'between treatment of Negroes and treatment of women in our society as a whole'. Moreover, Hayden and King asserted that 'women we've talked to who work in the movement seem to be caught up in a common-law caste system that operates, sometimes subtly, forcing them to work around or outside hierarchical structures of power which may exclude them'. 'Women', they went on, 'seem to be placed in the same position of assumed subordination in personal situations too'.²⁵ Once more they stressed that '[w]ithin the movement, questions arise in situations ranging from relationships of women

²³ Anonymous, 'SNCC Position Paper (Women in the Movement)', November 1964, reprinted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, Appendix, p. 233.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 234.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 235.

organizers to men in the community, to who cleans the freedom house, to who holds leadership positions, to who does secretarial work, and who acts as spokesman for groups'. To make matters worse for women in SNCC 'very few men', they argued, 'can respond non-defensively....The usual response is laughter'.²⁶ Certain testimonies also revealed women's lack of awakening and an absence of politicisation towards their plight, which helped the Mississippi project to retain its homogenous notion of a 'Beloved Community'. Indeed, the Sex and Caste memo 'received a lukewarm response from female staffers, and Bob Moses and Charles Cobb aside, an even more negative one from the men'.²⁷ 'Sexism', Jan Hillegas maintained, 'was not something that... had been made conscious to me at the time, but looking back on it [Freedom Summer], that's...what it was.'²⁸

Freedom Summer was, in many ways, a precursor of ERAP, most specifically in the creation of both the spirit of the Beloved Community, yet also in the general assumption that women should and would perform traditional female tasks in administrative and day-to-day activities. Moreover, as we shall find in ERAP, women's position in SNCC did not preclude them from taking a key organising role in Freedom Summer; whilst the men predominantly led, women fulfilled a significant function in organising the grassroots and performing day-to-day tasks.²⁹

ERAP was an extension of the Beloved Community principle which was inspired by the spirit that existed within SNCC's community organising staff. In some ways, the

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 236-7.

²⁷ Cook, *Sweet Land*, p. 240.

²⁸ McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, p. 105.

²⁹ See C. Payne, 'Men Led, But Women Organised', in Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline A. Rouse and Barbara Woods (eds.), *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers 1941-1965* (Brooklyn, New York: Carlson, 1990), pp. 1-11.

ERAP community displayed a more intense, less diluted version of the fellowship that early SDSers testified to experiencing.³⁰ As Leni Wildflower explained, 'lots of early SDSers ended up in ERAP', and they brought with them their friendships and ideas of community'. 'Everyone', she asserted, 'was part of everyone else's lives'. A happening such as Tom and Casey Hayden's marriage was a 'community event'.³¹ These sentiments were fundamental to ERAP's outlook. As Wildflower clarified, they were 'an intimate group' and this intimacy helped them in their ERAP experiences. 'Even though we were in different cities, we were all doing this weird, impossible task', she explained, 'and were faced with the trials of going into the poor community'.³² The Beloved Community gave many ERAPers an important support when faced with the problems of community organising, and reinforced their group-based identities.

The fact that the majority of the ERAPers lived in the neighbourhood in which they were working also contributed to an ERAP community spirit and identity. Not all ERAP projects had an identical set-up in each city, but, in each, a sense of affinity and closeness within the project was paramount. Leni Wildflower explained, from her own experience, that there were differences in the living arrangements in the Chicago and Cleveland projects.³³ In Chicago, she told how project leader Rennie Davis encouraged ERAPers to live separately, immersing themselves in the community and 'liv[ing] and becom[ing] like a poor person, drinking and swearing like them'.³⁴ In Cleveland, however, Wildflower described how the ERAPers again drew inspiration from SNCC. Living in their own 'freedom house', they held 'lots of very intense

³⁰ As described in Chapter One.

³¹ Wildflower, OOI.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

meetings' and sought to be accepted in the neighbourhood as a group of students offering their assistance.³⁵ Andrew Kopkind, after visits to numerous ERAP projects, noted 'the completeness of their transformation, or the depth of their commitment'. 'They', he argued, 'get no salary; they live on a subsistence allowance that the project as a whole uses for rent and food.... [T]hey eat a spartan diet of one-and-a-half meals a day, consisting mainly of powdered milk and large quantities of peanut butter and jelly....'³⁶ 'Some organizers', Todd Gitlin argued, 'wanted to go further, forcing themselves to eat on the welfare budget – twenty five cents per person per meal, or less'.³⁷ Two visitors to the Cleveland project in 1965 noted its similarity to an 'urban kibbutz'. 'Their openness is apparent', they reported. 'They exhibit great tolerance and no speaker is silenced, no matter how irrelevant or repetitious'.³⁸ This sense of community, asserted Carol McEldowney, 'facilitated the growth of people in the group'.³⁹

'Most often', Sara Evans, remarked, 'this sense of community developed within the staff and the few neighborhood people who became intimately involved in a project'.⁴⁰ This closeness was evident in the reminiscences of a JOIN (Jobs Or Income Now) worker. His vision was holistic, also encompassing local people from the neighbourhoods. 'One thing that has happened', he argued, 'is that we have begun to see JOIN as the focus for building...a movement around a community....Of tying people together...To build an alternative community, around a political movement'.⁴¹

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kopkind, quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 130.

³⁷ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 166.

³⁸ Miller, *Democracy*, p. 107.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 215.

⁴⁰ Evans, *Personal*, p. 136.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 135.

Sometimes, however, the attempt to build a community stumbled over social differences between the students and the people of the neighbourhood. Both Leni Wildflower and Helen Garvy made a similar observation on these idiosyncrasies. 'I found out years later', remarked Garvy, 'that the people in our building thought Jill Hamberg and I were prostitutes. They thought we were very nice, but why else would 2 women live together, with men visiting all the time! So much for our attempt at respectability!'⁴²

Changes within society had a key impact on the Beloved Community, and identity of ERAP. Lee Webb, detailing his activities in a JOIN project in Summer 1964 asserted '[n]obody drank...Nobody knew a thing about drugs....No liquor, no drugs, no sex; and I think that was true like in all the projects'. 'In a sense', Webb continued, that summer was...almost monk-like...[b]ecause the whole ethic of community organizing was on the basis of those kind of principles – you know: *you work*'.⁴³ Kirkpatrick Sale, however, noted the lifestyle changes that affected ERAP in the space of one year. Communal living was accepted, marijuana was being used and, he argued, '[s]ome slackening of the previous summer's monastic isolationism occurred with unspoken disapproval from the veterans'.⁴⁴ The Beloved Community was not a homogenous group and cracks could appear. The frustration of the work in ERAP led, remarked one project worker, to '[p]ersonal feuds – somebody wouldn't wash the dishes....A lot of them lived together in one apartment which was a bad deal – much too close, much too filthy'.⁴⁵

⁴² Garvy, OOI.

⁴³ Webb, quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 131.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 139.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* p. 140.

ERAP illustrated SDS's desire to move away from the organisation's overtly intellectual focus. Overwhelmed by violent responses to Civil Rights protest in the South and constrained by the mechanism and isolation of university life, intellectualism had, according to Sara Evans, 'grown increasingly inadequate'.⁴⁶ ERAP provided SDSers with the opportunity not only to cast off cerebral concerns in favour of action, but also to underline their cultural alienation and their disillusionment with the status quo. Equally significantly, the ERAP initiative was a direct extension of the ideas of participatory democracy that the Port Huron Statement introduced. The statement's emphasis on decentralisation and the need for the inclusion of all strata of society in the democratic process was, in effect, put into action 2 years after its publication in the ghettos of America's cities. Work within the communities that ERAPers carried out also re-emphasised the ideas inherent in the Port Huron Statement. Such activities, Sara Evans asserted, 'would in the process begin to realize the goals of the Port Huron Statement'.⁴⁷ Moreover, in time, women in SDS benefited from this rejection of intellectualism and hierarchy. Local, independent work at a grassroots level had a salient effect on gender dimensions, as a 'reassertion of the personal' took place within the organisation. Once ensconced in ERAP, women discovered the opportunity for the development of new skills, new ways to put old skills into practice and saw the beginnings of a women's consciousness.

Supporters of ERAP within SDS identified the need to expand the scope of the organisation. SDS 'has to be *relevant*', Tom Hayden argued, 'has to leave all the "academic crap" behind it, has to break out of intellectuality into contact with the

⁴⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 127.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 129.

grassroots of the nation'.⁴⁸ Essentially, Hayden was articulating the beliefs of fellow ERAPers who saw that middle-class intellectualism was alienating SDS from the very people that it wanted to reach. The creation of ERAP signalled an intention within SDS to diversify, and move from a wholly campus-based focus towards a recognition of the role that the working classes could play in their vision of a new society. Paul Potter, SDS President 1964-5 highlighted this as he asserted that ERAP reflected the doubts of the middle-class activists that their grievances would effect social change. In order to bring about this radical transformation, the black and white poor and unemployed, 'who were getting creamed', had to be brought into the movement.⁴⁹ However, in this intention to attract disadvantaged blacks and whites to the movement, women were inadvertently attracted to the initiative by its focus on anti-intellectualism and diversity.

ERAP's desire to reject the cerebral was deliberate and manifest. SDS, as Tom Hayden argued at the December 1963 National Convention, had to 'break out of intellectuality'.⁵⁰ At the 1964 National Convention, great emphasis was placed on 'student participation in the community'. 'Students', the discussion went on, 'should be encouraged to apply their skills to aid community organising and to confront their academic perspective with the realities of the society'.⁵¹ 'The great contribution of ERAP', asserted Paul Potter at the same convention, was that it had 'defined a number of goals and procedures that allow people to act'.⁵² Moreover, ERAP, Potter argued, 'has...goals and priorities that will not only allow people to work, but also judge the

⁴⁸ Hayden-Haber debate, paraphrased in Sale, *SDS*, p. 107.

⁴⁹ Potter quoted in Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 233.

⁵⁰ Hayden quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 107.

⁵¹ Minutes of National Convention. New York University, Tamiment Library New Left Collection. (hereafter NYU NLC), Folder 4-SDS National Convention and National Council Meetings 1964.

⁵² *Ibid*, Folder 4.

effectiveness of their work and its relevance'.⁵³ A letter to Paul Potter stated that 'the commitment to a radical vocation comes into being most easily through action as opposed to study'.⁵⁴ 'A reemphasis on the existing analysis is necessary', argued Cathy Wilkerson. Emphasising her commitment to the increased direction towards action, she asserted that 'we must look at what we are doing and what kind of effect we can have'.⁵⁵ Supporters of ERAP reinforced their frequent rejection of theory within SDS in their repetition of the rhetoric of action that reiterated their commitment to this course.

ERAPers also saw language usage as a way of reaching out to a wider range of people. They recognised the distancing effect that intellectualism could have, and identified a change in approach as a way of attracting more diverse support, particularly from the working classes. A draft statement at the 1964 convention noted that 'if SDS is to communicate with the community, it must speak a simpler language'. Rejecting the overt influence of the 'intellectual elite', the statement's authors argued that SDS 'will never be able to communicate with large numbers unless it stops seeing itself as an elite and talking to itself as an elite'.⁵⁶ Again, whilst this recognition of the impact of language was primarily aimed at the working class that ERAP was intent on organising, the move away from intellectualism also had a key impact on women within SDS. As the emphasis on the cerebral essentially emanated from the intellectualism of the early SDS's male leaders, then it is comprehensible that as ERAP gave this aspect less emphasis, women were encouraged to participate more, could become more active and could make a greater impact in the ERAP projects.

⁵³ Ibid, Folder 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Folder 6.

⁵⁵ *SDS Papers*, S2A No. 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid, S2A No. 9.

Certain SDSers were, however, concerned at this new direction away from theory. Al Haber was an initial opponent of ERAP. At the December 1963 National Convention he argued against Tom Hayden (and lost) that ERAP should be established along academic lines. As Kirkpatrick Sale noted, Haber argued that ERAP 'should be a place for research and writing about the problems of the poor'. Students, Sale paraphrased, 'should concern themselves *as students*, [and should] avoid the "cult of the ghetto"'.⁵⁷ In 1965, he was still struggling with the problems of the direction of SDS. In his introduction to the December 1965 conference, he concluded that, as a result of community organising, SDS had gone 'from a movement of theorists...[to] a movement of activists'.⁵⁸ Dick Flacks also expressed his concern in 1965 over 'emphasis on action and organisation prevent[ing] students from engaging in intellectual tasks'. 'I am arguing', he went on, 'for us to take seriously the role of the intellectual as intellectual; to expand our vision of radical vocation'. His opposition to ERAP was along similar grounds to Haber. Indeed, whilst not advocating opting out of organising, he suggested that ERAPers 'replace themselves in the community with indigenous organisers [and] develop the idea that what we are trying to do...is education, more than anything else'.⁵⁹

Many SDSers' desire to reject intellectualism was also evident in ERAPers' intention to be anti-elitist. ERAPers were keen to minimise the leadership role and were intent on embracing more diversity. This again reflected the aim to put the ideals of the Port Huron Statement into practice and adopt a more devolved leadership. The move away

⁵⁷ Sale, *SDS*, p. 107.

⁵⁸ NYU NLC, Folder 6.

⁵⁹ *SDS Papers*, S2A No. 16 1965 Convention Working Paper.

from a distinct leadership style also added to the sense of community affinity within ERAP, and the increased opportunities that arose.

The 'emphasis on democracy', Sara Evans asserted, 'led, as in SNCC, to an anarchic ethic that rejected hierarchies of any kind'.⁶⁰ A 1964 ERAP report discussed the replacement of the ERAP director with non-salaried people participating in speaking and organisational activities. The willingness to minimise administration and office functions also highlighted the implementation of a more grassroots-based approach, which tied in with the notion of participatory democracy and a reduction in leadership. Jane Adams noted that ERAP was 'less clubby' than SDS.⁶¹ As an ERAP worker in Newark explained, '[w]e don't believe in leadership....We discuss each problem that occurs on our blocks and let the people decide what kind of action they want to take to solve the problem...We have rotating chairmen who serve four weeks and then are replaced by the program committee. We in NCUP [Newark Community Union Project] do not believe in leadership because so many organizations have been sold out by leaders. That is why we demand one man, one vote'.⁶² However, as Evans explained, the idea of 'a "leaderless movement" held serious contradictions for those who called themselves "organizers"'.⁶³ In essence, a rejection of leadership, and community organising were not compatible. ERAPers sought to resolve this issue by embracing diversity and decentralisation, and discarding a top-down structure with a narrow reach.

⁶⁰ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 136.

⁶¹ Adams, OOI.

⁶² Taken from Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 136.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

This more diverse approach was also an important development in ERAP, and was central to the philosophy of the projects. 'The program of ERAP is magnetic', it was argued in a draft for the 1964 National Convention. 'SDS should...regard acceptance of a program as broad as the one sketched here, but come to the spirit of expansion and growth behind it'.⁶⁴ Primarily, the diversity of ERAP was apparent in its embrace of activities that touched and associated with the grassroots and the working class, and was removed from the cerebral concerns that affected the intellectual elite of SDS. ERAPer Harriet [no surname given] outlined the important direction that ERAP could take towards 'education in the community, [including] freedom schools, day care centers, nursery schools involving slum kids, street schools [and] less formal techniques in film, photography poetry etc'.⁶⁵ A report from the ERAP project in Louisville recommended a 'day care center for working mothers' which was to be supplemented by 'students, neighborhood people, clergymen, [and] wives on a regular part - time schedule'.⁶⁶ 'We are trying hard to better ourselves by working together as a group', explained the Citizens United For Adequate Welfare.⁶⁷ A 1964 Cleveland newsletter underlined ERAP's willingness to embrace experimentation and their open-mindedness to different input and approaches. Activists saw these features of ERAP as a key attraction of the project, and used its diversity and anti-intellectualism as a unique selling point. ERAP, it was asserted, 'was not founded upon a grand economic blueprint'. Rather, the newsletter stressed the actual concerns, actions and benefits of ERAP, which would prove particularly appealing to the working-class neighbourhood. 'What is needed is an organization of people to achieve and protect

⁶⁴ NYU NLC, Folder 7.

⁶⁵ *SDS Papers*, S2A No. 14. ERAP letter April 1965.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, S 2A No. 75, September 1964.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, S 2A No. 87, February 1965.

their economic rights and security and ensure decent working conditions'.⁶⁸ 'The new program offers a way of looking at the world in more practical terms', Paul Potter maintained. 'It allows us to see ourselves and the organization in a new light of relevancy'.⁶⁹

Although specifically targeted at organising and politicising working-class, inner-city blacks and whites, ERAP's rejection of the cerebral and embrace of diversity also proved to be an opportunity for SDS women. In the more relaxed, supportive and group-based atmosphere of the various projects, women found the confidence, the opportunity to put their skills into practice in an environment that was far removed from the intellectualism of the SDS hierarchy. SDS, Sara Evans suggested, 'created unwittingly the practical basis for female revolt: an arena in which women could start with the skills they already had and build from there a new sense of potential and self-respect'.⁷⁰

The nature of the work in ERAP ensured that strengths such as organising and interpersonal skills were particularly important and valued. These traditionally female pursuits, often undervalued when set against more highbrow activities, shone through in ERAP, as the domestic sphere collided with community organising. 'In my opinion', asserted Vivian Rothstein, 'women were the most effective organizers. The nature of community organizing', she went on to explain, 'generally provided important roles for women. Women relate to community issues such as food, housing [and] schools'. Rothstein also argued that 'women organizers were generally less

⁶⁸ Ibid, S2A No. 7, October 1964.

⁶⁹ NYU OHC, Folder 4. SDS Community Organisation Program.

⁷⁰ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 141.

competitive, more compassionate, less threatening to community people than men, and had an easier time in drawing community people into activity and leadership'.⁷¹ Todd Gitlin supported this assertion. '[P]eople', he maintained, 'had to be organized one at a time. Speechmaking, manifesto writing, analyzing the economy of the history of liberalism...:the *men's* talents – were not much use over coffee at some welfare mother's kitchen table. It was the female organizers who were best at hanging out with the local women'.⁷² 'We were good with other women', maintained Leni Wildflower. 'We were naturals at doing welfare rights organising. Much of the organising work involved helping people with domestic situations: moving house; getting the welfare check, etc'.⁷³

Testimonies reveal the central role that women, the organisers and the organised, played in the day-to-day workings of ERAP. The important role that women had in the community was apparent. 'Community organizing', argued Paul Millman, 'often meant working with women and families...[as it] was fraught with women's issues'.⁷⁴ Helen Garvy told how women were 'very good organizers [and although] we didn't realise it at the time...organizing is a real skill'.⁷⁵ Leni Wildflower gave an important insight into women's roles in day-to-day community organising, and commented on the successes of ERAP. 'As we got to know them', she asserted, 'we helped them to move, get bail, go to the welfare officer, [and] help with their children'. Noting a gender dimension to women's community work, she commented that 'the only way [for women] to gain credibility was to help on women's welfare issues'.⁷⁶ The GROIN

⁷¹ Rothstein, OOI.

⁷² Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 366.

⁷³ Wildflower, OOI.

⁷⁴ Millman, OOI.

⁷⁵ Garvy, OOI.

⁷⁶ Wildflower, OOI.

(Garbage Removal Or Jobs Now) project also built on women's issues, as its concerns emanated from community and home life. Evans noted that '[I]t is a general rule, but one to which ERAP was blind, that women provide the backbone of most community-organizing attempts, though not necessarily the publicly known leadership. Not only do community issues touch women more directly, but also women are more likely to be at home during the day when the organizer comes around to talk'.⁷⁷ Marilyn Katz worked in Chicago's JOIN project 'to experience organizing first hand', and the project 'taught her to organize'. She noted the significant role of women in the community. 'With its base in poor communities', she added, 'ERAP had a more diverse leadership...as the women organizers had their own spheres of influence and most of the community members were women'.⁷⁸ Vivian Rothstein also noted the significant influence that ERAP had on women in the neighbourhoods. 'Community members', she explained, 'were very welcoming of our involvement, although some were intimidated by the male organizers'. Stressing the important role that female ERAPers played, she illustrated how they 'helped develop the largely female community leaders'.⁷⁹

Women's concerns were addressed by ERAP projects. Particularly after the decision to widen the scope of the projects to incorporate more than unemployed youths, who were often male, women's issues were subconsciously given a central role, as much of ERAP attention focused on community and home life. In Louisville, a day care centre for children of working mothers was established, which was intended to provide a 'program of education and recreation for children'. Moreover, the centre was

⁷⁷ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 141.

⁷⁸ Katz, OOI.

⁷⁹ Rothstein, OOI.

particularly targeted towards working parents and mothers. The ERAP report on the day care centre concluded that it 'can mean saving female workers \$25-\$35 per week or [give] peace of mind'. The creation of a community centre was also perceived in the report as having a significant politicising effect. The report's authors intended the day care centre to 'incorporate parents into the program of the day care center, their union and in the community', in an attempt to 'create greater loyalty for both parents and children in the labor movement'.⁸⁰ What was so interesting about this activity was the absence of polarisation of the genders. Men and women were included in the discussion on both childcare (which was primarily a domestic activity), and politics, a male-dominated concern in the public domain.

ERAP women and the female residents of the communities also had important positive effects on each other. Whilst female organisers assisted neighbourhood women with their particular concerns, the locals, in turn, became role models for the ERAPers as they impressed them with their strength in adversity. The poverty 'was just so profound compared to our upbringing', Vivian Leburg (later Rothstein) maintained, 'I never learned as much since then, about people'.⁸¹ 'In every city', Evans asserted, 'there were some of the "incredibly strong women" [Sharon] Jeffry remembered in Cleveland'.⁸² The Citizens United for Adequate Welfare (CUAW), a project in Cleveland, was also primarily concerned with assisting women, in particular mothers who qualified for government aid. Again the emergence of women's issues from the private into the public sphere was in evidence, as they sought 'money for babysitters whilst [they] fought county commissioners for free school

⁸⁰ *SDS Papers*, S 2A No. 75, September 22, 1964.

⁸¹ Leburg, quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 147.

⁸² Jeffry, quoted in *ibid*, p. 147.

lunch, for high school children'.⁸³ SDSers Sharon Jeffry and Carol McEldowney were important players in this Cleveland project. They, according to Evans 'were by far the best organizers'. Seizing on the confidence that this gave them, Jeffry and McEldowney saw that passing out leaflets at food stamp queues proved more productive than the unemployment queues. As Evans remarked, both women '[w]hen they chose to, they could command respect and stature within SDS as a whole', and McEldowney may, by 1965, have become one of the most powerful women in the organisation. 'When the woman question first came up in SDS', she added, 'Carol McEldowney and Sharon Jeffry assumed a leading role'.⁸⁴

Undoubtedly, the confidence gained from community organising had a salient influence on women's position in SDS and their prominent role in the rising women's consciousness. There are further examples of ERAP facilitating women's growing confidence. Marilyn Katz identified the 'myriad benefits' that ERAP gave to the 'visibility of women'.⁸⁵ The ERAP project in Boston was also led by two women, Marya Levenson and Pat Hansen. Again, they focused on welfare organising, which according to Levenson, was 'definitely women's organizing, and women were the only ones who felt comfortable doing that'. At a project in Boston, she argued, ensured that women who were organising 'became much stronger....We learned how to fight. We went in there and fought welfare battles....And so when it came to appearing in SDS national things, I had no question I could talk'.⁸⁶ Not all women, however, saw their organising experiences as wholly confidence-building. Leni Wildflower discussed how she was intimidated by men in the community who were, she said, 'frightening

⁸³ *SDS Papers*, S 2A No. 87. February 1965.

⁸⁴ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 142.

⁸⁵ Katz, OOI.

⁸⁶ Levenson quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 143.

and violent'. 'I didn't know how to talk to them. No way, she added, 'as a single, white woman was I going to organise the men'.⁸⁷ Her reminiscences give a further insight into women's success in organising community women, as they were pushed in that direction by their trepidation at the prospect at organising men in the community.

It is clear therefore, that women's success in ERAP overwhelmingly came in their organisation around domestic issues. Men, on the hand, often gravitated towards assisting the men of the neighbourhood. This disjunction between male and female organising had a telling impact on gender relations in ERAP. As women became active in the organisation of the private sphere, men increasingly embraced the culture of the ghetto, as their role in organising often involved the perceived need to display their own machismo and virility.

Whilst women gravitated towards the areas of organising in which they had proficiency, primarily in areas connected to the private, domestic sphere, male ERAPers were also drawn to organising in environments in which they felt more familiar. As Vivian Rothstein explained, 'often men related to work issues'. Moreover, 'they could', she found, 'be seen as sexual competitors to husbands if they organise women'.⁸⁸ ERAP's attempts to reach out to the youth of the local community in order to politicise them, saw them target unemployed young males, and in certain circumstances saw the middle-class male ERAP volunteers adopt key characteristics of these urban youths. '[I]n order to reach the "indigenous" population', maintained historian David Cavallo, 'there were times when the SDS activists found themselves

⁸⁷ Wildflower, OOI.

⁸⁸ Rothstein, OOI.

acting like those they were trying to organize, rather than the other way round'.⁸⁹ Rennie Davis described the 'potential revolutionary force' that could be tapped by the Chicago ERAP project. 'They are the force', he went on, 'that is least afraid of the police, do have some sense of justice - and are willing to act on that sense'. However, the targeting of these people frequently meant adoption of certain macho traits and distractions. 'To work with them', continued Davis, 'really requires that you live their way... that you run, and fight and drink and do all the things they do'.⁹⁰ In order to keep the pace and in an attempt to organise, Todd Gitlin also contended that male ERAPers were drawn towards stereotypically male pursuits. 'Much of the male organisers' energy', he asserted, 'went into work with "young guys" who hung out on streetcorners, liked cars, sex and fighting, got fired up against the police in spurts and were not reliable cadres'.⁹¹

Leni Wildflower saw the influence of macho on the organising activities that male ERAPers, in particular, undertook. Rennie Davis and SDSer Richard Rothstein were 'macho guys'. Male ERAPers had to 'give off this macho air', she maintained, as it was the way that they saw to 'connect with the men in the community'.⁹² Paul Potter, 'probably the least dominating male leader in early SDS', suggested that he liked the project led by Carol McEldowney and Sharon Jeffry so much 'because the style was much less macho...I felt like the style was much too competitive in, say, Newark or Chicago...I didn't want to be in one of those places with all the other heavy men'.⁹³ Male ERAPers also utilised macho rhetoric. Davis admitted that he was 'virtually

⁸⁹ Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 241.

⁹⁰ Davis, quoted in *ibid*, p. 241.

⁹¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 366.

⁹² Wildflower, OOL.

⁹³ Paul Potter quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 141.

drunk all week'.⁹⁴ As he recounted the need to gain respect from the men in the neighbourhood, Davis's aggressive and confrontational language underlined his machismo. '[Y]ou have to be ready to fight....I haven't had to, but on one occasion', he asserted, 'I stood up in a bar and said I would whip every mean son of a bitch in there...'.⁹⁵ Leni Wildflower recalled one incident where Rennie Davis attempted to organise local gang members, who were disliked by the local people. Moreover, this use of machismo was also evident in the language used by male project volunteers, as Wildflower told how they 'were trying to talk in a way that connected [with them]'.⁹⁶

The official leadership, despite its intentions at diversity, was, Sara Evans maintained, 'almost exclusively male'.⁹⁷ In 1964 the director of each of the ten ERAP projects was male and from 1963-1965 Sharon Jeffry was the only woman on the ERAP Executive Committee. In a similar manner to the male leadership of early SDS, the male leaders of ERAP 'brought to the movement the aggressiveness and competitiveness they might have been expected to exercise as successful professionals. They struggled among themselves for leadership, dominated meetings with their verbal abilities [and] actively sought positions of authority...'.⁹⁸ Evans suggests that their work with ERAP had closed the traditional avenues of success, instead, she asserted, the 'only avenues left for proving their "manhood" were those that community organizing offered'.⁹⁹

As unconsciously prejudiced attitudes were rife in the main body of SDS at this time, they were also apparent in the community organising projects. Despite anti-

⁹⁴ Rennie Davis quoted in Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 241.

⁹⁵ Davis quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 151.

⁹⁶ Wildflower, OOI.

⁹⁷ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 151

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 151-2.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 152.

intellectualism and decentralisation, there were instances of sexism and sexist attitudes within ERAP. 'Sexism', remarked Marilyn Katz, 'was alive and well'.¹⁰⁰ A 1964 report on the Cleveland Project highlighted the sexism in SDS and ERAP. The remark under a list of 'problems' was that 'we need more men, too many girls have signed up'.¹⁰¹ This was prejudiced in its intentions as it implied that women's input in the project was not taken too seriously, and suggested that the author was concerned over women's influence in ERAP. Moreover, the report was also prejudiced in its use of language, as women were placed in an unequal and inferior position, as their description as 'girls' contrasted with the report's use of 'men' in the same sentence.¹⁰² Vivian Rothstein also recalled how 'in 1965-1966, many of the applicants to be organizers were referred to as 19-F, in other words, women who were 19 [and] there were disparaging comments about them'. However, she highlighted an element that was also apparent in the sexism of the 1964 report, 'that many more women were drawn to ERAP than men...[she] was in charge of screening new applicants...and became very aware of this imbalance'.¹⁰³ The prejudiced reaction could be seen as a reaction to women's increasing involvement in the community organising projects. The problem with representation was also evident in the use of exclusive language such as 'fraternally' and 'he/his', which unconsciously excluded women's voice and input. A 1964 ERAP newsletter ignored the contribution that women made to community organising through its language. Advocating the need for more staff, the communication read '*he* is in the community for a long time...*he* is able to gradually build up support even though *he* is part time'.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Katz, OOI.

¹⁰¹ *SDS Papers*, S 2A, No. 7.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, S 2A, No. 7.

¹⁰³ Rothstein, OOI.

¹⁰⁴ ERAP Newsletter November 4, 1964, NYU OHC, Folder 7. My italics.

In certain community projects traditional gender roles still frequently applied. Leni Wildflower told of how 'women made the coffee'.¹⁰⁵ Evans noted that 'work with groups who were not considered "tough", like teen-age [sic] girls or welfare mothers, was not accorded the same status'.¹⁰⁶ A post-1965 conference report concluded that in 'most ERAP projects women frequently get relegated to female types of work, dish-washing, cooking, cleaning, clerical work'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, traditional sexual roles were often evident in the projects. Relationships in ERAP frequently replicated certain relationships in SDS generally. At times, in ERAP, 'a woman's status could rise or fall according to the changes in her sex life'.¹⁰⁸ Women could be initiated into community organising through sleeping with/being the girlfriend of an 'important' ERAP male, and thus she became part of the inner sanctum. As George Brosi suggested, 'I saw Rennie Davis operate up close, and I know he was really good at recruiting women, and very keen to do so'.¹⁰⁹ She also describes Casey Hayden's approach to the problems that arose out of these intricate liaisons in ERAP. 'She had had it with the philosophy that liberation meant you don't have one man – he sleeps around, you sleep around', Wildflower explained. [Hayden] said 'this is bullshit...he stays with me or he's out'.¹¹⁰ Despite Hayden's determination, Sara Evans described the problems for women who were caught in 'the painful middle' between either avoiding relationships at all, committing to monogamy, or enjoying sexual freedom.¹¹¹ 'In the absence of any clear understanding of the ways sex roles continued to shape behaviour', Evans

¹⁰⁵ Wildflower, OOI.

¹⁰⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁷ 'December Conference Impressions', *New Left Notes*, January 28, 1966 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁰⁸ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ Brosi, OOI.

¹¹⁰ Wildflower in Oral History Collection Columbia University (hereafter OHC CU), p. 1–40.

¹¹¹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 152.

explained, 'the double standard collapsed into a void'.¹¹² One female ERAPer identified an unspoken code. 'Love, was having a relationship with a person that you met, where two people were independent, where they functioned independently'. 'Dependence', she went on, 'was really up the wall. Dirty. Ugly'.¹¹³ Thus, women often had to struggle between their own aspirations towards relationships, and the unsaid and prevailing code within ERAP. Undoubtedly, these had the effect of occasionally inverting the significant advances that women had made in terms of confidence and self-assurance, often causing women to feel vulnerable and insecure. 'We were all super-intense, super-sincere in everything we did', one woman explained. '....And, as women...none of us were very sophisticated sexually'.¹¹⁴

Indeed, the problem of sexist attitudes in ERAP was beginning to be discussed by ERAP women in particular. The 1965 SDS 'Rethinking Conference' saw women form workshops to discuss their position in the movement, generally, and in ERAP in particular. A women's consciousness began to emerge that questioned the prejudiced attitudes and beliefs that existed in SDS and ERAP when women were, at the same time, finding self-confidence, strength and recognising their own capabilities in the community organising projects. Carol McEldowney discussed women's status in a 1965 report for the ERAP institute, and articulated her ideas on the form and content of ERAP. 'What is the role of women in the organisation', she inquired, 'and how would that relate to our concerns about democracy?' 'Why', she added, 'is there a tendency to think of all women as filling certain slots in the movement and why do many men deny that the problem exists in ERAP? Who had made the decisions in

¹¹² Ibid, p. 153.

¹¹³ Anonymous ERAPer quoted in *ibid*, p. 153.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 153.

ERAP and why have some...been made so poorly?'¹¹⁵ Harriet Stulman also saw the need to 'include the role of women' at the 1965 SDS convention. It was, she added, 'really important. Too many people are talking about it for it to go undiscussed. Don't think it's a paper tiger, tigress'. However, Stulman showed a reluctance to discuss her ideas in person at the convention. This also suggested that she suffered from a lack of confidence in public speaking that often characterised women in the organisation. 'I'm cultivating non-image making like the plague', she maintained. 'Partially out of shyness, partially unwilling to have an argument with people yet'.¹¹⁶

Thus, their experiences and expertise gleaned as a result of community organising had a salient effect on the initial rise in women's consciousness in the movement. The experiences and lessons of ERAP had a profound radicalising effect. The projects proved to be the training ground for future leaders of SDS, the burgeoning women's voice within the organisation, and ultimately the women's movement.¹¹⁷ For both sexes, there were advantages, argued Heather Booth, in seeing 'economic and racial hardship at first hand'.¹¹⁸ Marilyn Katz saw that ERAP 'taught [her] about women and poverty, about sexism in the real world, taught [her] to be militant'.¹¹⁹ Radicalism came in other guises and also affected the future progression of SDS. Indeed, historian Milton Viorst maintains that the very ethos of community organising was radical, as from it 'would emerge a radical political base'.¹²⁰ The possibilities inherent in ERAP were outlined in the fall programme report to the National Council. This saw

¹¹⁵ *SDS Papers*, S2A No. 48.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, S2A No. 14.

¹¹⁷ Other than the women whose reminiscences this chapter is constructed around, key women who participated in ERAP were Cathy Wilkerson, Cathy Boudin, Harriet Stulman, Casey Hayden and Heather Tobis.

¹¹⁸ Booth, OOI.

¹¹⁹ Katz, OOI.

¹²⁰ Milton Viorst, *Fire in the Streets: America in the 1960s* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 393.

that 'by giving both a focus on real and current issues....and by creating things that can be done, [it] serves a radicalizing function'.¹²¹ However, this 'radicalism existed in a vacuum', asserted William O'Neil, 'which created an illusion of change, without creating a substance'.¹²²

Other criticism of ERAP has been along similar lines. The most frequent attacks focused on the tendency amongst ERAP leaders to romanticise the poor. As Dominick Cavallo argued, '[ERAPers] implicitly assumed that the world of the inner city poor would somehow be more socially cohesive than was their own impersonal, competitive, status-hungry middle class world'. 'In fact what ERAP organizers found', he maintained, 'in these impoverished neighborhoods, was a variation of the same atomized, random society that they were alienated from'.¹²³ The originators of the ERAP projects also overestimated the revolutionary potential of those that they were intent on organising. As has become clear in this chapter, many community people, especially young unemployed men, were very difficult to reach with the message of ERAP and SDS. ERAPers, however, anticipated that the poor would 'act out the values of the middle class radical who has come to the slum' as Michael Harrington asserted.¹²⁴ Expecting them to be 'natively intelligent, informed, angry at the circumstances of their lives [and] prepared to unite against a common enemy', they found them, Sale argued, '...ignorant, passive, atomized and fragmented, and with a whole set of quite different values'.¹²⁵ They soon discovered that the poor were not the agents of change that was assumed. 'Seeing themselves to blame for their situation',

¹²¹ *SDS Papers*, S 2A No. 11.

¹²² William O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 279.

¹²³ Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 237.

¹²⁴ Harrington, quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 143.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 143.

Tom Hayden commented, 'they rule out the possibility that they might be qualified to govern themselves and their own organisations'. 'Besides fear', he went on, 'it is their sense of inadequacy and embarrassment which destroys the possibility of revolt'.¹²⁶ ERAPers also found that their definition of the poor was lacking. Despite being considered in terms of unemployment, poverty and class, SDS failed to recognise the complexity of the communities. As Dominick Cavallo asserted, 'their populations were heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, regional origins and religious values. Moreover, [e]ven in ERAP neighborhoods that were ethnically homogeneous such as the one in Newark...the residents often disagreed about which problems were most pressing, their causes and what to do about them'.¹²⁷ Community people were also frequently mistrustful of ERAPers. 'Some local people', George Brosi recounted 'wanted to kill [ERAP volunteers]'.¹²⁸ Leni Wildflower remembered, 'lots of friction...it was hard in white communities to figure out how to organise'.¹²⁹

There was also criticism of ERAP for not being radical enough, and of the project leaders for being unsure of the ultimate aim of community organising. 'Our struggle', Paul Millman maintained, 'appeared to be much more amorphous and less able to galvanise'. As a result, he 'often felt inept at ERAP'.¹³⁰ 'Beyond the day to day', Wildflower asserted, 'it was never clear what the projects should accomplish'.¹³¹ Kirkpatrick Sale highlighted the disparities inherent within the SDS's ethos of community organising, as they 'never resolved the contradictions between wanting fundamentally to change the nature of the state and building its projects around all the

¹²⁶ Tom Hayden, quoted in *ibid*, p. 144.

¹²⁷ Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 238.

¹²⁸ Brosi, OOI.

¹²⁹ Wildflower, OOI.

¹³⁰ Millman, OOI.

¹³¹ Wildflower, OOI.

shoddy instruments of that state'. Despite talk of "transforming the system" and "building alternative institutions", ERAP, he argued, 'did not build *parallel* structures out of projects, it built *parasite* structures, which had to live off the crumbs of the Establishment....In spite of themselves, ERAPers were manipulated and handled by the state they had set out to change'.¹³²

ERAP was very much of the mid-1960s. Indeed, by 1967, only two projects remained in Newark and Chicago. Contemporary and future critics of community organising pointed to the myriad disappointments, the missed opportunities and lost potential. For some the projects were too much of a departure from the intellectual basis of the organisation, for others ERAP did not repay the effort invested in them, and was ultimately overwhelmed by campus-based opposition to the Vietnam War. There were, however, advantages gained from organising. The action-based initiatives were welcomed by some, as was the emphasis on decentralisation and leaderlessness. Inevitably, these had a significant influence on gender issues within ERAP. Women in particular found a niche for themselves with this move away from the overtly cerebral emphasis of the central SDS leadership. Furthermore, with SDS's move into working-class neighbourhoods, women found that they had skills that were well suited to the environment in which they were operating. Their training in the domestic sphere came to the fore, as women proved their proficiency at organising in the communities primarily around domestic issues. As they displayed this capability, women gained increased confidence both personally, and in their position in SDS which would result in certain concerns being raised at the 1965 Rethinking Conference.

¹³² Sale, *SDS*, pp. 143-4. No italics added.

Indeed, these issues raised highlight the complex gender issues that were at play in ERAP. Although women were finding increased opportunity to show their skills, traditional sex roles were still being played out in the community organising projects. Often women's only opportunity to organise was around domestic issues. Machismo also grew as male ERAPers adopted the attitudes of the community men that they were aiming to organise, frequenting their bars, the street corners and occasionally utilising sexist or macho rhetoric. Moreover, the advances made by women were not always reflected in ERAP as certain documents employed exclusive language that marginalised women. Traditional attitudes to relationships were also evident in the projects. Certain women found that their standing in the organisation would increase or diminish as a result of whom they were sexually involved with, and some women struggled to reconcile their aspirations with the unsaid code that was operating in ERAP.

However, it is apparent that ERAP was something of a double-edged sword for women in SDS. Undoubtedly, the organisation's embrace of community organising saw women increase in confidence and influence within the local projects, yet this also caused increased frustration amongst women who had finally found a sphere of influence within SDS. Women's consciousness had been raised through their significant contribution to ERAP, yet with the exception of two or three key female figures, women were still not accorded the visibility of men in the organisation, as they were virtually anonymous in the top echelons of the National Office. Although the demise of ERAP as a significant force within SDS after 1966, and the rise in the organisation's anti-war activity saw women's issues again relegated to the back

burner, women's concerns and gender issues were still apparent. Indeed, it was the tension between these themes of invisibility combined with an initial awakening that had a profound effect on the second half of SDS, as the decade progressed.

Chapter Three

SDS and Revolutionary Black Nationalism

Black revolutionary nationalism had a profound impact on SDS. Previous chapters have demonstrated the shared history between SDS and SNCC, going back to the Freedom Summer. Many SDSers were influenced by the ideologies and methods of the Civil Rights movement evident in projects such as ERAP. As leftist radicalism increased as the decade progressed, the influence that groups such as SNCC and the Black Panthers held over SDS grew. It is therefore imperative at this point in the study to look briefly at the ideological development of black nationalism, before moving on to focus more closely on the key influence that black nationalism had on SDS, and the ways that notions that were derivative of black nationalism were manifested in the ideology and action of later SDS and its sub-group Weatherman.

Groups such as SNCC and the Black Panthers had a telling influence on an organisation that was looking leftward in an increasingly revolutionary direction as the second half of the sixties progressed. This chapter reflects on gender and black nationalism, considering the particular impact that SNCC's adoption of Black Power, and the Black Panthers' revolutionary programme, had on men and women, and male and female roles within their organisations. It also focuses on the rhetoric and style of black nationalism with an investigation into machismo in the black nationalist groups and its impact on gender constructions. This chapter presents the significant ties that were apparent between SDS and the Black Panthers in particular, and focuses on the effect that black nationalist ideology and language had on gender relations within SDS.

In 1966, SDS came out in support of SNCC and its 'emphasis on Black Power'. 'Let it be clear', said the statement on SNCC, 'that we are not merely supporting SNCC's right to its views, we are welcoming the thrust of SNCC's program and expect to continue our joint work'. Arguing for the on-going support of SNCC and its philosophy of Black Power, the statement's authors urged that 'we must not simply tolerate this "black consciousness" [but] encourage it...organising primarily amongst the powerless, the disenfranchised, the dependent whites...so that they may move forward toward authentic alliance with the organizations of Black Power'.¹ By 1968, this support for SNCC was more vociferous, as SDS focused its attention away from its primarily middle-class constituency, concentrating on the plight of African-Americans above all. After a persuasive speech at the summer 1968 National Convention by Carl Ogelsby, who argued that SDS should turn its attention from the Vietnam War to racism, the delegates agreed, almost unanimously, on a proposal to support the black struggle for liberation. This, according to Kirkpatrick Sale, saw the organisation embark on 'a fateful process'.² This combined a 'politics of guilt' with 'a politics of revolution'.³ It was keen to stress its members' role as supportive radical whites in the Black Power revolution, 'a presence of a white community in the coming rebellions...[with] a special responsibility to fight racism amongst our own white population'. SDS reiterated a point made by H Rap Brown in 1967 when he 'emphasised the need for black/white unity in forging an American revolution'.⁴ 'We must', the organisation stated, 'see our job as one of moving the white population into

¹ SDS Statement on SNCC, April 2, 1966 in *New Left Notes* (hereafter *NLN*), *SDS Papers*, Series 3 No. 10.

² Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House 1973), p. 419.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 419-20.

⁴ 'Brown Raps with White Left', *NLN* November 27 1967, *SDS Papers*, Series 3 No. 10.

a position of rebellion which joins the black struggle for liberation to make the American revolution'.⁵

Moreover, most telling was the influence the Black Panthers had on late SDS and, particularly, on Weatherman. This was essentially driven by the shared revolutionary Marxist values that the Black Panthers and late SDS (especially Weatherman), began to demonstrate. Both the Panthers and Weatherman advocated the forming of alliances between white and black radicals. The Black Panthers' Marxist beliefs convinced them 'our fight is a class struggle and not a race struggle', and saw it target the white ruling capitalist class as the major enemy.⁶ Bobby Seale quoted Huey Newton when he welcomed the class agitation of white revolutionaries. 'If any white person', he argued, 'wants to act in the manner of a John Brown, and in accordance with the needs of black people, then we can work with him....If they want to support the liberation struggle – beautiful'.⁷ Weatherman illustrated their commitment to the Panthers' perspective in their document 'You Don't Need a Weatherman To Know Which Way the Wind Blows', its desire to support the black revolutionary struggle being encapsulated in John Jacobs' slogan, 'John Brown, live like him'.⁸ Indeed, the 'You Don't Need' document tangibly illustrated the derivative nature of Weather's brand of revolutionary communism. In the document, to be discussed further in the

⁵ Quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 419.

⁶ Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party* (London: Arrow Books, 1968), p. 93.

⁷ Seale, quoted in Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 126.

⁸ Further documentary evidence of Weatherman's commitment to the black revolutionary struggle, and their secondary role in it is discussed at length in Chapter Six. John Jacobs, quoted in Echols, *Daring*, p. 126.

Weatherman chapter, the group stressed the need for armed struggle to achieve revolution, and emphasised the subsidiary role for whites in support of this uprising.⁹

A key trait of the revolutionary black nationalism propounded by SNCC and the Panthers was their rejection of the policy of non-violence which had characterised the Civil Rights movement. Although SNCC's full title, the Student *Non-violent* Coordinating Committee (my italics) underlines the group's past allegiance to non-violence, the emergence of Black Power within the organisation at the Meredith March through Mississippi in summer 1966 heralded SNCC's move towards violence as a means of self-defence within the black community. 'Those of us who advocate Black Power', Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton maintained, 'are quite clear...that a 'non-violent' approach to civil rights is an approach black people cannot afford and a luxury white people do not deserve'. 'White people', they contended, 'must be made to understand that they must stop messing with black people, or the blacks *will* fight back!'.¹⁰ As Carmichael also asserted, 'nothing more quickly repels someone bent on destroying you than the unequivocal message: "OK fool, make your move, and run the same risk I run, of dying"'. Initially entitled the Black Panther Party For Self-Defense, the Panthers also were categorically opposed to tactics of non-violence. 'The second amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms', Huey Newton proclaimed. 'We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense'.¹¹

⁹ 'You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows' in Harold Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman* (New York: Rampart Press 1970), pp. 51-90.

¹⁰ Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 67. No italics added.

¹¹ Huey P. Newton, '10 Point Program', in Huey Newton, *To Die For the People* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1995), pp. 4-5.

'We see clearly the need', stated a SDS resolution in 1969, 'to join with the Black Panther Party and other revolutionary nationalist groups in the fight against national chauvinism and white supremacy'.¹² As previous chapters have illustrated, SDS and SNCC had a shared history going back to the Freedom Summer of 1964, and equally, had a common experience with charges of male chauvinism being levelled at both organisations. As SNCC moved irreversibly towards Black Power and its accompanying militancy, this link continued, although the interaction between SDS and SNCC became increasingly and decisively one-sided. SDS came out in support of SNCC's 'invention' and embrace of Black Power, agreeing with African-Americans' rights of self-determination and, following Stokely Carmichael's instruction, pledging to organise whites against racism. SDS and the Black Panther party also proved to have a common bond. In addition to the clear link in ideology adopted by both the Weatherman faction of SDS and the Black Panthers, much of the confrontational style that became common in SDS after 1967, and especially characterised the rhetoric of Weatherman, was influenced by the often aggressive language of black nationalist groups such as SNCC and the Panthers in particular.

The rhetoric that accompanied these black nationalists' assertions often resonated beyond emphasising their right of self-preservation. The choice of language was perceived by some as having aggressive and confrontational tones, which impacted on gender relations within the organisation. This language would also come to characterise the discourse of the New Left, and particularly SDS, which adopted the rhetoric of black revolutionary nationalism in order to highlight its support for the black freedom struggle, and also show its radical and revolutionary intent.

¹² 'The Black Panther Party: Toward the Liberation of the Colony', National Convention resolution, in *New Left Notes* (hereafter *NLN*), April 4, 1969, *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown, in particular, utilised aggressive language in their writings and pronouncements. Indeed, Carmichael's Black Power polemic paved the way for the increasingly combative language that was to follow. '[W]hatever the consequences', he asserted, 'there is a growing...body of black people determined to T.C.B – take care of business. They will not be stopped in their drive to achieve dignity, to achieve their share of power, indeed, to be their own men and women...by whatever means necessary'.¹³ Rap Brown, who succeeded Carmichael as chairman of SNCC, had little of the ambiguity of his predecessor, and was more strident in his use of language to support his political intentions. In July 1967 Brown delivered a speech to Cambridge, Maryland, residents, urging that blacks 'burn [America] down if we don't get a share of it'. 'You gotta own some of them stores', he cried, as he impelled blacks to seize white-owned premises. 'I don't care if you have to burn him [whites] down and run him out', he added. SNCCer Julius Lester emulated Brown's bellicose rhetoric, and echoed his proclamation of an impending war. 'You can't do what has been done to blacks and not expect retribution', he warned. 'The very act of retribution is liberating. It is clearly written that the victim must become the executioner'.¹⁴

The Panthers' confrontations with the police and the establishment allied to their use of rhetoric and symbolism gave them an aggressive and confrontational air. Certainly, members of the Black Panther Party used aggressive language and frequently articulated a confrontational message. 'If you kill a few pigs', asserted Panther Fred Hampton, 'you will get some satisfaction...but if you kill them all', he went on, 'you

¹³ Carmichael/Hamilton, *Black Power*, p. 187.

¹⁴ Julius Lester, *Look Out Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), pp. 137-8.

will get complete satisfaction'.¹⁵ Bobby Seale cited Huey Newton's reaction to a police raid. 'You're all gonna die', he said. 'You're all racist dogs. You're all racist swine....And you're all gonna die, and you're gonna be run out, driven out of the black community'.¹⁶ Seale was a keen advocate of 'offing the pig'. 'Off the pig means to kill the slave master', he explained.¹⁷ 'If they attack us or try to kill us...we'll defend ourselves. We'll off any pig who attacks us'.¹⁸ He also referred to a song sung during Huey Newton's murder trial, which encapsulated the macho, aggressive message. 'No more pigs in our community/Off the Pig/It's time to pick up the gun'.¹⁹ The confrontational language patented by the Panthers proved attractive to white radicals across the Left, and appealed to members of late SDS and Weatherman in particular. They adopted Panther language almost wholesale, as a means of displaying their revolutionary credentials in Leftist and counterculture circles of the time.

Of all the symbols employed by the Panthers, nothing displayed their confrontational intent as obviously as their embrace of guns. In *Seize the Time*, Bobby Seale presented the actual role of guns in the Panther ethos. He quoted Huey Newton who argued that '[w]e have the guns because we're instituting a new...revolutionary organisation'.²⁰ However, despite their reiteration of their intention to use firearms purely for defence, the image of the Panther members openly carrying guns was a powerful representation of their purpose, and undoubtedly contributed to their aggressive and macho image. Elaine Brown highlighted the link between the Panthers' militant symbolism and discourse. 'One [brother] stepped forward', she recounted, 'sawed - off

¹⁵ Hampton quoted in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 77.

¹⁶ Seale, *Seize*, p. 135.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 447.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 449-50.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 451.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 94-5.

shotgun now raised across his chest, a gloved fist at his side. 'We'll put [the pig's] dick in the dirt' [he said].²¹ Other symbols were also important and combined with the carrying of guns to put across the Black Panthers' collective macho image. Seale described how the Panther leadership attended a meeting. 'We all got down our uniforms', he recollected, 'the blue shirt, with black leather jacket, black pants, and black beret. We loaded up and got out guns'.²²

'Although', Alice Echols suggested, 'the Panthers were undoubtedly the victims of unprovoked police attacks, they were...not completely without blame'. She cites Eldridge Cleaver who claimed that the Panthers did, on occasion, ambush the police. Moreover, even if the Panthers claimed their intention was self-defence, the government took the Panthers' pledge to 'off the pig' quite literally. 'The Panthers', she maintained, 'found themselves victimized by their own rhetoric as twenty-six Party members were killed between April 1968 and the end of 1969'.²³ There was, nevertheless, a distinct difference between some of the rhetoric of the Black Panthers and Weatherman. Whilst the Panthers suggested that their desire for violence was purely for purposes of self-preservation, Weather's language took on a much more obviously confrontational and offensive edge. This is particularly evident in the aggressive rhetoric at the 1969 SDS National Convention that was utilised to celebrate and revel in the Charles Manson murders.

Despite attempts at explanation by black nationalist leaders, their use of language played a large part in creating and maintaining an image that was aggressive,

²¹ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Women's Story* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), p. 125.

²² Seale, *Seize*, p. 141.

²³ Echols, *Daring*, p. 127.

confrontational and frequently imbued with machismo. With late SDS's enthusiastic support for, and adoption of, black nationalist ideology, sexism in the Panthers and SNCC also had a knock-on effect on SDS. Unsurprisingly, the new representation of SNCC's intent, encapsulated in its Black Power message, proved to be attractive to many African-Americans, who seized upon Black Power rhetoric as an alternative to both the conventional dictates from the government and instruction from the non-violent section of the Civil Rights movement. 'The Black Power spokespersons, historian Van Deburg maintained, 'knew that the press would stigmatize them...but they also recognised that this lawless, macho image had its benefits' in attracting those whom the Panthers' Bobby Seale called 'the brothers on the block'.²⁴ Certain Black Power leaders emphasised these macho traits at the same time as stressing the combative and sometimes hostile nature of Black Power politics. Clearly, they were intent on playing to both audiences, attracting both the young urban blacks and playing on the fears of the white establishment. Thus, Julius Lester entitled his 1968 polemic *Look Out Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama*, and Huey Newton wrote *To Die for the People and Revolutionary Suicide*. H. Rap Brown spoke of his love of the gun. 'They weren't taking my gun', he wrote in his autobiography, 'the only thing "the man's" going to respect is that .45 or .38 you've got'.²⁵

Frequently underlying this language of machismo, bravado and confrontation was the search for manhood. Whilst certain members of SDS, and of Weatherman in particular, had a preoccupation with emphasising this stereotypical masculinity, there was a further motivation behind black nationalists' machismo, which was exclusive to

²⁴ William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 12.

²⁵ H. Rap Brown, *Die Nigger Die* (New York: Dial Press, 1969), pp. 81, 84.

the black experience. This desire to prove oneself in traditionally masculine terms, some commentators claimed, stemmed from a deep-rooted fear of emasculation arising out of African-Americans' slave past. The early Civil Rights movement had played a key role in 'confirming masculine as well as racial assertiveness', historian Paula Giddings argued, 'but when it broke down, the old nightmare of impotence...surfaced'.²⁶ Black Power leaders were keen to declare their possession of overtly masculine traits. The quest for manhood can be blamed for accentuating sexist attitudes within black nationalist groups. This preoccupation with traditional masculinity marginalised women within both SNCC and, to a lesser extent, the Black Panthers, while women also contributed to their peripheral role as race loyalty frequently overshadowed their sexual identity.

In SNCC, men dominated the leadership of the organisation after 1966, and women supported their control of the organisation, possibly because of a desire to assist African-American men in their manhood quest. 'There was a popular notion', asserts Cynthia Griggs Fleming, that 'because black men had somehow been more victimised than black women, the women were obligated to support male assertiveness'.²⁷ Moreover, without women adding to their feelings of insecurity, Black Power men would be able to assert their masculinity in a traditional way, as head of the organisation as a substitute family. Even Ruby Doris Robinson Smith, who herself had, according to James Forman, 'endured vicious attacks from the SNCC leadership, who embodied male chauvinism in fighting her attempts as executive secretary', genuflected to the male assertions of manhood and authority. In 1966 she told *Ebony*

²⁶ Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* (New York: William Morrow Press, 1984), pp. 314-5.

²⁷ Cynthia Griggs Fleming, 'Black Women and Black Power', in Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin (ed.), *Sisters in Struggle* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 207.

magazine that the freedom struggle was men's work, although because of their victimisation by society, they could not entirely shoulder the burden yet. However, she predicted that in the future the 'Negro man will be able to assume his full role'. 'As women', added SNCC activist Fannie Lou Hamer, 'we feel we have done many things that have enabled us to open doors for our men, and to show them that when they get their chance, we will be there to back them up all the way'.²⁸

Sexism did exist in the Panthers, but leaders of the party were also amongst the first 1960s radicals to recognise the counter-revolutionary drawbacks of harbouring chauvinistic attitudes, and spoke out against sexism within the Black Panther Party. Adopting a stance that Weatherman would later replicate, the Panthers identified the revolutionary potential of women, tying the women's liberation struggle to the overall quest for revolution and supporting the notion of women as a fighting force on the front line of the battle for a Marxist-Leninist take-over. However, whilst overt sexism was absent from Panther leaders' rhetoric, it was frequently replaced by an adherence to, and glorification of machismo. The 'public display of arming themselves perhaps was necessary for Huey Newton and the Black Panthers', noted Michelle Wallace in her critique of black macho. This, she argued, was because 'their actions represented an unprecedented boldness in the sons of slaves and had a profound and largely beneficial effect on the way that black people would regard themselves'. However, Wallace regrets the surrender of the positive gains of 'an improved self-image' to 'black macho – a male chauvinism that was frequently cruel, narcissistic and shortsighted'.²⁹ Frances Beale of SNCC openly challenged this macho posturing. Whilst the black militant male was keen to renounce white cultural values, 'when it

²⁸ Phyl Garland, 'Builders of a New South', *Ebony*, August 1966, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 206-7.

²⁹ Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: Verso, 1990), p. 73.

comes to women he seems to take his guidelines from the pages of *Ladies Home Journal*.³⁰ Angela Davis also supported the existence of a black macho, which was attached to male African-Americans' desire to regain their masculinity, contending that she was attacked as 'domineering' by black men who feared that she would 'rob them of their manhood'.³¹ 'A lot of us [women]', Assanta Shakur maintained, 'adopted that kind of macho style in order to survive in the Black Panther Party...[as] you had to develop this whole arrogant kind of macho to be heard'.³²

Machismo proved to be a further link between the white and black radical left, and between black nationalists and SDS in particular. Macho, it is argued below, had a significant role to play in the constructions of masculinity and femininity in SDS, SNCC and the Black Panthers. Whilst sexism was apparent in SDS from its inception, from the mid-1960s onwards the macho and combative attitudes that were at play within the organisation were clearly influenced by the rhetoric and style that the Black Panthers, in particular, were displaying. Indeed the influence of Panthers' language and image-making was profound and has been noted earlier in the chapter. Moreover, in the later years of SDS, which saw resistance to the draft, the Columbia uprising and the rise of Weatherman, machismo was rife, and was, in effect, an effective way of proving one's own revolutionary credentials and commitment to the cause. Thus, as Giddings commented, a macho chic began to emerge in the radical black and white left, as 'both black men and radical men and women too applauded the machismo of leather-jacketed young men, armed to the teeth and rising out of the urban ghetto'.

³⁰ Frances Beale, 'Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female' in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 343.

³¹ Angela Davis, quoted in Echols, *Daring*, p. 106.

³² Quoted in Traceye A. Mathews, 'No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is' in Collier-Thomas/Franklin (ed.), *Sisters*, p. 243.

'Although', she adds, 'this might not have been consciously conceived out of the need to affirm their manhood, it became the metaphor for the male consciousness of an era'.³³

The fear of emasculation was a key motivation behind male Panthers' chauvinism and machismo. As the article 'Panther Sisters on Women's Liberation', a polemic penned by women active in the Black Panthers, asserted, black males' 'manhood' had metaphorically been taken away in slavery, leaving them 'sort of castrated...[without] the responsibilities that they rightfully should have had before'.³⁴ 'Black men', remarked Panther Regina Jennings, 'had been too long without some form of power...[to] rework their double standard towards the female cadre'.³⁵ Bobby Seale also indirectly referred to men's feelings of emasculation 'where the male is put in a position where he can't really be the breadwinner for the home'.³⁶ Moreover, he correlated the economic position of African-Americans with black males' sense of devalued manhood, which frequently affected their attitude towards women. 'Incidents and problems', he explained, 'are cross-related to the economic situation in our society, the fact that a black man can't get a job...Many of the brothers just give up and leave their families. Because of this rotten system, a lot of young brothers grow up not wanting to get married. They want to be pimps and subordinate the sister'.³⁷ The 'Panther Sisters', also drew a link between chauvinist attitudes amongst Black Panther men and their search for manhood, as 'our men are constantly thinking

³³ Giddings, *Where and When*, p. 315.

³⁴ 'Panther Sisters on Women's Liberation' in William L. Van Deburg (ed.), *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey, to Louis Farrakhan* (New York and London: New York University, 1997), p. 261.

³⁵ Jennings quoted in Mumia Abu-Jamal, 'A Life in the Party' in Kathleen Cleaver/George Katsiaficas (eds.), *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 45.

³⁶ Seale, *Seize*, p. 437.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-6.

or saying that maybe if we assume a heavier role, a more responsible role, that this, in turn, will sort of take away their responsibility...'.³⁸ Recognising the need 'to be sensitive enough' to black men's 'very real fear[s]' arising from their symbolic castration, the authors also sought to separate the search for self-worth from the oppression of women in the group. They therefore placed great stress on the importance of making 'black men understand that their manhood is not dependent on keeping their black women subordinate to them'.³⁹ Similarly, but with different motivation, male and female members of late SDS and Weatherman were intent on overt displays of macho to prove their worth as revolutionaries. Their apparent motivation was one of class rather than race, as they sought to cast off their upper-middle-class affluence of their upbringing. Again, as black revolutionaries cast off the racial constraints with macho posturing, white revolutionaries sought to use machismo in order to remake themselves as class warriors. The perceived authenticity of black nationalists' revolutionary lifestyle, and the machismo that accompanied it, further motivated SDSers to adopt similar traits.

Indeed, certain Panthers sought to redefine the search for manhood and to locate it fully within the Panthers' anti-chauvinist ethos. Bobby Seale maintained that 'real manhood is based on humanism, and it's not based on *any* form of oppression'.⁴⁰ 'Manhood', David Hilliard argued, played a telling role in creating 'the Party's image of freedom and defiance [that] attracts both brothers and sisters'. Thus, Hilliard presented 'manhood' as an inclusive creation, encapsulating the desires of male and female Panthers. He perceived that the group had 'become the standard for black

³⁸ Panther Sisters in Van Deburg (ed), *Black Nationalism*, p. 261.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 262.

⁴⁰ Seale, *Seize*, p. 446. No italics added.

manhood' as it 'made the guys feel like they're no longer less than men, and telling sisters that if their men can't measure up to Brother Huey, than [sic] they had better get out of the bed'.⁴¹ However, despite its tone of inclusivity, Hilliard's message still reinforced traditional sex roles. His perception of Black Panther manhood ensured that men were never seen as less than men, and although women were presented as being empowered, Hilliard described this in a purely sexual way, within the confines of the domestic sphere. Furthermore, the Panthers' exclusive language betrayed their ingrained chauvinistic attitudes. Alice Echols noted that Eldridge Cleaver's use of language, particularly his references to "our women" in his statement on women's liberation, 'suggested a less than progressive view of women'.⁴²

The issue of male chauvinism was a significant one in the Black Panthers and male and female members made frequent reference to the existence of male chauvinism and the need for its elimination. Other members, however, were keen to stress the Panthers' advanced stance in gender relations. Clayborne Carson recognised that 'in ways that distinguished it from other black militant groups of the period the Black Panther Party encouraged the participation of women by condemning male chauvinism and lessening its reliance on a paramilitary style of organization'.⁴³ Yet although denounced in theory, sexism undoubtedly remained an issue in practice within the party. According to Eldridge Cleaver, Panther leader Huey P. Newton stated that 'the male chauvinism that is rampant in Babylon in general, is also rampant in our own ranks' and argued that 'the revolutionary standards of principles demand

⁴¹ David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1993), p. 161.

⁴² Echols, *Daring*, p. 328.

⁴³ Clayborne Carson, foreword to Philip S. Foner (ed.), *The Black Panthers Speak* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. xvii.

that we go to great lengths to see to it that disciplinary action is taken...against those who manifest male chauvinist behavior'.⁴⁴ Moreover, he urged other Panther members to 'purge our ranks and our hearts, and our minds and our understanding of any chauvinism, chauvinist behavior or disrespectful behavior toward women'.⁴⁵ Bobby Seale also acknowledged that male chauvinism did exist within the Black Panthers, and, he asserted, 'when Eldridge and Huey and the Party as a whole move to get rid of male chauvinism, we're moving on that principle of absolute equality between male and female.... The Party is working very hard and fast to break down male chauvinism'.⁴⁶ He was at pains to stress, however, the basic equality between male and female that existed in the Black Panthers. He maintained that the Black Panther Party was 'winning on a higher level and treating the sisters on an equal level'.⁴⁷ Seale also saw that 'where the sister was previously regulated to typing and cooking...we broke up those rules in the Party'. 'In our Party', he added, 'the sister is not told to stay home...[In] a Panther house... both brothers and sisters cook. Both wash the dishes. The sisters don't just serve and wait on the brothers'. Furthermore, Seale maintained, 'brothers can be secretaries too'.⁴⁸

Kathleen Cleaver also refuted the suggestion that there were 'sex roles' in the party. 'Women', she argued, 'could do almost anything in the Party...it wasn't like if you were a woman you went to this office, if you were a man you did that'.⁴⁹ Highlighting her influence in the party, Cleaver explained how she 'created the position of

⁴⁴ Taken from Eldridge Cleaver, 'Message to Sister Erica Huggins of the Black Panther Party' in *ibid.*, pp. 98-9.

⁴⁵ Eldridge Cleaver to Erica Huggins, in *NLN*, July 8, 1968, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 12.

⁴⁶ Seale, *Seize*, p. 436.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-6.

⁴⁹ Zachariah Mamphilly, 'Beyond the Black Panthers: An Interview With Kathleen Cleaver' from *Africa.com*. First published April 20, 2001.

communications secretary...I organised demonstrations, wrote leaflets, held press conferences, spoke at rallies, I even ran for political office in order to organize the community around the program of the...Party'.⁵⁰ The Black Panther Party, Assanta Shakur argued, 'was the most progressive organisation of the time...many other organisations at the time were so sexist... [and preoccupied] with this quest for manhood'.⁵¹ Significantly, the influence of the Black Panthers and their revolutionary rhetoric saw SDS recognise the existence of sexism within its own ranks. However, like the Panthers, SDS failed to recognise the irony in this, as macho and prejudice continued to exist within its own ranks.

Both the Black Panthers and Weatherman were motivated to oppose male chauvinism by their belief that it was a bourgeois construction that hindered the route to revolution. The Panther Sisters saw that 'male chauvinism must be stomped out, because we have come to realize that it is bourgeois'.⁵² Specifically, they also linked this belief with the black struggle. 'Black women', they asserted, 'as generally a part of the...working class, are more oppressed as, being black they're super oppressed, and as being women they are sexually oppressed by men in general and by black men also'.⁵³ 'The liberation of women', Eldridge Cleaver maintained, 'is one of the most important issues facing the world today...because women want to be liberated just as all oppressed peoples want to be liberated'.⁵⁴ The *Black Panther* newspaper also replicated this aggressive tone in condemning sexist attitudes. 'Male chauvinism', it

⁵⁰ Kathleen Cleaver, 'Women, Power and Revolution', in Cleaver/Katsiaficas (eds.), *Liberation*, pp. 124-5.

⁵¹ Quoted in Fleming, 'Black Power', in Collier/Franklin, *Sisters*, p. 248.

⁵² 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p 265.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 262.

⁵⁴ Eldridge Cleaver to Erica Huggins, in *NLN*, July 8, 1968 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 12.

asserted, 'must be stamped out because we have come to realise it is bourgeois'.⁵⁵ Articles by Weather also supported the bourgeois attitudes behind women's oppression. 'Male supremacy...', Cathy Wilkerson stressed, 'is a critical force in promoting bourgeois individualism through false separation of men and women....[I]t is crucial', she maintained, 'that men and women both begin to fight against the vestiges of bourgeois ideology within themselves'.⁵⁶

Just as both SDS and the Panthers believed that capitalism lay at the heart of the development of bourgeois values, so the Panthers and Weather identified capitalism as the root of male chauvinism. 'In the Black Panther Party', Bobby Seale contended, 'we understand that male chauvinism is directly related to the class society'. Moreover, the appeal of socialism was unequivocal. 'We need to establish a system based on the goal of absolute equality, of all people...we see establishing socialism...as a means by which we begin to remove the oppressive social obstacles, and hope to build a society where someday a man and a woman can relate to each other'.⁵⁷ 'People', Weatherman Bill Ayers asserted, 'have come to see...the need to build collectives that are strong and tough, and in order to do that a lot of individualism has to be worked out of every one of us'. 'In practice', he went on, 'when people are operating in collectives...the women begin to get strong, begin to assert themselves, begin to come out as leaders not as political people who work through another individual; but as political people who build collectives and lead struggles'.⁵⁸ Women within both organisations were even more candid. 'In order for

⁵⁵ Quoted in Lawrence Lader, *Power on the Left: American Radical Movements Since 1946* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1979), p. 302.

⁵⁶ Cathy Wilkerson, 'Towards a Revolutionary Women's Militia', in Jacobs, *Weatherman*, p. 93.

⁵⁷ Seale, *Seize*, pp. 435-6.

⁵⁸ Bill Ayers, 'A Strategy To Win', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, pp. 190-1.

women to become truly emancipated in this country', the Panther Sisters maintained, 'there's going to have to be a socialist revolution'.⁵⁹ The Honky Tonk Women explained how they 'must fight to destroy that national white oppressor identity and establish world communism....US imperialism is our common enemy, and white women must join in this fight before they can win anything but empty transitional demands'.⁶⁰

To achieve this revolution, both the Panthers and Weather identified two key areas where women had a salient role to play: a commitment to the primary objective of revolutionary class struggle and the need for women to present themselves as an aggressive and strong combative force. Moreover, both the 'Panther Sisters' and Weather's 'Honky Tonk Women' rejected the 'strategy of autonomous women's liberation organisations...because [they] look upon women's liberation as a priority when in actuality the struggle towards socialist revolution is a priority'.⁶¹ Thus, although the Panthers recognised the existence of male chauvinism, they indicated that women's struggle was not 'separate...but part and parcel of the overall struggle'. They therefore maintained that women could only start their emancipation 'through their participation on an equal plane in the existing organizations which are comprised of men and women who are struggling for the same cause'.⁶² 'Women's role', asserted Kathleen Cleaver, is 'the same as men['s]. We are revolutionaries'.⁶³ The Panther Sisters were cautious about the negative effects of a separatist women's movement, perceiving that 'extreme female chauvinists...totally negat[e] the revolutionary

⁵⁹ 'Panther Sisters', in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 263.

⁶⁰ 'Honky Tonk Women' in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 313.

⁶¹ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, pp. 263-4.

⁶² *Ibid*, p 263.

⁶³ Kathleen Cleaver, 'Women, Power, Revolution', in Cleaver/Katsiaficas (eds.), *Liberation*, p. 124.

struggle'. They also saw the existence of a disturbing trait synonymous with separatism. Women's liberation, they insisted, 'should exist...to channel the energies...into a united liberation of the men and women together -- not as a bourgeois cult'.⁶⁴ Bobby Seale also warned of separating the women's struggle from the overall battle against capitalism. 'Some women's organisations', he argued, 'are working strictly in the capitalistic system, and talking about equality'. 'But', he added, 'the very nature of the capitalist system is to exploit and enslave people.... So we have to progress to a level of socialism to solve these problems'.⁶⁵ Weather voiced similar sentiments. As Cathy Wilkerson of Weather asserted, 'it must...be clear that "women's issues" cannot be considered or dealt with separately from an understanding and strategy of the way the major contradictions affect the whole proletariat of the mother country'.⁶⁶

The second way that the Black Panthers and Weather intended to eliminate male chauvinism and achieve revolution was by ensuring that their female adherents were strong and aggressive women who would play a key role in the revolution. This approach reflected the machismo and shows of strength that were endemic in the strategy and posturing of both organisations. Bobby Seale was also keen to stress the important role that women could play in the party and in the revolution. He described the important actions of the Panther women' who 'laid the revolutionary ideology right on [the Panther brothers]'.⁶⁷ Throughout his piece, Seale referred to the active role that Panther women must play, and equally the respect that must be paid to them by Panther men. 'The main thing that the brothers had to understand was that no one had

⁶⁴ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 265.

⁶⁵ Seale, *Seize*, p. 446.

⁶⁶ Wilkerson, 'Towards a Revolutionary Women's Militia' in Jacobs, *Weatherman*, p. 93.

⁶⁷ Seale, *Seize*, p. 438.

a right to speak of a sister as counter-revolutionary'. She, he stressed, 'is also revolutionary'.⁶⁸ 'Once women find their place in terms of their roles as revolutionaries', the Panther Sisters asserted, '...then...[male chauvinism] won't be such a sharp issue'.⁶⁹ 'We must too recognise', Eldridge Cleaver argued, 'that a woman can be just as revolutionary as a man and that she has equal stature'.⁷⁰ As 'a weatherwoman' succinctly put it, '[w]omen must pick up the gun and kill the pig. Our liberation depends on this fight as well as seeing this fight as part of a worldwide struggle'.⁷¹

Machismo, in both male and female Weather and Panther members, was to be celebrated. Inherent within the image of the Panther and Weather woman was their combative role and their familiarity and proficiency with guns. 'The sister', Bobby Seale maintained, 'has to be able to defend herself, just like we do. She has to learn to shoot, just like we do'.⁷² Eldridge Cleaver urged that Panther men understand that 'our women are suffering strongly and enthusiastically as we are participating in the struggle'.⁷³ Often combat, guns and the battle against male chauvinism were interconnected. Erica Huggins, for example, was cast as a role model in the fight against male chauvinism and for the revolution. 'Sister Erica Huggins is a shining example', Eldridge Cleaver asserted, 'of a revolutionary woman, who's been meted out the same kind of injustice from the pig power structure that a revolutionary man receives...the pigs recognised a revolutionary woman to be as much a threat as a revolutionary

⁶⁸ Seale, *Seize*, p. 440.

⁶⁹ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 261.

⁷⁰ Eldridge Cleaver to Erica Huggins, in *NLN*, July 8, 1968 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 12.

⁷¹ A Weatherwoman, 'Inside the Weather Machine', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 326.

⁷² Seale, *Seize*, p. 440.

⁷³ Eldridge Cleaver to Erica Huggins, in *NLN*, July 8, 1968 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 12.

man'.⁷⁴ She gained the respect of 'the brothers [who] had to look upon Erika with a new light because she had been thru [sic] a lot of things that some Brothers hadn't even been thru [sic]'. She was an example for 'the sisters' who 'all saw what [they] had to do'.⁷⁵ Bobby Seale also commented on the example of Huggins. 'Since the pig structure has been trying to kill Erica Huggins', he saw that 'brothers have begun to see that the sisters can get arrested too'.⁷⁶ The 'Panther Sisters' believed that 'sisters have to pick up guns just like brothers....Unless we stand up male chauvinism will still show itself and be something that's just passed over'.⁷⁷ As Weather men sought to emulate their Panther counterparts, Weather women followed the Panthers' lead by also celebrating macho and glorifying violence, aggression and the gun. Weather communiqués praised the autonomous and often violent action by their female members, and Weather women Bernadine Dohrn celebrated the Charles Manson murders.⁷⁸

The Vietnamese were also seen as role models for the Black Panthers. Weather drew inspiration from their exploits and granted the Vietnamese a place alongside the Panthers in the pantheon of their revolutionary heroes. Both groups were inspired by the Vietnamese Communists' battles against US imperialism, perceiving the Vietnam War as part of the world revolutionary struggle against the capitalism that the US epitomised. As Huey Newton wrote to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, 'the Black Panther Party recognise that our common enemy is the American

⁷⁴ Ditto; in *NLN*, July 8, 1968 in *ibid*.

⁷⁵ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 258.

⁷⁶ Seale, *Seize*, p. 440.

⁷⁷ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 258.

⁷⁸ The Weatherman observations will be expanded upon in the final chapter that has Weatherman as its focus.

imperialist who is the leader of international bourgeois domination'.⁷⁹ Newton's sentiments were replicated by Panther Connie Matthews in a speech to a Vietnam Moratorium committee in July 1969 as she linked the Vietnamese and black struggles. 'Whenever the Vietnamese fight...', she insisted, 'they are fighting for you here'.⁸⁰ Moreover, in both Weatherman and the Black Panthers, Vietnamese women were held up as examples of women fighting to achieve revolution and the overthrow of American capitalist colonialism. The 'Panther Sisters' were also inspired by the fighting qualities of the Vietnamese, as they provided 'a prime example of the role women can play in the revolution'. They emphasised the Vietnamese women's strength and aggression. 'The Vietnamese women', they contended, 'are out there fighting with their brothers, fighting against American imperialism....They can shoot...and they're participating in the revolution wholeheartedly just as the Vietnamese men [are]'. '[W]omen, in fact, play the role of the other half', they went on, '- not the weaker...not the stronger, but the other half of Vietnamese men'.⁸¹ As we shall see through the rest of the thesis, opposition to the Vietnam War played a key role in the rising prominence of SDS in the late 1960s and set the organisation on an increasingly radical and revolutionary trajectory that culminated with Weatherman. In Weatherman, the Vietnamese, alongside the Panthers, were symbols of the potential of revolutionary socialism. Again, Weather documents also supported the role that women were playing in the struggle with American forces and, once more, the anti-colonial discourse of Weatherman mimicked that of the Panthers.

⁷⁹ Newton, *Revolutionary*, p. 178.

⁸⁰ Connie Matthews, 'The Struggle is a World Struggle' in Foner (ed.), *Black Panthers Speak*, p. 156.

⁸¹ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, pp. 260-1.

Women in the Black Panthers, and as we shall later see in Weatherman, argued that the group's inherent chauvinism caused them to overlook this revolutionary potential of women. At first, their proclamation that 'the success of the revolution depends on the emancipation of women' seems at odds with their class-based struggle. However, the 'Panther Sisters' were keen not to override the party's doctrine and made it clear that their aspiration was not contrary to their belief in the primary role of class. Their desire to seek equality for women was only within the confines of the black liberation battle. Certain Panther women articulated their frustration at women's secondary role because they believed that they could play a significant role as equal participants in the black struggle, which, in turn, would result in the achievement of revolution. Their desire to see women's emancipation, they maintained, was in order to make revolution attainable more quickly in a similar vein to the role that the Vietnamese women played. They saw the need for the Panthers to embrace women's potential for revolution, and argued that chauvinistic attitudes ruled out women's participation in any form. As they put it, 'women are the other half. A revolution cannot be successful simply with the efforts of men, because a woman plays such an integral role in society even though she is relegated to smaller, seemingly insignificant positions'.⁸² David Hilliard displayed some understanding of women's integral role by maintaining that 'we listen to what women say in the Party'.⁸³ Under Panther and Weather doctrine, black liberation was the primary goal and as Panther women agitated to be involved in this struggle, the secondary role of full women's liberation after the revolution was still maintained.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 260.

⁸³ Hilliard, *This Side*, p. 161.

However, this is not to argue that there were not problems with addressing male chauvinistic attitudes within the Black Panthers, or with gaining respect for the validity of women's concerns within the Black Panther Party. As we shall also see with Weather, many Panthers failed to recognise the clear disjunction between their view that women's total emancipation must succeed the revolution and their criticism and rejection of male chauvinism and macho attitudes. Moreover, there were disparities between practice and theory in the Panthers. This practice, as we have seen, also prevailed in early SDS, where notions of equality were sometimes forgotten as elitism and sexist attitudes came to the fore. Moreover, despite women such as Kathleen Cleaver and Elaine Brown in the Panthers and Cathy Wilkerson and Kathy Boudin occupying important positions within the upper echelons of SDS and then Weather, party members displayed their reluctance to extend equality to Panther women in a number of ways.

Clearly, there was a crucial schism between the desire to oppose male chauvinism, a desire propounded in theory by the Panther hierarchy, and the ability to get this message to the people at the ground level of the party. The testimonies of women in the Panthers exposed an alternative picture of gender issues in the party. 'In theory, the Panther Party wanted equality for the sexes', Connie Matthews contended. 'On a day to day struggle with rank and file brothers, you got a lot of disrespect...there was a lot of struggle and a lot of male chauvinism'.⁸⁴ 'Of course, the women were to clean up the kitchen in which they had eaten, standing', Elaine Brown stated. 'When the meal was over, the men remained in the living room, discussing guns and politics -- and "pussy power", I presumed'.⁸⁵ '[S]isters were relegated to certain duties...', the

⁸⁴ Matthews, 'No One Ever Asks' in Collier-Thomas/Franklin (ed.), *Sisters*, p. 243.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Taste*, p. 191.

'Panther Sisters' explained. 'like sisters would just naturally do the office-type jobs the clerical-type jobs. They were the ones that handled the mailing list'.⁸⁶ Brown also noted the inherent sexism that often distinguished gender relations within the Panthers. 'I was appalled', she recalled, 'when I first joined the Oakland chapter – it was all male control, just “beat her ass” in their attitude to women'.⁸⁷ Indeed, Brown's experience of sexism in the Party directly led to a partial awakening to feminism. 'If... ', she contended, 'the very leadership of a male-dominated organization was bent on clinging to old habits about women, we had a problem. We would have to fight for the right to fight for freedom. Like most black women of the time, we considered the notion of women's liberation to be a “white girl's thing”...black men were our Brothers in the struggle for black liberation. We had no intention, however, of allowing Panther men to assign us an inferior role in our revolution'.⁸⁸

There were overt public displays of sexism at the June 1969 SDS Conference in Chicago and at the United Front Against Fascism (UFAF) conference in July 1969. Weather had invited the Black Panthers to speak at the June 1969 conference as a way to 'discredit PL's antinationalist position'.⁸⁹ Panther member Rufus Walls denounced PL (Progressive Labor), then gave his particular interpretation of women's liberation as he declared that the Panthers supported free love and 'Pussy Power'.⁹⁰ As some of the crowd reacted with chants of '[f]ight male chauvinism', Walls responded by shouting 'Superman was a Punk because he never even tried to fuck Lois Lane'.

⁸⁶ 'Panther Sisters' in Van Deburg (ed.), *Black Nationalism*, p. 258

⁸⁷ Elaine Brown, quoted in Lader, *Power*, p. 302.

⁸⁸ Brown, *Taste*, pp. 191-2.

⁸⁹ Rebecca Klatch, *Generation Divided: The New Left, The New Right and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 207.

⁹⁰ PL originated in 1962, asserting that it was the American working class and not peasant workers in the Third World or minorities in the US that would overthrow capitalism. Puritanical in outlook, PL was opposed to all vestiges of the counterculture, as it believed that this bourgeois approach would alienate the workers.

Having been booed off stage, Panther member Jewel Cook added to the inflammatory situation by reiterating not only Walls's cries of 'Pussy Power', but also by echoing Stokely Carmichael's statement that '[t]he only correct position for women in the movement is prone'. 'The hall', remarked Rebecca Klatch, 'broke out into pandemonium'.⁹¹

The difference between the Panthers' theoretical and practical approach to male chauvinism again surfaced a month later at the UFAF conference. This meeting was organised by the Panthers and SDS, and funded, in part, by the Communist Party with hope that it would mark the return to coalition politics between the white and black New Left. Alice Echols commented that the 'UFAF conference was marked by a divisiveness over women's liberation. The Panthers, she argued, did not want a speaker from the bourgeois women's movement, and only acquiesced reluctantly. Moreover, after ejecting females from the auditorium protesting over the women's forums being postponed or cancelled, Panther Minister of Education Ray Masai Hewitt argued that 'the Black Panther Party is the vanguard when it comes to the emancipation of women...If you want to act bad, you're gonna get treated bad'.⁹²

Although the Panthers offered a much more limited perspective on monogamy than Weatherman, where sexual adventurism was endlessly discussed and was a vital component of Weather's underground cell existence, in both organisations, sex was frequently bound up in the party rhetoric and tied to the achievement of revolution. Panther David Hilliard highlighted women's unequal status in monogamous relationships. Despite the party stating their 'principle that people are free to choose

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 207-8.

⁹² Account taken from Echols, *Daring*, pp. 128-9.

their sexual partners', he noted that 'sisters often complain that the men take advantage of [the party's] commitment to create a different kind of personal life, something beyond the well-defined limits of bourgeois morality'.⁹³ Certain Panthers, however, had a sexual approach to relationships within the party. As in Weather, politics and private life were irretrievably intertwined.

Elaine Brown illustrated this combination of sexualised language and aggressive language, in her discussion of new Panther recruit, Marsha. Answering a question from Bobby Hutton regarding 'what a brother has to do to get some from you', she replied; 'can't no motherfucker get no pussy from me unless he can get down with the party.... A Sister has to give up the pussy when the Brother is on his job', she continued, 'and hold it back when he's not. 'Cause Sisters got pussy power'. Brown commented how this outburst had 'degraded...this pathetic child'.⁹⁴ Bobby Seale also drew a correlation between sex, the party and revolutionary intent. He detailed how the Panthers 'trying to cross-relate our principles on the level of everyday lives, asked all the sisters to turn a cold shoulder to all these fools who came round late, and the ones who didn't do any work'. He quoted Bunchy Carter, 'These cats aren't doing any revolutionary work, but are wanting to go to bed with you, talking about how much they love you', he maintained. 'But they must not love you very much at all, because they aren't doing revolutionary work so you can be free'.⁹⁵ As Elaine Brown recalled after struggling with sexist attitudes in the Party, 'Joan [Kelley] Erica [Huggins] and Evon Carter and Gwen Goodloe and I concluded that they better not try to fuck with

⁹³ Hilliard, *This Side*, pp. 221-2.

⁹⁴ Brown, *Taste*, p. 189.

⁹⁵ Seale, *Seize*, pp. 438-9.

us. We would not be rewarding *any* Brother with our bodies, in the bedroom or in the kitchen'.⁹⁶

Despite the similarities that we have seen between Weatherman and Panther doctrine and discourse, and Weather's sometime hero worship of the Black Panthers, relations between the two groups had collapsed by July 1969's UFAF Conference. According to the underground newspaper *Rat*, the alliance held in the opening exchanges, as white radicals continued their obsequiousness towards the Black Panthers. Jon Grell described how, on 'the opening night that amazing spirit emanat[ed] from the whites to the Panthers was something like, "PLEASE, you are the vanguard, and PLEASE LEAD US TO THE REVOLUTION"'.⁹⁷ However, this mood was soon dispelled as Weatherman refused to support a motion proposed by the Panthers that called for community control of the police by the Panthers in both black and white areas. This, the National Interim Committee told the Panthers, "not only undermines the fight against white supremacy", but would only lead to white vigilante bands, and that they could not support'.⁹⁸ Enraged with this rejection by a group that had appointed them the 'vanguard' only months before, Panther Chairman Bobby Seale and Chief of Staff David Hilliard signalled the spectacular disintegration of the alliance at the 1969 SDS convention in Chicago. 'We don't see SDS as being so revolutionary...', Hilliard stormed. 'SDS had better get their politics straight because the Black Panther Party is drawing some very clear lines between friends and enemies... We'll beat those little sissies', he added, 'those little schoolboys' ass if they don't try to straighten up their politics. So we want to make it known to SDS and the first motherfucker that gets out

⁹⁶ Brown, *Taste*, p. 192. No italics added.

⁹⁷ Jon Grell, writing in *Rat*, quoted in *ibid*, p. 127.

⁹⁸ NIC quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 590.

of order had better stand in line for disciplinary actions from the Black Panther Party'. As Kirkpartick Sale noted, 'this was not exactly the kind of fraternalism SDS thought it had been establishing with the Panthers...'.⁹⁹ Julius Lester wrote the epitaph for the relationship between the two radical parties. 'The contempt shown SDS in this instance', he asserted, 'cannot be said to exemplify the conduct and attitudes one has a right to expect (and demand) from anyone claiming to be revolutionary'.¹⁰⁰ For many Weathermen, the rejection by the Black Panthers confirmed that they 'would have to go out and do the job themselves, an attitude that would eventually grow into an unspoken conviction that it was really Weatherman that was the vanguard of the revolution, after all'.¹⁰¹

The Black Panther Party had many similarities to the Weatherman faction of SDS. Clearly, certain elements of Weatherman doctrine and discourse were derivative of Panther ideology and language. Indeed, in their aggressive use of language, both Weather and the Panthers held words to describe the revolution and the establishment in common, and both groups were built on Marxism. It was their fundamental commitment to Marxism, and the belief that radicals of all colours should support each other towards achieving the revolution that saw the groups forge an unofficial alliance. Weatherman perceived the Black Panthers as the vanguard of the revolution, and saw their own role as supporting blacks to achieve their revolution. Furthermore, the Panthers appreciated the role that white radicals could play in attaining this aim. Much of Weather's early proclamations were particularly derivative of Panther doctrine. These included their belief in the existence of a black colony in the United

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 590.

¹⁰⁰ Lester, quoted in *ibid*, p. 591.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 591.

States and their commitment to white radicals fulfilling a support - only role in black liberation. Also, Weather appropriated certain elements of Panther discourse, including 'pig'. As *The Black Panther* outlined, 'the pig is an ill-natured beast who has no respect for law and order, a foul traducer who's usually found masquerading as a victim of an unprovoked attack'.¹⁰² The word became a key term in Weather's radical lexicon, used to describe any members of the establishment that opposed the revolution. Weather's use of Panther discourse was frequently used as a way of reinforcing its revolutionary commitment and its combative and aggressive potential. The Panthers were perceived as a benchmark by which violent action and, consequently, displays of machismo could be measured.

The Panthers and Weather also had a similar outlook on gender relations within the groups, and were allied in their approach to male chauvinism. Both groups displayed overt signs of machismo in their discourse and action, which glorified the gun, strength and aggression. Weatherman and the Black Panthers also identified male chauvinism as a problem that emanated from capitalist society and saw the need to eliminate it. They also accepted the presence of chauvinism within their own ranks, existing amidst the bourgeois values that still subconsciously were present in the thoughts of Weather and Black Panthers' members. It was their notion that a socialist revolution was the way to achieve women's full emancipation. Women's liberation, they both argued, was part of the same revolutionary struggle. Both Weatherman and the Black Panther Party outlined women's own role in achieving revolution and their own deliverance, firstly in a commitment to revolution as a primary goal and secondly in their desire for women to become a strong, combative force. Participation in a

¹⁰² *The Black Panther*, May 1967, in Foner (ed.), *Black Panthers Speak*, p. 14.

separate women's struggle was deemed counter-revolutionary by both groups. Although machismo and sexism existed, both groups, because of their obvious commitment to eliminating bourgeois male chauvinism, had women in leadership positions in their respective organisations.

Chapter Four

SDS and the Draft

The 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution marked the beginning of the United States' full involvement in the Vietnam War. For SDS, the advent of a war that it deemed imperialistic and immoral saw the organisation increasingly embrace militancy, ultimately culminating in the emergence of the Weatherman faction by 1968. In the short term, however, SDS's initial mantle of the leader of opposition to the war heralded the demise of ERAP as a significant force in the organisation, as it was increasingly replaced in importance by anti-war activity and particularly opposition to the draft. It could be argued that SDS did not seize the full range of the opportunities of anti-war organising, did not build sufficiently or substantially on its position as inaugural leaders of the antiwar coalition, and was preoccupied with initiatives other than the war. However, opposition to the Vietnam War, through anti-draft activity in particular, did play an increasingly important role in SDS as the war progressed.

This chapter will highlight the significant ways in which the organisation's anti-war opposition affected male and female SDSers, and will consider its impact on gender roles. Men in the organisation found themselves at the heart of the anti-war movement, as organising against the draft became a major area of action. In order to combat perceptions of resisters as cowards, resisters constructed an alternative masculine identity, which reversed these notions, and presented those who opposed the war as heroes. Frequently, this alternative masculinity also contained elements of machismo. Draft resisters' actions were couched in heroic language, and the resisters themselves were seen to be courageous, manly and valiant, by both men and women.

Often resisting the draft became a way for its opponents to enhance this image and to prove themselves to others in the Movement. The emphasis on sexual prowess, both by the resister and by anti-draft literature also became another way, tinged with machismo, to emphasise the virility and masculinity of those who actively combated the draft. Women could be marginalised by the focus on this gender-specific activity, where only male SDSers could make a fundamental contribution, and this peripheralisation was made more apparent by the sexist slogans and rhetoric that heightened the impression of men's active, and women's supportive, roles. However, this chapter will go some way to challenge Sara Evans' primarily negative thesis on women's participation on draft resistance. Oral testimonies will reveal a more complex picture, where both women and non-draftable men often created a niche for themselves within SDS's draft resistance programme, where they actively and often autonomously participated in anti-draft activity.

SDS had a complex relationship with the antiwar movement. The organisation's involvement in antiwar protest came with their leading role in the March on Washington in April 1965. This was a new initiative for the group, and marked a change in direction from attempting to create an 'interracial movement of the poor' through its community organising programme. 20,000 students gathered at the Washington monument in the capital to hear SDS President Paul Potter vowing that [T]he war has provided the razor, the terrifying sharp cutting edge that has finally severed the last vestige of illusion that morality and democracy are the guiding principles of American foreign policy...we must name that system'.¹ Despite the large attendance, media coverage and overall success of the April march, SDS, at this point,

¹ Quoted in Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 25.

began to turn its back on the national antiwar protest movement. This was, according to Paul Booth, 'a colossal blunder...the chronicle of a bunch of intelligent people who were confused'.² In the autumn of 1965, Paul Booth issued the statement that became known as 'build not burn', where he 'reiterated emphatically [SDS's] intention to pursue opposition to the war in Vietnam', and pledged to 'serve democracy at home' through volunteering to work in ghettos, schools and hospitals, rather than 'burn and torture in Vietnam'. SDS also 'encouraged every member...to file...for conscientious objection'.³ SDS, on the brink of becoming the leading national antiwar organisation, pulled away from the edge in fear of becoming too immersed in the single-issue peace movement. There was a need, the group's leaders stated, to fundamentally change American society before anything could be implemented to end the war. Old Guard SDSers and ERAPers such as Tom Hayden and Todd Gitlin were initially sceptical of agitating against the war.⁴ As Steve Weissman saw it, 'SDS was guilty of a consistent under - estimation of the importance of the antiwar movement'.⁵ 'Here was', Kirkpatrick Sale asserted, 'that chance to build an American left, to go beyond the students into the other strata of America, and SDS didn't realize it'.⁶ Eventually the leadership of SDS did recognise the war as a subject worthy of debate, although it was still only peripheral to SDS discussion at a national level until 1967.

It was at a local chapter level that SDS opposition to the war was the most pronounced. As early as 1965, the National Office (NO) urged local chapters to

² Paul Booth, quoted in *ibid*, p. 44.

³ 'Build Not Burn', *Liberation* 9 (December 1965).

⁴ Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 214; Wells, *War Within*, p. 45.

⁵ Weissman, *New Left Notes* (hereafter *NLM*), February 4, 1966 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

⁶ Sale, *SDS*, p. 214.

propose action against the draft.⁷ Moreover, 1966 saw the introduction of the Prairie Power influence into SDS, with its rejection of intellectualism and theory and emphasis on decentralisation. Figures such as Greg Calvert, Carl Davidson and Jane Adams saw the need for local chapters to organise around local grievances, with the NO providing support for campus organising. Autumn 1966, Sale asserted, 'was the beginning of active student resistance'.⁸ By far the greatest number of student protests were directed at noncampus issues, usually the war in which the university was involved'. Students protested their university's compliance with student ranking in Selective Service testing for the draft, and exposed hidden links between the Universities and the war machine, including research in chemical and biological warfare and recruitment on campus by the Army, Navy and napalm manufacturers, Dow Chemical Company.⁹ SDS, at a national level, however, 'had been dragging its feet on the draft issue for two years now', until events at the Berkeley National Council in autumn 1966 saw them go 'on record with the strongest antidraft program in the land'.¹⁰ The organisation's 1967 antidraft resolution not only saw conscription as 'coercive and anti-democratic', it also pledged to organise antidraft unions, demonstrate at draft boards, educate potential draftees and their families, and arrange direct action at pre-induction physicals and during induction. Moreover, SDS's new working - class theory, historian Allen J. Matusow stressed, 'meshed well with the organisation's new anti-war programme'.¹¹ The theory that students were the new oppressed class and were, therefore the group that would make the revolution also

⁷ Sale, *SDS*, p. 219.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 299.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 300.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 311.

¹¹ Allen J. Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), p. 324.

compelled this new working - class of students to organise around their own oppression as pawns to be recruited within the universities to serve the military - industrial complex. SDSer Peter Henig emphasised how the draft was established to channel men from school into occupations designed to serve the government. He quoted a Selective Service Document, which stated that 'the psychology of granting wide choice under pressure... is the American or indirect way of achieving what is done in foreign countries where choice is not permitted'.¹² The draft, the new working - class theory stressed, was the illustration of the totalitarianism behind the façade of liberalism in America. A year and a half after abdicating the leadership of the antiwar movement, SDS finally moved on the war issue. With the release of the antidraft statement, the organisation had indicated its move, in National Secretary Greg Calvert's words, 'from protest to resistance'.¹³

As opposition to the draft was the central focus of SDS's antiwar organising, men found themselves at the heart of the organisation's strategy. With this overt emphasis on the particular problems that young male SDSers faced in relation to the United States Selective Service programme, women had differing perspectives on their roles in draft resistance; as observers who could only play supportive or passive roles, or as active participants in the overall experience of combating the draft.

SDS's opposition to the war was frequently couched in righteous and moralistic language, which left little ambiguity as to the organisation's high principles. These proclamations often contrasted with their belief that the US government was

¹² Peter Henig, 'On the Manpower Channels' in *NLN* January 13, 1967 in *SDS Papers* S3 No. 210.

¹³ Anti-draft resolution in *NLN* January 13, 1967 in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

conducting an aggressive and imperialistic war. 'Princeton SDS', a December letter stated, 'opposes US intervention in Vietnam because it is immoral and illegal'.¹⁴

A statement by Cornell University went further, by condemning the US government's 'genocidal war of aggression against the American people', and castigated capitalist enterprise for its 'deliberate policy of world-wide oppression and exploitation of insurgent people'. The US was fighting a neo-colonial war in Vietnam, they argued, in order to secure its economic interests, 'a logical conclusion of giant US corporations expanding their search for profits and resources'.¹⁵ The SDS anti-draft statement encapsulated these attacks on the war, and underlined the organisation's moral opposition to the war at a national, as well as a chapter level, as it 'reaffirmed its opposition to the United States government's immoral, illegal and genocidal war against the Vietnamese people's rights to self-determination'.¹⁶

In addition to the moral tone of SDS's discourse on the war, the organisation also made frequent references to the weight of conscience that the Vietnam War had placed on the nation. Significantly, this emotive use of language was primarily aimed at young men of draft age, as SDS documents and pamphlets appealed directly to their moral obligation. Often these statements' use of gender exclusive rhetoric left little doubt as to their target audience, making it clear that those who actively resisted the draft would hold a clear conscience and would occupy the moral high ground. 'The radical', maintained a *Why Refuse the Draft* leaflet, 'owes his primary loyalty to his conscience...he knows that for him to kill another is to kill his brother...he must stand

¹⁴ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 47.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, S3 No. 49.

¹⁶ *NLN*, January 13, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 10.

up against all systems of domination and brutality...and evil laws. He will let truth be his guide'.¹⁷ Does 'your conscience', a SDS document enquired, 'give you doubts about fighting?' An Ann Arbor SDS pamphlet asked if draftees 'object[ed] to fighting? You may be...morally right', it added, 'perhaps you have some second thoughts about killing'.¹⁸ Frequently, the act of conscience was encapsulated in the burning of the draft card. This exploit was viewed as showing courage in defying the authorities, possibly resulting in jail, whilst also underlining men's moral commitment to opposing the draft and the war. 'The act of turning one's draft card in', a 1967 SDS *Duke University Statement on the Draft* stressed, 'is a personal moral witness against the atrocities being committed in Vietnam'.¹⁹ In a similar vein, Mark Harris asserted that he was 'prepared to go to jail, purely as an act of moral witness'.²⁰

The emphasis on the conscience and moral virtue of the draft resisters made it clear that those men that actively opposed the draft were heroes. The courage and heroism of the draft resister were also highlighted. 'The resistance was so idealistic, romantic.... The whole thing of going to jail', explained Linda Dauscher, '...really scared men and at the same time put them on some kind of pedestal'.²¹ A June 1966 letter to *New Left Notes* saw the author 'representing a viewpoint heard within SDS' and maintained that he was 'giving up [his] first deferment. I'm a step closer to jail because of it, and I urge all other SDS members to do the same'.²² 'The Selective Service System is morally and constitutionally repugnant', SDSer Mike Price

¹⁷ Hoover Institute of War and Peace Studies, New Left Collection (hereafter HINLC), Box 24, 'Why Refuse the Draft'.

¹⁸ Quoted in Michael Ferber and Staughton Lynd, *The Resistance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 37.

¹⁹ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 55.

²⁰ 'A confrontation with SSS', *NLN*, March 27, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 10.

²¹ Quoted in Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 182.

²² *NLN*, June 10, 1966, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

emphasised. 'If, he added, 'in order to present genuine alternative to the American people, it is necessary to break the "law", then obligations of our moral code will force us to commit such a crime continually.²³ 'It may take more courage to protest than give in', maintained a *Vietnam Day Committee* leaflet, '[but] we must stand up for our rights to be free [and] to stay alive'.²⁴ Oral testimonies also highlighted the importance of courage and heroism. Both Marilyn Katz and Paul Millman saw draft resisters as 'heroes'. 'They were seen as courageous', Jane Adams maintained. '[They were], in a sense, models, with a degree of heroism'. Men who resisted the draft were 'courageous', argued Heather Booth, and played an 'important role' with 'difficult consequences'.²⁵

SDSers were keen to defuse possible suggestions of their own cowardice in their opposition to the draft, and refuted the press image of draft-dodging cowards, frequently employing gender-exclusive language to do so. The mystique of the resistance, Barrie Thorne argued, 'served as an ideology of "courage, strength and audacity"'.²⁶ A *Hell No* document asserted that 'the draft is something that almost every young man has got to deal with. For a long time', it explained, 'most men have been scared of [saying] too much about the draft [as they] didn't want to be branded cowards or communists'. However, the leaflet stressed options that resisters could take, including, 'meeting with others opposing the draft, counselling men on deferments, agitational work', and getting 'ready to join in national action'.²⁷ Clearly,

²³ Quoted in Kenneth J Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 140.

²⁴ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 116.

²⁵ Marilyn Katz, Paul Millman, Jane Adams, Heather Booth, Own Oral History Interviews, (hereafter OOI).

²⁶ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 182.

²⁷ 'Hell No!', in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 84.

this list of activities was designed to politicise potential draftees, whilst also stressing their active and courageous dispositions. An SDS *Democracy and the Draft* leaflet questioned the press image of resisters as 'draft-dodgers, card burners and cowards'. 'Is this', it asked, 'an accurate portrait of the nation-wide opposition of thousands of young men to the draft? This generation', the pamphlet maintained, 'has shown its courage...in SNCC and SDS community projects living on subsistence salaries and risking...violence'.²⁸ A summary of resolutions passed at the 1968 convention emphasised that 'we can't be draft dodgers...we must be class-conscious imperialists...then we have the option of winning the support and respect of the people'.²⁹ Furthermore, SDS was also keen to stress that the organisation's move from advising students to file for Conscientious Objector status to opposing all drafting was also a move imbued with courage, as well as one that helped to develop ties to the working - classes. 'Getting individuals out of the draft is not impossible', Mike Klonsky argued, 'but a student based draft-resistance program is helping the government do its job of selection...a working man is sent in his place. We must', he maintained, 'instil a sense of commitment within the people we counsel which turns them into fighters instead of frightened, impotent students hiding behind another out'.³⁰

This image of the courageous, honourable and fearless draft fighter was often underpinned by machismo. George Brosi identified that men who resisted the draft 'were viewed as a little more macho and a little less cerebral than most [men]'.³¹ Resisting the draft became a way for young, white middle-class men to prove

²⁸ HINLC Box 38, 'SDS-Democracy and the Draft'.

²⁹ *NLN*, April 8, 1968 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

³⁰ Mike Klonsky, 'SDS and the Draft', *ibid*, S3 No. 84.

³¹ George Brosi, OOI.

themselves, both to the working - class that formed the majority of the foot-soldiers in Vietnam, and to the blacks who were being drafted in numbers disproportionate to their percentage of the population. Draft Resistance activist Staughton Lynd saw that the draft could be a vehicle of this type of personal transformation. He argued that 'draft resistance could mean for young white men what the work of SNCC had meant for young people a few years earlier'.³² Certain men were sure, Greg Calvert contended, 'that the Draft Resistance issue would convince SNCC that white students in the north were willing to take the risks...to prove to SNCC that we were as tough as they were'.³³ 'I hear[d]', remarked Todd Gitlin, 'that some SNCC guys were saying...OK boys, you've become men now, we're ready to talk'.³⁴

As this example shows, the desire of draft-resisters to prove themselves often originated from their intention to underline their manhood and masculinity. The machismo of the anti-draft movement emanated from its male participants' desire to combat the traditional notions of masculinity in wartime, which was frequently constructed by the military and the government. This traditional manhood overwhelmingly suggested that the ultimate display of male values such as virility and courage was to go to war and be prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for their country. In the era of the Vietnam war, however, certain men of draft age sought to challenge these assumptions, and attempted to construct an alternative masculine identity, which now presented those who opposed the war, rather than those who fought it, as the true heroes. 'Why be part of an army that takes away all your rights as a man?', questioned an SDS pamphlet. 'It takes more courage to

³² Lynd paraphrased in Doug Rossinow, *Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 230.

³³ Greg Calvert, Oral History Collection Columbia University (hereafter OHC CU), p. 1-18.

³⁴ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 252.

protest'.³⁵ Indeed Staughton Lynd announced that 'the emotional thrust of the [draft] resistance movement is not...emasculat[i]on but manhood'.³⁶

Moreover, resisting the draft took on a wider significance in the context of the Cold War. Draft resisters' creation of an alternative masculinity fundamentally challenged the culture of traditional masculinity that predominated in the Cold War climate of McCarthyism and was evidenced in the foreign policies and rhetoric of President Truman's containment, Eisenhower's rollback and liberation of free peoples, and Kennedy's involvement with the Bay of Pigs invasion. In this conforming climate founded on demonstrative anti-communism, there was, according to historian K.A. Cuordileone a, 'political culture that put a premium on hard masculine toughness and rendered anything less than that soft and unfeminine and, as such, a real or potential threat to the security of the nation'.³⁷ Thus, liberals, radicals and any one else who was suspected of being 'pink' or soft on communism, were, he argues, also presented in language that questioned their sexuality and stressed their effeminacy and emasculation. Joseph McCarthy blamed America's 'position of impotency' in the face of communism on East Coast and attacked the 'pitiful squealing' of egg-sucking liberals who 'hold sacrosanct those communists and queers'.³⁸ To be a liberal, according to contemporary author Louis Bromfield, was to be 'over-emotional and feminine in reaction to any problem...surfeited with conceit and contempt for the experience of more sound and able men.... A self-conscious prig [and] and anaemic

³⁵ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 116.

³⁶ Staughton Lynd, 'The Movement: A New Beginning', *Liberation* 14 (May 1969), p. 15, quoted in Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 38.

³⁷ K.A. Cuordileone, 'Cold War Political Culture and Masculinity 1949-1960', *Journal of American History* (hereafter *JAH*) 87 (September 2000), p. 516.

³⁸ Joseph McCarthy, quoted in *ibid*, p. 521.

bleeding heart'.³⁹ 1952 Democrat Presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson had, maintained Cuordileone, 'all the attributes that the right wing suspected - an Ivy League pedigree, style, intellect, a penchant for verbosity', and was, therefore, 'unusually vulnerable to a campaign to impugn his manhood'.⁴⁰ He, according to the *New York Times* 'trilled' his speeches in a fruity voice and 'wailed in perfumed anguish' about anti-communism. The paper christened him 'Adelaide' as a result.⁴¹

Thus, politicians of the 1950s and early 1960s proved their anti-communism and their virility through displays of traditional masculinity. John F Kennedy displayed a particular desire to reinforce his manhood and prove his status as a committed Cold Warrior. There was, Cuordileone contended, 'a cult of toughness' in the Kennedy administration'.⁴² Kennedy's approach to foreign policy often placed great emphasis on traditionally masculine traits. Historian William H. Chafe asserts that his Special Forces were intent on being the 'most daring and tough minded young soldiers to carry forward the military and political war against Soviet efforts to control movements for national liberation'.⁴³ Moreover, '[i]n the [1961] Bay of Pigs fiasco', Thomas C. Reeves maintained, 'Jack rejected moral and legal objections to an invasion; he lied, exhibited an almost adolescent macho temperament, became involved with military operations just enough to make them worse, and then blamed others for the failure'.⁴⁴ With the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy became imprisoned in his own aggressive macho rhetoric. 'The truth is', maintains Garry Wills, 'that Kennedy went

³⁹ Louis Bromfield, quoted in *ibid*, p. 521.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 539.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 539.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 545.

⁴³ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 197.

⁴⁴ Thomas C Reeves, *A Question of Character* (London: Arrow Books, 1991), p. 416.

ahead with the Cuban action...to mark his difference to Eisenhower...He would', Wills explained, 'be bold where he had accused Eisenhower of timidity'.⁴⁵ Despite the failure of the invasion, Cold Warrior Kennedy refused to tame the confrontational and macho nature of his language. Critics of the invasion were attacked as 'soft' and unmanly' and 'not tough enough to be counted on in a crunch'. Other critics were warned that they had better 'grab their nuts and remain loyal'.⁴⁶ 'The premium', argues Cuordileone, 'placed on courage and hardness [within Kennedy's White House] may have rendered the Bay of Pigs invasion and the flexing of liberal muscle in Vietnam a seeming masculine imperative'.⁴⁷

The alternative masculinity of the draft resisters sought to reject the Cold War notion that, to be macho and male, was to be like McCarthy and Kennedy; vehemently pro-America and aggressively anti-communist. Participants in Draft Resistance reconstructed their masculinity and presented, through their opposition to the Vietnam War, their alternative manifestation of virility, courage and toughness.

This vision, as we have seen, was often tainted by machismo, as the draft resisters glorified the traits associated with traditional masculinity in their new alternative construction of masculine identity. Thus, strength, virility and heroism were idealised by the draft resisters, as a way to deflect charges of cowardice and malingering that were being levelled at them by the government and the establishment media. This was their primary way to re-emphasise their own masculinity, despite their refusal to be

⁴⁵ Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion*, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 198.

⁴⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 200.

⁴⁷ Cuordileone, 'Political Culture', *JAH* 87 (September 2000), p. 545. Kennedy, it must be argued, seemed to have learned from the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs and took a more reserved and infinitely more successful approach with the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

drafted. 'I believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', a draft resister from Detroit wrote in an open letter to Lyndon Johnson published in *New Left Notes*. 'I do not believe in you. I do not pay taxes to war mongers, I do not wear the uniform of a killer', he stated, 'because I am a man'.⁴⁸ Todd Gitlin, after his involvement in a particularly bloody confrontation with the police at the Oakland Stop the Draft Week demonstration in Autumn 1967 wrote a letter telling friends that 'if balls are not equivalent to revolution – they are not – they are prerequisite to an honorable resistance'.⁴⁹ 'Why did I refuse to be drafted? I found' replied one potential draftee, 'that I wasn't a man until I said 'fuck you' to the draft'.⁵⁰ An important insight into the process behind the emergence of a new, reconstituted identity is revealed as early as 1965, in an SDS Draft workshop report. 'There is a suggestion', the document stated, 'that there should be a conscious attempt made to undermine the image of the military as a symbol of strength and masculinity. An attempt should be made', it suggested, 'to show military training for what it really is'.⁵¹ Inherent within this passage is the notion of reclaiming masculinity from the armed forces, and to remake it in the vision of those opposing the military draft.

Often the resisters' desire to prove their manhood was supplemented by their use of language and imagery that glorified their activities. The decision to go to jail rather than go to Vietnam was also perceived as a show of strength and was a key way to demonstrate masculine traits. 'The resister', Carl Davidson asserted, 'who permits himself to be imprisoned himself, makes others feel weak'.⁵² A 1967 SDS resolution

⁴⁸ *NLN*, October 30, 1967, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

⁴⁹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 252.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, quoted in Ferber, Lynd, *Resistance*, p. 244.

⁵¹ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 119.

⁵² Ferber/Lynd, *Resistance*, p. 127.

clarified this position. Whilst 'SDS [does not] support going to jail as a means to resist the draft', the document stated, 'it supports all those whose actions result in imprisonment'.⁵³ Elliot Lazier criticised the 'obnoxious male leftists' of draft resistance who 'maintained their romantic fantasies of being...Che Guevara'.⁵⁴ Todd Gitlin also divulged his romanticised image of the fallen Cuban hero, and his connection with him, as he saw that 'Che...match[ed] my own sense of estrangement'.⁵⁵ As historian Maurice Isserman explained, 'the imagery of heroic guerrillas brandishing automatic weapons filled [SDS's] *New Left Notes*....The anti-war protesters who clung to the doctrine of non-violence were now scorned as wimpy'.⁵⁶

The act of draft card burning also became a symbol of the activists' manhood and a display of their alternative masculinity. Those who chose to burn their draft cards made a conscious decision to display their non co-operation and their desire to actively challenge the draft and their disgust at the Vietnam War, and this gesture was not only aimed at the United States government but was also directed at the general public and their fellow SDSers. 'Young individualists within the organisation', maintained Mike Klonsky, were 'already seeing themselves as enemies of the state...there was much talk of alienation [and] many SDSers burned their draft cards'.⁵⁷ Undoubtedly the decision to actively confront being drafted to a war that they believed to be both unnecessary and immoral was a courageous act, and it often

⁵³ Ibid, p. 128.

⁵⁴ Eliot Linzer, 'On Recurring Debates', in Sohnya Sayres (ed.), *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 302.

⁵⁵ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 249.

⁵⁶ Maurice Isserman, 'You Don't Need a Weatherman but a Postman Can be Helpful: Thoughts on the History of SDS and the Anti-war Movement' in Melvin Small/William D. Hoover (eds.), *Give Peace a Chance* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), pp. 28-9.

⁵⁷ Mike Klonsky, 'SDS and the Draft', *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 84.

carried heavy penalties. This display of resistance, however, was also a way to display one's heroism, bravery and boldness in a very public arena. Inherent within the burning of draft cards was a further display of manhood and another example of potential draftees' desire to reconstruct the notion of masculinity within the context of draft resistance. 'I knew it was a decisive act', asserted David Miller, on the burning of his own draft card. 'it had its own magnitude...it sort of took on its own life'.⁵⁸ 'Draft-card burning is a high measure of personal protest', wrote a member of SDS's Vietnam staff. 'It enlarges the movement', they explained, 'by shocking people and forcing them to confront the issues of the draft and the war'.⁵⁹ Staughton Lynd and Dave Dellinger's *Call to Burn Draft Cards*, circulated by SDS at its 1967 National Council encapsulated this public demonstration of manhood. 'The draft-card burner...challenges the assumptions of the cold war. Massive draft card burning', it explained, 'is a dramatic act of non-co-operation [which] will give courage to others to burn draft cards'.⁶⁰

Sexual prowess was a further way to prove one's manhood, as draft resisters found an additional way to reinforce their reconstructed masculinity. As historian Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones observed, '[o]rdering women about and flaunting the availability of sex in those envied sixties orgies was a way of restoring a sense of virility'.⁶¹ Often, inherent within this was an embrace of machismo. One woman recalled her experience within the anti-draft movement, telling that there was a 'real concentration on life styles and new sexual forms, all these supposedly revolutionary ways of living

⁵⁸ David Miller, quoted in Joan Morrison and Robert K Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience Through the Eyes of Those Who Lived it* (New York: Random House 1987), p. 110.

⁵⁹ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 114.

⁶⁰ Staughton Lynd, Dave Dellinger, 'Call to Burn Draft Cards', in *ibid*, S3 No. 97.

⁶¹ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Peace Now!: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 153.

that weren't tied down to the old modes...'. Moreover, she added, there were '[t]hese gross situations of people trying to sleep around....Instead of becoming more human it became more and more inhuman....You just go ahead and do what you want'.⁶² Anti-draft slogans also reinforced the highly charged sexual atmosphere within the organisation, whilst also promoting macho attitudes. 'Women Say Yes to Guys Who Say No' was the most notable example, as much of the language utilised in slogans made both implicit and explicit reference to the sexual achievements of those men that refused to be drafted. Leni Wildflower related that she found 'Women Say Yes...offensive'.⁶³ Slogans used at the University of Texas, historian Sara Evans explained 'constituted a directive to women to make overtures to men and was framed in terms of male fantasies'. She gave an example of an instruction to women given by the University of Texas SDS. 'SDS chicks should hug fraternity guys and sorority chicks should take emaciated beatniks out to lunch'.⁶⁴ Elliot Linzer also supported the notion that sex was a way for certain draft resisters to emphasise their manhood, and again highlighted the machismo that often accompanied it. He presented the highly stylised, fantasist image of male and female sexuality and contrasted it to the reality of his own (and almost certainly other SDSers') situation. 'Girls say yes to guys who say no was', he argued, a 'sexist slogan. I never knew if that was true about the sex lives of other draft resisters, but it certainly wasn't true about mine...I was hopelessly naïve, confused, inexperienced and embarrassed about anything to do with sex'.⁶⁵

Other women, however, supported the use of such phrases. Indeed historian Jeffreys-Jones goes as far as to suggest that 'women connived at, if they did not invent, the

⁶² Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 179.

⁶³ Leni Wildflower, OOL.

⁶⁴ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ Linzer, 'On Recurring Debates', in Sayres (ed.), *Sixties Without Apology*, p. 302.

effective antidraft slogan Girls Say Yes to Boys Who Say No'.⁶⁶ Folk singer and opponent of the war Joan Baez urged 'young ladies [who] think it is wrong to kill and [think that] the war is wrong' to 'say yes to the young men who say no to the draft'.⁶⁷ Marilyn Katz was 'not offended by "women say yes"', as she saw that 'women's sexuality [was also] blooming'. 'I didn't find it offensive in any way', maintained Helen Garvy. 'I took it the way I assumed it was meant, that we supported guys who refused to go'.⁶⁸

Certain women and commentators led by Sara Evans saw that women were marginalised by SDS's anti-war work, which was focused primarily on combating the draft. Often, by its very nature, draft resistance could be perceived as being highly gendered, giving male SDSers a central focus and, as a direct result, sidelining women, and relegating them, they asserted, to the position of observers and helpers. Men were the nucleus, critics argued, of SDS's opposition to the Vietnam War and the selective service system that fuelled it; women were, at best, supporters in this movement. As historian Alice Echols claims, the draft resistance movement 'marginalised women...as the heroic action of men became the exclusive domain of men. It further reduced women to the status of helpmates or worse'.⁶⁹

The rhetoric of the anti-draft movement frequently strengthened the argument of women's peripheralisation. Certain slogans emphasised the perception of women's secondary position, and became telling emblems for women's overall position in the anti-draft movement. Women could either be relegated to a subordinate role or be

⁶⁶ Jeffrey-Jones, *Peace Now!*, p. 154.

⁶⁷ 'SDS National Vietnam Newsletter, September 9, 1965, in *SDS Papers* S3 No. 119.

⁶⁸ Katz, Garvy, both OOI.

⁶⁹ Alice Echols 'Women's Power and Women's Liberation', in Small/Hoover (eds.) *Give Peace*, p. 173.

presented as sexual prizes. Heather Booth saw that 'women say yes...provoked discussions of women's secondary/subservient position'.⁷⁰ Todd Gitlin also remarked that '[t]he anti - draft movement aggravated sexual difference, echoing the draft itself. "Girls say yes to guys who say no" was a cute slogan', he added, 'but many women felt humiliated by the pressure to make themselves over into a women's auxiliary'.⁷¹ Women also played a secondary role through sexual encounters, Alice Echols asserted, as the adage reinforced 'the tactic of employing women as sexual bait'.⁷² This notion was also evident in other SDS documentation. Mike Davis, the Los Angeles SDS's anti-draft programmer, wrote in a 1965 letter that they 'needed better Vietnam stuff...more just plain groovy literature to complement the draft programmes...people are [also] discussing ideas like rock n roll concerts [and] the use of petite females etc'.⁷³ Historian Kirkpatrick Sale's comment on SDSer and future Weatherwoman Bernadine Dohrn, illustrated and, to some extent, reflected this sexualisation of women, as he referred to her 'sex appeal' and the fact that 'every draft resister on the East Coast knew those legs'.⁷⁴

Significantly, whilst women were presented in this highly sexual manner, men, as we have seen, reconstructed their traditional masculinity through their emphasis on the courage and heroism. Women sometimes struggled to make their voice heard within SDS's anti-draft impulse which focused so heavily on men's concerns, and they also had to battle against gendered language used within the organisation which silenced women still further. The draft was presented as something that 'every young man has

⁷⁰ Booth, OOI.

⁷¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 370.

⁷² Echols, 'Women's Power', in Small/ Hoover (eds.), *Give Peace*, p. 174.

⁷³ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 14.

⁷⁴ Sale, *SDS*, p. 411.

got to deal with' and SDS urged 'all young men to wage a collective struggle in resistance to the draft'.⁷⁵ '[D]raft resistance', maintained a 1967 Draft Resistance Union paper, 'is the existential stance described by *the man* who would rather die than be forced to kill'.⁷⁶ Certain documents explicitly highlighted the merely auxiliary role that women could play, their views implicitly supported through their gender specific rhetoric. 'Perhaps girls can form friends of the union groups', the SDS article *Why Draft Resistance Unions?* suggested, 'but the burden is ours'.⁷⁷ 'Get a list of 1-A's', proposed a Draft Union article, '[and] encourage these guys and their chicks to come along to a DRU [Draft Resistance Union] meeting'.⁷⁸

There was criticism of the anti-draft impulse in SDS, as SDSers, mostly radical women, attacked the draft's contribution to the marginalisation of women within SDS and the wider movement. As Mimi Feingold, a veteran of the Civil Rights movement and ERAP asserted,

[H]ere was a movement where women were playing this most unbelievably subservient role, because that was the only role the women could play, because women couldn't burn draft cards and couldn't go to jail so all they could do was to relate through their men and that seemed to me the most really demeaning kind of thing.⁷⁹

Other women in SDS were highly critical of the organisation's preoccupation with the draft. These denunciations frequently coincided with women's growing awareness of what they perceived as their own secondary position within SDS, and many of these

⁷⁵ *SDS Papers*, S3 No 84; *ibid*, S3 No. 49.

⁷⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 181.

⁷⁷ *SDS Papers*, S4A No. 5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, S3 No. 84.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 182.

radicalised women drew a direct correlation between their subsidiary allocated role in draft resistance and their auxiliary position in the overall organisation.⁸⁰ Leslie Cagan told of her own experience. 'The draft was an exciting and important development in the movement to end the war. My excitement [however]...was quickly undermined', she asserted 'when I, and the other women [at a meeting to discuss the tactics of refusing induction] were told that we would not be allowed to speak'. The 'logic' of this was that 'women did not face the draft and therefore women should not be involved in the decisions...Indeed', she explained, 'it seemed that some men didn't even want women to discuss the issue'.⁸¹ Leni Wildflower felt that, 'by its very nature', draft resistance could only allow men to actively participate, and she asserted that women's role in opposing the draft 'was limited'. In her capacity as a volunteer leader of an anti-war coffee shop in Columbia South Carolina, she argued that she 'was very aware of this. It was real clear', she stressed, 'that I couldn't do anything and couldn't [properly] work with anyone'.⁸²

Marilyn S. Webb forcefully articulated this discontentment. 'Only certain roles are open to women within the movement', she asserted in her 1968 polemic *Women: We Have a Common Enemy*. 'Our position viz a viz [sic] the anti-draft movement', she added, 'is clearest of all. Men can refuse induction, burn draft cards...but all women can do is aid and abet. This position', she maintained, 'exemplifi[ed] women's position in the movement'.⁸³ Webb saw that women should redirect their energies away from the draft towards other areas that specifically targeted women's concerns. 'People', she

⁸⁰ This is a subject that will be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

⁸¹ Leslie Cagan, 'Women and the Anti-Draft Movement', *Radical America* 14 (May 1980), pp. 37-38.

⁸² Wildflower, OOI.

⁸³ Marilyn S. Webb, 'Women: We Have a Common Enemy' in *NLN*, June 10, 1968 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

argued, 'saw the necessity for identifying those places where women could say no and cause the same disruption as men do in saying no to the draft'. Webb recognised the need for women to identify other areas where women could make a more telling and more active contribution, and also containing a veiled criticism of capitalism, as she saw that women 'must study what specific roles women play in this society in order to determine where our co-operation is essential'.⁸⁴

Other feminists within SDS also expounded on this theme, articulating their intention to identify areas where women could play a pivotal and decisive role. Sue Munaker, in her *Call for Women's Liberation*, expressed her desire for women 'to affirm [them]selves as women and human beings'. This impulse, she maintained, was awakened by the 'frustration of trying to find our place in the anti-draft movement'. As Munaker explained, 'men in our movement are defining the response of non-cooperation as the legitimate response to the escalation of the war, and we, movement women, have tried to define our role in relation to that response'. Thus, Munaker offered an alternative for women in the movement who desired to have their own input into matters that affected women primarily. She argued that women should take note of the lessons learned in draft resistance and should organise around their own oppression. 'We have come to realise', she added, 'that our total lives have been spent defining ourselves in relation to men...we need to seek our own identity so that each of us can live a full life, not only in relation to men, but for ourselves'.⁸⁵ Munaker did recognise the appeal and 'excitement' of draft resistance, but her criticism of it was consistent with Webb's arguments against SDS's preoccupation with organising against the draft. Women's role in the resistance movement was 'auxiliary', she

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Sue Munaker, draft of 'A Call For Women's Liberation' in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

asserted. This was apparent in the very nature of resisting the draft itself. 'Men are drafted', she explained, 'women can counsel them not to go. That is men take the stand; women support them. Many women feel there is no meaningful response to the government because we cannot take as strong a stand as men [and] refuse the draft'.⁸⁶

The article *Women in the Radical Movement* written by Sue Munaker with Evelyn Goldfield and Heather Booth further highlighted both the secondary nature of women's role and the politicising effect that the draft had on certain women in SDS and the wider Movement. 'Although we have been activists in SDS, draft organising etc...we have been non-radical, accepting the status quo...[and] men often refuse to take us seriously'. 'Women', they argued, 'have played passive political roles--the legendary followers and shit-workers'. Furthermore, this realisation and consequent articulation of women's secondary, supportive part saw them seek a further female identity as they 'struggl[ed] together to discover the social roots of [their] problems and the ways to overcome them [women] develop[ed] a new sense of community amongst women'.⁸⁷

Radical feminist Shulamith Firestone's criticism of women whose 'primary loyalty is to the Left ('The Movement') rather than to the Women's liberation Movement proper', contained a stinging attack on these 'contemporary politicos [who] see feminism as only tangent to 'real' radical politics, [and]... still see male issues, e.g., the draft, as universal'.⁸⁸ Moreover, much of the historiography of women and the draft, dominated by Sara Evans' highly influential work *Personal Politics*, reflects

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker, Heather Booth, draft of 'Women in the Radical Movement', in *ibid.*, S3 No. 22.

⁸⁸ Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: The Women's Press, 1979), p. 39.

these testimonies and attitudes, placing great stress on women's peripheralisation as a consequence of organising around opposing the draft. Evans accused draft resistance programmes of exclusivity. 'Only men', she argued, 'could completely experience the "brotherhood" of common struggle and suffering'. '[T]he draft, the counterculture and the sheer size of the movement', she added, 'pushed women more and more into the background'.⁸⁹ Alice Echols also charged that the draft, 'contributed to women's growing peripheralization within the Movement'.⁹⁰ Jeffreys-Jones stressed the 'problem of male chauvinism in the antiwar movement', highlighting women activists complaints 'that men in the movement excluded them from the decisionmaking and allocated them to menial tasks like food preparation...typing, and the provision of sex'.⁹¹

Although much of the historiography supports certain SDSers view that women had a secondary role in the anti-draft movement, evidence in the SDS Papers and oral testimonies also reveal the inclusive and pivotal involvement that women had in anti-draft and anti-war activity. There is much to be accepted in Sara Evans' pioneering work, yet her thesis, on occasion, is too simplistic. Certainly, there was discrimination in SDS regarding draft resistance. The female voice was often absent and women were marginalised and sidelined because of their sex and as a consequence of draft resistance's sometimes single-minded focus on the potential draftees. However, there is a more complex and multi-layered approach than has been argued previously. Women and undraftable men articulated their total commitment to the cause of opposing the draft and sought and found significant and active roles to play in the

⁸⁹ Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 180, pp. 182-3.

⁹⁰ Echols, *Daring*, p. 37.

⁹¹ Jeffreys - Jones, *Peace Now!*, p. 153.

draft resistance movement. Greg Calvert highlighted the confusion and tension within SDS between the 'negative picture of the draft movement that Sara Evans has painted', and a more positive experience of draft resistance that himself and his associates experienced. He recounted how his then girlfriend Jane Adams 'was disturbed by people...who said that what women should be doing is supporting men...around their position as draft resisters. Jane', he explained, 'was very reactive about this and thought that this was very limiting of women's roles'. Calvert himself accused Evans of 'paint[ing] a distorted picture of how complicated those issues were and of how different people responded. She made it too much "either or" in her presentation. There were many of us', he went on to explain, 'who realised that the worst thing that could happen would be if women were seen as auxiliary to the draft resistance movement'.⁹²

Not all of the language utilised by SDS and its anti-draft groups was gendered in such a way that it rendered women's voices noticeably absent. Indeed, certain SDS publications were gendered in such a way that the rhetoric of pamphlets and articles stressed the involvement of both men and women. 'The Draft is a central factor in the lives of millions of people around this country', stressed a Todd Gitlin authored *Membership Draft Referendum*.⁹³ 'The draft', an April 1968 SDS resolution stated, 'effects everybody as part of the overall struggle against the [American capitalist and imperialist system]'.⁹⁴ A *Program For Campus Draft Organising* emphasised that 'it

⁹² Calvert, OHC CU, p. 2-191.

⁹³ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 116.

⁹⁴ *NLN*, April 8, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 10.

would be good to use college newspapers, posters etc to reinforce the effect of the draft, and to inform girls as well as guys about the new program and meeting'.⁹⁵

An article penned by Cathy Wilkerson, SDSer and an editor of *New Left Notes*, highlighted the gender inclusivity that could be apparent within draft resistance. 'We, as draft organisers, have learned that our program must have a political coherency...if we want to build a viable movement, we should give the draft a high priority in our work'. Wilkerson went on to stress the need for SDS draft organisers to look more widely to attract recruits to the movement. 'In all cases', she asserted, 'the tactics should embody our emphasis on group action and the building of a group identity...increasingly, people should begin to reach out...to expand the scope of the issue'. Wilkerson underlined her own commitment, and her desire that SDS reflect it, to diversity within draft organising, both in attracting the working - classes and women into anti-draft activities. 'All kinds of people', she maintained, 'in the community should be organised into draft groups...and begin to raise these problems as an important community issue'. Moreover, appropriating, it must be noted, sexist language, Wilkerson especially wanted 'young guys and chicks to become involved...to win the first battle legitimately'. In the organisation of a Draft Resistance Union, she suggested a 'call for a mass meeting of all seniors, graduate students and teachers...to elicit a response from a large number of guys and chicks who have also defined the draft as an acute problem'.⁹⁶

A more inclusive and holistic approach to draft resisters was outlined in the *Proposed Framework for the National Union of Draft Refusers and others who are deeply*

⁹⁵ *NLN*, February 5, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 10.

⁹⁶ *NLN*, March 11, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 10.

opposed to the illegal, immoral and politically disastrous Vietnam War. 'The membership', the proposal argued, 'should not only be limited to draft resisters, but should be open to all those threatened by atomic war...and who are deeply enough concerned [about the Vietnam war] to share the risks and responsibilities in signing the pledge'.⁹⁷ This anti-draft pamphlet highlighted the participation of 'students, pacifists, draft-dodgers, wives, mothers, sisters, brothers and fathers'.⁹⁸ 'The draft is important', stated a 1967 *Report on Community Based Draft Resistance*, 'because it affects a broad range of society, including all classes, ages, races...draft-age men, mothers, fathers, sweethearts, wives, sisters'.⁹⁹ An anti-draft proposal by Austin SDS also utilised language that suggested their more inclusive approach. 'Politically', the document stated, 'we should try to organise anti-draft clubs comprised of anyone who is against the draft'.¹⁰⁰

Women, it seems, did have a function other than that of observers and supporters. Oral testimonies and SDS literature made reference to women's involvement in anti-draft activity and also often related the central and even autonomous role that women played in these actions. '[We] have taken men and women to induction centers', reported a draft week committee, 'to counsel and talk with them'.¹⁰¹ '2 years ago', Paul Lauter asserted, 'no one organised draft resistance, people acted out of individual gestures of conscience...what was a symbolic protest of individuals became increasingly political actions of men and women'.¹⁰² Women could also be at the forefront of organising opposition to the war and the draft. A 1965 letter from Nancy

⁹⁷ Ibid, S3 No. 97.

⁹⁸ Ibid, S3 No. 97.

⁹⁹ Ibid, S3 No. 99.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, S3 No. 62.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, S3 No. 99.

¹⁰² Ibid, S3 No. 101.

Seldin to Jim Russell told how 'we are planning on tying into the National Action on Vietnam...several kids have been assembling material on planning anti-draft [demonstrations]'.¹⁰³ A pamphlet advertising an anti-draft day at the University of Washington in April 1968 also advertised a speaker as Barbara Arnold, 'an SDS activist who would be talking about women's role in anti-draft work'.¹⁰⁴ Oral testimonies also support the significant role that women played. George Brosi 'remember[ed] women who identified almost as completely with draft resistance'. 'I became active organising against the war in Vietnam', recounted Vivian Rothstein. 'Some of my first organising', Marilyn Katz asserted, 'was around draft resistance'. Helen Garvy 'did leafleting in Hoboken [New Jersey], beginning with the SDS draft "counter exam"...[and] later participated in the Oakland Stop the Draft Week'. 'I have very strong memories', recalled Paul Millman, 'of women working in GI coffee shops and [taking part in] anti-war, anti-draft activities'.¹⁰⁵

Women not only participated in actions, however, they also were organising them. Jane Adams is the foremost example. 'I was', she explained, 'part of the group that created the draft resistance in SDS'. 'I don't recall', she said (stressing the possible inclusivity of the draft impulse) 'that debate being gendered at all'. Adams also emphasised her involvement in day to day resistance. 'I was one of the leaders', she maintained, 'organising the event at the Oklahoma City draft board'. Heather Booth told how she participated in draft resistance by 'organising women at a CADRE (Chicago Area Draft Resistance) conference'.¹⁰⁶ Paul Millman recounted how 'Bernadine Dohrn...was the [co] author of the draft book, which...helped men deal

¹⁰³ Ibid, S3 No. 62.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, S3 No. 63.

¹⁰⁵ Rothstein, Garvy, Katz, Millman, Brosi, all OOI.

¹⁰⁶ Adams, OOI.

with the draft'.¹⁰⁷ Letters to SDS also stressed women's active participation. Millicent Schoenbaum requested 'advice and anti-draft literature which can be passed on'. Mary Lewis Higgins asked 'for all information...on the draft'. 'A group of us here in Santa Barbara', M. Millard enquired, 'would like to have anti-draft pamphlets...we want to distribute them at the college and university'.¹⁰⁸ Sue Eanet Klonsky asserted how she and others visited 'dozens of high schools...[and] bombarded kids with [anti-draft] literature'.¹⁰⁹

In addition to women's participation in general anti-draft activities, there is also evidence to suggest that female SDSers organised autonomous, all-women actions that directly challenged and opposed the draft and its manifestations of power. 'Some of us', stated Susan Schwartz Jhirad, in a 1968 letter to *New Left Notes*, 'formed a draft resistance group to organise concretely and in our own way around the issue of the draft. There are many things', she added, 'that women can do, as women in this area'.¹¹⁰

Paul Lauter highlighted the case of 'Suzie Williams and a friend [who] walked into Boston draft board and poured black paint over files'. Indeed, women's targeting of draft boards became something of a characteristic action. Despite its obvious sexist language, the report of the University of San Diego anti-draft demonstrations accented women's participation. 'Five guys', the SDS newsletter reported, 'leafleting the draft boards...were arrested by about forty cops...three others, two of them chicks, were

¹⁰⁷ Millman, OOI. Away from the draft, Vivian Rothstein also represented SDS at a conference in Czechoslovakia between American activists and Northern and Southern Vietnamese. She then visited North Vietnam for 19 days on behalf of SDS. (OOI).

¹⁰⁸ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 114.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Helen Garvy (producer/director), *SDS Rebels* (2001).

¹¹⁰ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 100.

arrested on several charges'.¹¹¹ Buffalo SDS's journal *Resist*, recounted an incident 'provoked by federal officials' at a Selective Service Board. 'They barred women from entering', it explained, 'even when they had letters of complicity to submit to the draft board'.¹¹² New York City SDS's chapter spring 1968 newsletter contained a proposal for mass action against the draft and the war 'that has a clear-cut, simple focus'. This action encompassed a 'draft resistance project' and included 'women organising guerrilla theatre...at the local draft boards'.¹¹³ Other examples illustrate women's input as autonomous organisers and leaders of actions. SDSers Alice Embree and Judy Shiffer recounted their 1966 sit-in at a draft board in Austin, Texas that lasted six hours. 'We started to look', explained Shiffer, 'at a strategy-what could we do to bring attention to the issue [of the draft]-and we came up with a sit-in'. This she explained, was a way of articulating to the administration that 'we are mothers, sisters, wives, girlfriends...we do not want our men to die in a war that is unjust and is wrong'.¹¹⁴ Sue Eanet Klonsky told how a group of women at an Los Angeles handed out anti-draft flyers to inductees receiving their medical examinations and then escaped through the nearest window, avoiding arrest.¹¹⁵

Oral testimonies reinforce the perspective that those who were drafted could and did play an active participatory role in anti-draft organising. Other than women, non-draftable men were also a group that could have been peripheralised, and certain commentators were keen to draw analogies between the position of these two groups in their involvement in anti-draft activity. 'The war', argued Jane Adams, 'was an

¹¹¹ SDS Newsletter No. 3 October 6, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 46.

¹¹² *Ibid*, S3 No. 53.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, S3 No. 50.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Garvy (producer/director), *SDS Rebels* 2001.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

American war, women were not exempted from the responsibility of citizenship...Many men were exempt from the draft but still very active'. Helen Garvy also drew parallels between women and men who were not drafted. 'Many men as well as women', she asserted, 'were involved in work around the draft'.¹¹⁶ Greg Calvert was an SDSer who was too old to be drafted. His testimony emphasised the involvement that undraftable men had in anti-draft activity. 'On the draft resistance issue', he recounted, 'my great dilemma was what can I do since I'm not draftable – I decided that I should go to jail...I was devoted to draft resistance'. Calvert saw that the extensiveness and sweeping breadth of the anti-war and anti-draft movement could encompass everyone who was willing to participate. 'We embraced all kinds of forms of resistance', he said. 'There was a general sense', he maintained, 'that there are a variety of things we can do at different levels, and [that] different people [can do] in different circumstances'.¹¹⁷

The diversity of SDSers involved in resisting the draft was notable, and adds to the suggestion that many women, rather than feeling marginalised, saw that they had a role to play in anti-draft activity. Women, many respondents maintained, could be actively involved, despite their distance from the harsh experience of being drafted. 'Many women' Marilyn Katz argued, 'were deeply involved in draft resistance work out of pacifist convictions, or just as a tactical way to fight the war'. 'Organising', she argued, 'is organising, you organise men to resist the draft...that is the role of the organiser...one that requires empathy and identity, but not actual membership of a category or group'. Jane Adams asserted that 'women were not exempted from the responsibility of citizenship...anyone who advocated draft resistance...placed

¹¹⁶ Adams, Garvy, OOI.

themselves in legal jeopardy. That's the nature of the struggle', she added, 'it necessarily breaks down those highly individualised notions of self-interest'. 'Martyrs [those who refused to be drafted] aren't the only ones', George Brosi stated, 'involved in any broad-based movement. Coalition building, publicity, legislative actions, all kinds of functions need to be fulfilled'. 'There was plenty women could do', Helen Garvy contended. 'We weren't going to be drafted, but in some ways that allowed us to do thing men couldn't do for fear of reprisal'. 'Support', she maintained, 'is essential...I don't see support as a dirty word...and many men as well as women were involved in support work around the draft'.¹¹⁸

This increasingly comprehensive approach saw increased possibilities for the involvement of those SDSers who were undraftable. This wider focus considered not only the problem of the draft, but also the underlying and deep-rooted problems of American society for which the Vietnam war and the draft were merely a symptom. Everyone could play an active role in combating America's capitalism-driven imperialism. 'The anti-draft movement', an 1968 SDS resolution stated, 'must be part of the anti-imperialism movement...[SDS] should fight imperialism on all levels...the questions we raise about the draft should raise questions about other aspects of life'.¹¹⁹ 'We have come a long way', asserted Mike Klonsky. 'The draft is still a major part of our program, and although that...individualism so deeply ingrained in us is still there, we no longer analyse the Selective Service System...as a personal hang-up'. 'Instead', he explained, 'we see the draft as an organic part of...imperialism'.¹²⁰ Robert Lee Swartz articulated the change in mood,

¹¹⁷ Calvert, OHC CU, p. 188–9.

¹¹⁸ Katz, Adams, Brosi, Garvy, all OOI.

¹¹⁹ NLN, April 8, 1968, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 10.

¹²⁰ Michael Klonsky, 'SDS and the Draft', in *ibid*, S3 No. 84.

Fighting the system with individual non co-operation techniques [such as draft card turn-ins] is futile. The conditions in America are caused by the political-economic system...we must develop a philosophy and form of action which attacks capitalism. Draft resistance must focus on a broad range of issues rather than [just] using the draft as a symbol...[the] style must change from...do your own thingism to one that leads to the development of a mass movement. We must develop a sense of collectivism amongst members.¹²¹

SDS's involvement in draft resistance highlighted key themes of gender and masculinity and femininity that had relevance for the organisation as a whole. Draft resistance saw a celebration of manhood. Documents and testimonies placed great emphasis on the morality and courage of resisting the draft, and, as a consequence, draft resisters were presented as paragons of virtue and heroism. Machismo frequently underpinned this alternative identity, as draft resisters sought to prove themselves to the underprivileged whites and blacks who were dying in South East Asia in disproportionate numbers. Moreover, the creation of alternative constructions of masculinity reflected their preoccupation with combining heroism and manhood. Keen to refute the charges of draft-dodging and cowardice, SDSers sought to reverse traditional perceptions of masculinity by reconstructing their refusal to be drafted to Vietnam as the ultimate manifestation of both bravery and manhood. To supplement their alternative manhood and machismo, certain resisters chose language that glorified their challenge to the law, through draft card burning and jail, and revelled in their outlaw image. Furthermore, resisters could also reinforce and enhance their

¹²¹ Robert Lee Swartz, 'Beyond Resistance or Where My Head Is At', in *ibid*, S3 No. 80.

masculinity by displaying their sexual prowess and utilising sexual and gender exclusive imagery and language.

The draft resistance movement coincided with emergence of a female consciousness within SDS that was more aware and critical of women's place and participation in the organisation. Critics of draft resistance alleged that their experience in the movement found them marginalised, as, by its very nature of men being the only potential draftees, women could only play a secondary and supportive role in opposing the draft. They argued that SDS's involvement in resistance perpetuated women being only defined through their relationships with men and recommended that women should identify other areas where they could make a telling contribution and should organise around their own oppression. Although much of the historiography relating to women and draft resistance supports this perspective of women's marginalisation, this chapter has revealed a more complex picture. Documentary and oral history evidence showed that women took a significant part in opposing the draft, often leading and activities and organising and engaging in autonomous all-female actions. Moreover, certain oral testimonies presented a broader, more comprehensive viewpoint on gender and draft resistance. Non-draftable men also were unable to serve in Vietnam, but also had a role to play in organising against the draft, as they and women occupied other positions of significance in this broad-based movement: organising, leafleting, risking jail and resisting the draft as a manifestation of what they perceived as the wider problem of America's capitalism-fuelled imperialist fervour.

SDS's participation in draft resistance had a telling impact on the organisation as a whole and its political direction. This rising tide of militancy within SDS that was awakened by antiwar and anti-draft activity could not be reversed, as the organisation turned from protest to resistance. Moreover, the stirring feminist consciousness in SDS that was highly critical of gendered resistance also would not be extinguished. The years between 1966 and 1968 would see these two pivotal aspects take centre stage in SDS.

Chapter Five

SDS 1966-1968

The years 1966 to 1968 were highly significant for SDS. During this time, the organisation saw an explosion in applications for membership, whilst campus chapters also increased. Moreover, primarily as a result of SDS's involvement in anti-war and anti-draft opposition, the organisation became set on an increasingly radical trajectory. The upsurge in campus based interest in SDS combined with a rapidly developing consciousness within the organisation about what was perceived as the neo-imperialistic nature of America's involvement in Vietnam. The second half of the 1960s saw SDS pose sharp questions about the corrupting and manipulative nature of the capitalist society in the United States. This period saw SDS react against their middle-class status, and their belief that students were being groomed for careers within the military-industrial complex which fuelled the Vietnam War, saw students recast themselves as the new working - class. This influential theory was accompanied by an expanding revolutionary rhetoric. Moreover, as protest gave way to resistance, many SDSers reinforced their use of a combative language with a belief that non-violent protest was no longer the answer. Capitalism, they increasingly asserted, could not be reformed, it had to be dismantled and then destroyed.

This chapter will show that the rising interest in SDS and its increasing militancy had a significant impact on gender relations within the group. The 'beloved community' of early SDS and ERAP, and the opportunities that the latter gave to women, had disappeared with SDS's rapid expansion, leaving an organisation that was preoccupied with rapidly changing ideologies and increasing radicalism. These developments

allocated little room for women's political development. As Sara Evans asserted, '[f]or women the movement became more alienating, more massive, competitive, and sexually exploitative'.¹ It was during this time that, as a consequence of the lack of opportunities for the majority of women within SDS, a feminine consciousness came to the fore as women discussed their secondary and marginal status in SDS and decided to organise around their own oppression.

This chapter will chart the progress of SDS through the years 1966 to 1968, and will find that much of the organisation's activity during these years made a significant impression on gender relations within the group. The rapidly expanding membership of SDS compressed key areas where women had previously been active, whilst the developing tide of late SDS rhetoric, with its emphasis on violent action and combative, militant language, was often imbued with machismo and ego as SDSers tried to prove their worth as revolutionaries. Moreover, it will show that the influence of the counterculture on SDSers' approach to sexuality and relationships, although liberating for some, also could prove to perpetuate the machismo evident in SDS, and facilitate the creation of unequal and dominating relationships in the name of revolution.

The chapter will find that the organisation's ideological focus also had a telling effect on gender relations and on developing feminist consciousness. Women's issues were accorded low priority within the organisation, whilst, at the same time, SDS's preoccupation with the notion of groups organising around their own oppression had a profound effect on SDS women. The chapter will therefore chart the burgeoning

¹ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 170.

feminist consciousness, which emerged directly as a consequence of women's marginalisation and the machismo and elitism at play within SDS. Women, it will reveal, firstly spoke up in greater numbers than previously about their long ignored marginalisation within the organisation, and then chose to organise groups both inside and outside of SDS, in order to discuss their oppression, and then to suggest the ways and means of improving their overall situation. The hotly contested ground of the new-born radical feminism saw the emergence of differing theoretical positions. The debate between 'Politicos' and 'Radicals' will form the final part of this chapter. Although many radical feminist documents emphasised similar concerns, the chapter will also chart the emergence of this schism in radical feminism, as 'politicos' and 'radicals' passionately debated the purpose of organising and the identity of those to be organised, the role of the wider movement in women's struggle and the importance of socialism, the nature of men as the oppressor.

Inevitably, the Vietnam War had a major impact on SDS during the period 1966 to 1968, contributing to the rising militancy within the organisation. This was apparent both in SDS's theoretical approach to the war, its evolving belief that it was America's capitalistic hubris that was underlying it, and in the increasingly aggressive tactics that the organisation adopted as the war continued unabated. SDS's opposition to the Vietnam War had an important effect on the organisation generally, apart from its direct involvement in the anti-war and anti-draft movement. The organisation began to question and then condemn the nature of America's capitalist society, and also applied this revolutionary discourse to all aspects of its philosophy.

The influx of the so-called 'Prairie Power' activists into SDS after 1965 marked a key turning point in the trajectory of the organisation, and its move towards violent action. Two or three years younger than the Old Guard who had been at the forefront of SDS decision-making since the organisation's inception, the Prairie Power people seemed, according to Old Guard SDSer Todd Gitlin, like a new generation. 'The Old Guard failed to take these "prairie people" into our old boy networks', he added '...[w]hereupon a generational chasm opened up within the student movement...'.² The Prairie Power influx into SDS came to a head after the 1965 March on Washington, and by 1966 was in the ascendancy with the election of Prairie people Carl Davidson and Greg Calvert to the National Office.³ Much of the later SDSers' alienation from America, and thus their embrace of revolutionary rhetoric, came as they were awakened to the possibility that America was not the country that they had been brought up to believe it was. Thus, Gitlin argued, 'the news of American violence came as an utter shock, a radical challenge to their fundamental morality'. 'The newer SDSers would', he said, 'prove quicker than the founders to gravitate towards violence of their own [as] "their trauma had no prelude"'.⁴

SDS's growing radicalism was apparent in its aggressive, confrontational language, which mirrored their increasing belief in direct action. The violent rhetoric utilised by SDSers underlined the militancy that was captivating the organisation at this time. Their choice of language became a way of reinforcing their commitment to revolutionary values and, significantly became a way to prove themselves and, for male SDSers, a method of demonstrating their traditional masculinity. Indeed, the

² Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 186.

³ *Ibid*, p. 186; Lawrence Lader, *Power on the Left: American Radical Movements since 1946* (New York: WW Norton and Co., 1979), p. 212.

⁴ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 186; Carl Ogelsby quoted in *ibid*, p. 186.

New Left in the latter half of the decade was awash with groups that presented a tough image and exhibited traditional masculinity. The Black Panthers, who had become a *cause célèbre* with white leftists through their aggressive, no-nonsense attitude and their Marxist-Leninist doctrine, epitomised the confrontational and macho air of traditional masculinity which SDSers were trying to recreate through their own rhetoric and action. As Alice Echols commented, 'many white radicals found it difficult to resist abdicating authority to black radicals whose apparent willingness to "pick up the gun" seemed the essence of revolutionary commitment'.⁵ SDSers had displayed machismo throughout the organisation's existence and, as radicals on the left sought to imitate the Black Panthers' rhetoric and attitude, they also appropriated the macho that accompanied it. 'The *macho* mentality', historian Harold Jacobs asserted, '...characterised much of the rhetoric of the male-dominated white Left...While the struggles of black revolutionaries frequently endanger[ed] their lives, the white Left', he argued, 'have failed to go beyond symbolic demonstrations and revolutionary posturing'.⁶

SDS women also utilised this macho rhetoric and their attempts to adopt this form of masculinity must be viewed in the context of SDS in the late 1960s. Women's self-autonomy and space were contracting with the expansion of the organisation, and certain militant women employed these manifestations of masculinity as a means of buying into the zeitgeist and creating an identity as a revolutionary in a movement where confrontation was rapidly coming to predominate. It was, for some, another way to play a radical role in an increasingly militant organisation. Employing macho

⁵ Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1970* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p.126.

⁶ Harold Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman* (New York: Ramparts Press, 1970), p. 310.

posturing was, for others, a means of being transgressive and laying claim to male turf.

The opposition to the war had a telling effect on SDS's growing radicalism. Most notably, the 1967 March on the Pentagon saw anti-war protestors confront police and the National Guard, and at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago, demonstrators against the war fought running battles with Mayor Daley's police force. The Pentagon demonstration, historian Lawrence Lader maintains, illustrated SDS's adoption of a 'new type of violence'.⁷ SDS's particular turn towards radical confrontation was also apparent, and significantly, women were also at the forefront of embracing this growing feeling of militancy. The *Proposal for Convergence on Draft Hearings* was written by future Weatherman John Jacobs, and Loren Kaplen of Columbia University SDS. 'Instead of a morality play', they argued, 'proposed demos would be a confrontation with the war-makers where they are weakest...expand[ing] on previous anti-draft and anti-war work...[and] bringing students into the action'.⁸ 'The portent [of activist Suzie Williams' anti draft activity at Boston draft board]', Paul Lauter asserted, 'is ever increasing, [including] organised acts of sabotage'. Moreover, the slogan of an unnamed strike, 'up against the wall motherfucker', he argued, 'characterised our own tactics'.⁹ At an all-female demonstration at a draft board, Buffalo SDS magazine *Resist* recounted how 'the mood of militancy rose as the women demanded to be let in and were met by shoving police'.¹⁰

⁷ Lader, *Power*, p. 236.

⁸ John Jacobs and Lauren Kaplen, 'Proposal for Convergence on Draft Hearings', in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 171.

⁹ Paul Lauter, 'The Escalation of the Resistance', in *ibid*, S3 No. 101.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, S3 No. 53.

The growing revolutionary rhetoric which impelled actual confrontation with the symbols of authority placed a premium on hard masculine toughness. 'Reality' a September 1967 article urged, 'requires us to recognise that for the foreseeable future [violence] is likely to be used'. 'The movement', it maintained, 'must face the fact that...the creative use of violence has to be legitimate'.¹¹ Later in November 1967, an article stated that 'students, as a guerrilla striking force, [were] moving when the beast expected on unexpected targets. We must', it went on, 'develop the mentality that we are troops...and we must initiate action with that in mind'.¹² 'We are the youth' declared a report on the Chicago inauguration demonstration. 'We want to be free in our music, ideas and our violence...we refuse to be regimented into their deadly games'. The report revelled in summarising the violent scenes in Chicago, as once more confrontation and aggression was celebrated: 'Each night the militancy grew in the park...barricades were erected and the police were stoned...the object became to survive and still stay on the streets...squads of pigs roamed the streets...people fought back [with] stones, bottles or anything handy'.¹³ 'Instead of rolling over and playing dead', an article discussing the benefits of 'self defence' explained, 'we fought back, met their clubs with rocks and bottles...several plain clothes police men were beaten up'. This, the article stated, was a 'big step forward. We learned that people united and fighting can beat the armed might of the state...we must use any means necessary including people's violence to defeat them'.¹⁴ On the eighth anniversary of the founding of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, SDSers were 'invited to show their solidarity through appropriate actions'.¹⁵ Jeff Jones of Columbia SDS and a

¹¹ *New Left Notes* (hereafter *NLN*), September 4, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹² *NLN*, November 6, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹³ *NLN*, September 9, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁴ 'In Defence of Self Defence', *NLN*, December 23, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁵ *NLN*, December 3, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

future Weatherman highlighted the benefits of action and confrontation. 'It turned out', he asserted, that 'I was very attracted to militant demos and people who were militant...I always found myself at the forefront of those battles, learning when to fight, when not to fight'.¹⁶

This use of aggressive rhetoric was reinforced by combative imagery and symbolism. A letter by Bill Eisman to the editor of *New Left Notes*, was accompanied by a clenched fist and the motif, 'Resist!', and a New York City SDS chapter newsletter was adorned with clenched fists and the slogans 'Serve the people' and 'Dare to struggle, dare to win!'¹⁷ Frequently, calls to action and violent, macho symbolism were intertwined. An alternative version of the 12 Days of Christmas was printed in the December 1967 edition of *New Left Notes*. Amongst the delights that 'my comrade gave to me' in the newly titled '12 Days of Resistance', were 'eight imperialist puppets, the head of the ROTC and the death of the bourgeoisie'.¹⁸ 'Elections', stated a November 1968 article illustrated with fists, 'don't mean shit, vote where the power is, our power is in the streets'.¹⁹ Significantly, certain women within SDS also engaged in this highly aggressive rhetoric. A polemic by Diane Weis highlighted the inadequacies of non-violence, as she wholeheartedly came out in support of combative direct action, arguing that 'violence as a tactic cannot be dismissed just by the mere fact that it is violent'. Once more, the article was adorned with a large clenched fist.²⁰

¹⁶ Jeff Jones, Oral History Collection Columbia University (hereafter OHC CU), p. 1-88.

¹⁷ *NLN*, August 7, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210; *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 50.

¹⁸ *NLN*, December 25, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁹ *NLN*, November 11, 1968, *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

²⁰ *Ibid*, S3 No. 59.

SDS's use of violent language and action was intrinsically connected to the revolutionary rhetoric that dominated the organisation's philosophy in the latter half of the 1960s. Greg Calvert was at the forefront of the calls within SDS for 'revolution'. Indeed, in an autumn 1966 National Secretary's report he asserted that

Our revolutionary task - is not to purge ourselves of the desires, the vision, and the hope which brought us to the revolutionary movement. Our task is to examine ourselves and our movement and our work in order to sustain our revolutionary hope - in order that, despite the reality of frustration and despair, we might continue the building of the movement which *we know* is right because it corresponds to what we want for ourselves and what we understand to be necessary for the survival of the race.²¹

Fellow Prairie Power SDSer Carl Davidson also identified the need for revolution. 'The system', he argued, 'must be fundamentally changed...my own choice is revolution'.²² It was a clear call for a new level of struggle, a new perception of what SDS could do, and be', Kirkpatrick Sale commented. 'And inherent in it was the notion of revolution...and no more shilly-shallying about it'.²³

It was apparent that this revolutionary ideology greatly influenced the hostile language that was used by SDS. Greg Calvert saw that 'the use of the language of revolution was an unrealistic inflation of rhetoric', but he argued, 'how do you talk about state power without talking in a Marxist framework?' Suggesting the inspiration for the influx of this type of language, Calvert noted the influence of black nationalism. 'It was a reaction to what was going on in SNCC and the Black Power

²¹ Greg Calvert, 'National Secretary Report, November 25, 1966, in Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 309.

²² Carl Davidson, *NLN*, February 3, 1967, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

²³ Calvert, 'Report', in Sale, *SDS*, pp. 309-10.

movement, an attempt to match the rhetorical stance of Black Power'.²⁴ Tellingly, the discourse of black nationalism has also been critiqued for its celebration of aggression, confrontation and violence, which was also frequently imbued with machismo.²⁵

For some SDSers confrontational language was a way of reinforcing their revolutionary credentials. In November 1967 Carl Davidson published a 'revolutionary critique of institutions and society that we are trying to destroy. The social order that we are rebelling against is manipulative [and] repressive...the duty of the revolutionary is to not only be intolerant of, but to actively suppress the anti-democratic tendencies of the dominant order'.²⁶ The events at Columbia University in the spring of 1968 saw SDS's desire to change the system actively manifest itself, as they protested at the University's complicity in manufacturing arms for the Vietnam War, and its building of a gymnasium on community parkland in Harlem. In order to stop the building of the gym, students occupied buildings at the University, including the Low Library, which was the administrative centre on campus, and also called for a university-wide student strike. '[Liberals] don't understand', stated John Jacobs, a participant in the Columbia sit-ins, 'where strength will come from, they don't understand class antagonism and the dynamics of revolution. Our struggle will come from electrifying people's resentment against the corrupt and sterile quality of life under the old society'. 'The largest task', he went on '[is to] consolidate...a strong political force. The question is not whether to work for armed communist revolution

²⁴ Greg Calvert, OHC CU, pp. 2-12, 2-17.

²⁵ For a comprehensive investigation of black nationalism and machismo see Chapter Three.

²⁶ Carl Davidson. 'Institutional Resistance: List of Tactics', in *NLN* November 13, 1967 in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

in the USA, but how and what form it will take'.²⁷ 'There was an incredible exhilaration', asserted SDSer Nancy Biberman, 'that here we were making history, changing the world...who knows, maybe we were going to *make the revolution* at Columbia. Everybody' she maintained, 'believed that...society would be irrevocably changed, that there'd be revolution in the United States within five years, and a whole new social order. This is really what people believed...it was that kind of heady experience'.²⁸

Columbia SDS President (and future Weatherman) Mark Rudd's letter to the Columbia University President Grayson Kirk encapsulated the revolutionary, confrontational and macho mood of the time. '[This] is the opening shot in a war of liberation', he said. 'I'll use the words of LeRoi Jones whom I'm sure you don't like a whole lot: "Up against the wall motherfucker, This is a stick up"'.²⁹ The Columbia insurrection Tom Hayden later commented, 'set a new tone within what was known as the "action' faction" of SDS'. Tired of intellectualising, he explained, 'Rudd's action faction believed that disruptive, confrontational deeds were necessary to force people...into real choices about themselves and society'. Rudd, he asserted 'was a new type of campus leader...committed to revolutionary destruction, sarcastic and smugly dogmatic'.³⁰ Historian Lader emphasised the significant radicalising effect of the Columbia events. It 'made SDS a national byword, and inspired more campus revolts than ever before, [and moreover], it undoubtedly moved SDS further to violence'.³¹

²⁷ John Jacobs, 'Beginning to Bring the War Home', in *ibid*, S3 No. 48.

²⁸ Nancy Biberman, in Joan Morrison and Robert K Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience Through the Eyes of Those Who Lived it* (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 273. No italics added.

²⁹ Mark Rudd quoted in David Caute, *The Year of the Barricades, '68* (London: Paladin Books, 1988), p. 142.

³⁰ Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 273-75.

³¹ Lader, *Power*, p. 258.

Todd Gitlin discussed the 'language of revolution' which gripped SDS in its latter years. "To invoke 'The Revolution', he argued, 'was to claim title to the future; to see beyond raids and wiretaps and trials and empire and war and guilt; to justify the tedium of mimeographing one more leaflet, working out one more position, suffering through one more insufferable meeting'.³² Moreover, Gitlin suggested that the use of the emotive language of revolution was to create a new identity for SDSers in the late 1960s. 'To speak of 'The Revolution', he asserted,

was automatically to acquire a pedigree, heroes, martyrs, allies, texts and therefore anchorage... It was to take heart, and mind, from Marx, Bakunin, Lenin, Sacco and Vanzetti, Wilhelm Reich, Che, Mao, Fidel, Ho, from Brazil's urban underground or Guatemala's guerrillas slipping into villages to show the Indians that the military regime was not omnipotent...they were all professionals who had fought against the odds and hadn't quit.³³

Furthermore, the use of this rhetoric of revolution provided SDSers with an instant identification and a set of radical credentials. Here, with their references to Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and the Vietnamese amongst an array of leftist idols, was a ready-made heroic and, at times, macho identity for late SDSers to appropriate wholesale. To invoke the name of Che Guevara or Ho Chi Minh was, for many members of the organisation, to prove their strength, their militancy and their revolutionary worth both to themselves, and no less importantly to others in SDS.

There was a side to SDS's embrace of revolutionary rhetoric that assisted the advance of machismo within the organisation. As previous chapters have shown, holding

³² Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 345.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 346.

macho attitudes, and engaging in macho posturing was not a new phenomenon in SDS, and was evident in all of the organisation's guises, from early SDS to ERAP to draft resistance. The latter years of SDS, however, saw a rise in the aggressive rhetoric, confrontational action and language of heroic revolutionaries battling the capitalist regime, which nurtured machismo. Significantly, many former SDSers explicitly noted and named the increase in machismo within the organisation. Certain criticisms, understandably, came from early SDS members who had deep connections with the early leadership of the organisation and became distanced from the 'Prairie Power' leadership, although late SDSers did also comment on displays of macho.

Jane Adams saw that 'machismo certainly increased'. So too did Helen Garvy and Paul Millman. 'As SDS grew', asserted Garvy, 'macho seemed to flourish...people were judged by how often (or loudly) they spoke'. 'I remember', maintained Millman, 'that there was an increase in macho rhetoric. I remember the rhetoric of street fighting [which] I found both tragic and laughable'. Leni Wildflower told how, as the movement got more radical, there was a 'macho, are you butch enough' mentality. Indeed, testimonies reveal the important influence that the rise of radicalism had on macho. 'Militance', Heather Booth maintained, 'became equated with effectiveness. The boldness of the tactic became more important than the ways in which it actually increased the power of the group'. Marilyn Katz identified a 'happiness is a warm gun period', (around the time of the release of the Beatles song of the same name), where 'there was that crowd brandishing weapons while their wives sat patiently by'.³⁴ Greg Calvert saw 'that it was easy to get into militant fantasies'. 'There was a growing notion', he asserted, 'that urban guerrilla warfare really did have something, so

³⁴ Jane Adams, Helen Garvy, Paul Millman, Heather Booth, Leni Wildflower, Marilyn Katz, all Own Oral History Interviews (hereafter OOI).

everybody wanted to play the urban guerrilla'.³⁵ 'SDS people' Columbia activist David Gilbert stated, 'started to use the term urban guerrilla....There was a romance and drama to it and an identification with the revolution which was a positive'.³⁶

The elitism of certain SDSers contributed towards the machismo of the period. George Brosi saw that this strain of conceit and self-importance emanated from the upper echelons of the leadership of the organisation. 'Carl [Davidson] and Greg [Calvert]', he maintained, 'were just rough ego-centric glory-hound kind of assholes...they were loud dominating and strutted around like roosters'.³⁷ Marilyn Katz, however, refuted this, arguing that early leaders Tom Hayden and Todd Gitlin 'shared an arrogance not seen in later leaders [such as] Carl [Davidson] or Greg [Calvert]'.³⁸ Significantly, Calvert himself noted the egocentricism of certain SDSers at the Pentagon anti-war demonstration, although he contrasts others' desire for a militant approach to the rally with his own less confrontational idea to stage a sit-in and get arrested. As a consequence of this, 'people', he asserted, 'were just furious with me...suddenly I was not being the revolutionary hero...I thought this is turning out to be a bunch of ego trips'. 'People', he contended, 'were trying to vie with each other in the arena of revolutionary heroism'.³⁹ Jeff Jones told of his time with the Motherfuckers, a violent anarchist group affiliated to SDS. They attracted him because they were 'the most militant and were ideologically anarchists', and his testimony also revealed the exhilaration and attraction of militancy, a sense of danger and breaking the law. Moreover, a sense of ego was again apparent as he recounted a

³⁵ Calvert, OHC CU, p. 2-218.

³⁶ Gilbert, *ibid*, p. 1-101.

³⁷ George Brosi, OOI.

³⁸ Katz, OOI.

³⁹ Calvert, OHC CU, p. 2-219.

tale about Motherfuckers' violence against the police, which he stressed, should present him 'in a good light'.⁴⁰ Leni Wildflower saw that the December 1968 SDS conference epitomised the macho and elitist approach that tainted the late years of SDS, and paved the way for the emergence of the Weatherman faction. 'There was the action faction on one side', she asserted, 'and they've got their fists in the air. I felt like politics had become these macho young turks who were jerks'.⁴¹

Letters penned to *New Left Notes* highlighted the contemporary criticism of SDS and the violent route that it was taking. These letters provide important evidence of certain SDSers' repudiation of the violent tactics that were rapidly becoming *de rigueur* in the organisation, and also emphasise the masculinist nature of SDS's single-minded approach to their *modus operandi*. Harry P. Robertson wrote in November 1967 that 'I find myself unable to remain a member of the organisation due to the fact that I can no longer agree with the methods you advocate for change. I am still', he maintained, 'for a world of peace without armies and armaments, but can see no way to interpret it in the manner most of the members of SDS wish it'.⁴² A letter dated May 1968 stressed the nihilism that was overwhelming SDS's tactics. 'SDS', Joe Bute argued, 'has lost many of its constructive tendencies and has taken a violent attitude....To kill is to destroy, and destruction provides destructive ends'. 'Violence', he added, 'will defeat the Movement faster and quicker than all the arrests and beatings. We must resist, but must be sincere, productive, not brutal'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Jeff Jones, OHC CU, p. 1-88.

⁴¹ Leni Wildflower, *ibid.*, p. 2-78.

⁴² *NLN* November 20, 1967, in *SDS Papers* S3 No. 210.

⁴³ *NLN* May 12, 1968, in *ibid.*, S3 No. 210.

These critical correspondents also commented on SDSers desire for members to prove themselves, as engaging in combat and using aggressive language became a way for certain SDSers to showcase their machismo and traditional manhood. 'I am kind of disturbed', wrote Tom Ehrlich in December 1967, 'by what is happening in SDS...it appears that some people who write things for *New Left Notes* think they're revolutionary because...they use words like revolutionary, guerrilla [and] quote Che etc'. 'A lot of the writing', he stressed, 'is pretty shallow - people feel it is more important to use revolutionary words than deal more seriously and in depth with the issues'.⁴⁴ Carol Schik questioned the sincerity and commitment of these self-appointed insurgents. 'When the shit comes down', she asked, 'do you really think that any substantial number of these kids will choose to fight in the revolution rather than retreat into middle-class security?'⁴⁵ Certain SDSers' pride and their displays of bravado were criticised in an anonymous September 1968 letter. 'The attitude "my way or else" is childish and naïve', it stated. 'Simplistic sentences such as "free political prisoners" and "shut the jails down" are dangerous and an affront to intelligent, perceptive people to whom you purport to appeal'. 'I reject', the letter concluded, 'your rhetoric, your storm-trooper tactics and black and white interpretations...such rhetoric has only one advantage for you - its absolutism leaves you smugly impenetrable to critics like myself'.⁴⁶

SDSers' masculinist approach was also prevalent in attitudes to sex. The new approaches to sexual relationships and the language of sexual experimentation, attitudes which emanated from the counterculture ideology that was enrapturing a

⁴⁴ *NLN* December 11, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

⁴⁵ *NLN* April 29, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

⁴⁶ *NLN* September 23, 1968, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

significant minority of America's youth, greatly influenced the development of a culture of machismo and bravado within late SDS. There was much common ground between the more politically driven New Left of SDS, and the spiritually driven counterculture, particularly with the influx of the new generation of SDS leaders and recruits after 1965. According to Todd Gitlin, 'SDS's prairie power generation of 1965 saw no barrier between radical politics and drug culture...the traditions were tangled, intertwined.....On the verge of the 1967 Summer of Love', he explained 'many were the radicals and cultural revolutionaries in search of convergence, trying to nudge the New Left and the counterculture together, to imagine them as yin and yang of the same epochal transformation'.⁴⁷ The counterculture had a notable influence on SDS in the latter half of the 1960s, particularly impacting on gender within the organisation, and on attitudes to sex and sexuality. Certainly, there was a large aspect to the counterculture that proved to provide a liberating experience for both men and women in terms of personal expression yet there was also a negative side to the counterculture which saw unequal and exploitative relationships, and sexist attitudes disguised as 'free love'.

Theoretically, the advent of the counterculture should have made a positive impact on gender relations within the Movement, particularly in quashing the prevailing machismo in SDS and the New Left generally. More liberated attitudes to sexual relationships were seen as, and often could be, positive for women, particularly with the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1960.⁴⁸ For some women, these attitudes resonated as they seized the opportunity to reconstruct their relationships with men

⁴⁷ Gitlin, *Sixties*, pp. 213-4.

⁴⁸ Lara V. Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 6.

and to gain freedom as sexual beings, a far cry from the staid attitudes to women's sexuality of the 1950s and the *in loco parentis* rules of universities in the early 1960s. Indeed, it is possible to locate key feminist beliefs in the ideals of the counterculture. 'The language of the counterculture', asserts historian Rebecca Klatch, 'intersected with feminist beliefs. Both emphasised the importance of lifestyles of the personal as political. By rejecting middle-class standards, and lifestyles and embracing sexual freedom', she explained, 'the counterculture called into question basic institutions such as marriage and the family, causes that were critical to feminism'.⁴⁹ SDSer Judy Smith commented that 'the counterculture provided a glimpse of what a movement might provide in terms of new identities, new comradeship, new ways of seeing'.⁵⁰ 'People', Marge Piercy asserted, 'experimented with new forms of communities...and men and women were trying new ways of relating that would not be as confining....Some of the experimenting', she maintained, 'was shallow, manipulative, adventurist; but some was serious and had tentative, willing openness that allowed room for men and especially for women to grow whole new limbs of self and encounter each other in ways that made them more human'.⁵¹ 'My recollection', asserted Deidre English, 'of [the counterculture was] that it was not an unmitigated disaster. The sexism was there but women were actually having more sexual experience of different kinds and enjoying it. Women', she explained, 'were having more sex that was not procreational, and claiming the right to it as well as paying a lower social and economic cost'.⁵²

⁴⁹ Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, The New Right and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 183.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵¹ Marge Piercy, 'The Grand Coolie Damn', in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 422.

⁵² Quoted in Echols, *Daring*, p. 43.

Moreover, the basic lifestyle ideals of the counterculture; the possession-less communalism, the anti-materialist lifestyle, had an important impact on gender. Men subverted traditional cultural norms of masculinity by having long hair, and wearing beads, bracelets and unisex clothing. This created a new and alternative aesthetic that was initially specific to the counterculture, but which quickly became *the* accepted look for the young, ranging from rock bands to weekend hippies to commune-dwellers. The ethos of the counterculture saw men also take up pursuits such as bread-making, gardening, and an embrace of nature, which were a far cry from traditional notions of masculinity. Theoretically, the counterculture lifestyle did not sit well with self-centredness and machismo. After all, LSD guru Timothy Leary advocated taking the drug of choice of the counterculture, saying that the drugs 'unplug the ego...and the mind', leaving 'the open brain...alert and open to a broad sweep of internal and external stimuli hitherto screened out'.⁵³ However, prominent advocates of LSD and the lifestyle associated with it, such as Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters, did not exorcise the ego quite so easily. 'Like the Pranksters', LSD historian Jay Stevens asserted, '[Prankster chemist Augustus] Owsley's psychedelic perspective contained a lot of machismo; he was always taunting his friends to "take two and really cut loose into the cosmos"'.⁵⁴ Furthermore testimonies from certain SDSers reveal that machismo was flourishing in the counterculture at that time. 'There was this sense', asserted Leni Wildflower, 'of passive, somehow less macho-type behaviour, but I thought they were no less macho and the hypocrisy just sort of oozed out all over the place'.⁵⁵

⁵³ Timothy Leary, quoted in Jay Stevens, *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* (London: Flamingo, 1993), p. 214.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁵⁵ Wildflower, OHC CU, p. 2-76.

Frequently, the machismo and sexism of the counterculture was manifested in its approach to sex. Certainly, countercultural attitudes to sexual relationships facilitated, in theory, a more liberal and progressive take on cohabiting and having many sexual partners, as it questioned traditional moral values about virginity and marriage, and many men and women enthusiastically embraced this new lifestyle. However, the situation, in reality, frequently contrasted with the utopian ideal. Sexual relationships often replicated the unequal and patriarchal associations evident in the mainstream society, and sexually explicit language emphasised the aggression, sexism and macho that did not sit well with the counterculture's passive, gentle and non-violent image.

Jane Adams maintained that the reason she 'didn't get deeper into the counterculture' was because 'the cultural forms that came to dominate really reproduced existing roles, with women appearing largely in highly sexualised, objectified forms'.⁵⁶ Often, the counterculture's notion that sexual liberation could also be manifested through overtly sexual language contributed towards an objectification of women and an overt emphasis on their sexual being. A hippie badge read 'Peace, Pussy and Pot'.⁵⁷ The underground New York newspaper *Rat* printed articles about 'pussy power', and headlines such as 'Clit Flit, Big Hit', trailed a piece on female orgasm.⁵⁸ When the Seattle *Barb* published a feature entitled 'To Fornicate is Divine', the local SDS chapter correspondent John Venezia concluded sarcastically that '[I]t looks as if raising the banner of "free love" and "free sex" is a dangerous thing even in SDS'.⁵⁹ Taking this sexualisation and objectification to an extreme of violent fantasy, John

⁵⁶ Adams, OOI.

⁵⁷ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 315.

⁵⁸ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 373.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 177-8.

Sinclair, leader of the White Panthers, a group that epitomised the counterculture ideal of sex, drugs and rock and roll, suggested that recruits 'fuck your women so hard...she can't stand up'.⁶⁰

This highly sexualised attitude to women was symptomatic of a movement where, despite its claims of creating a new society, women were often accorded an unequal status. 'Traditional sex roles', sociologist Angela McRobbie contended, 'prevailed in the hippie subculture....Femininity moved imperceptibly between the earth-mother, the pre-Raphaelite mystic, the kind of goddess serenaded by Bob Dylan, and the dreamy fragility of Marianne Faithful'.⁶¹ Testimonies stressed the inequality of relationships in the counterculture. Jane Adams believed that the counterculture was particularly exploitative of women. 'There's sexual freedom and sexual exploitation....It was still a male culture...The women did all the cooking and the cleaning and would wait on [the men]'.⁶² The sexism of the counterculture and its exploitation of women was apparent in the 'free fuck clubs. These guys talked about love, screwed us, and then zoomed off for more cultural revolution'.⁶³ As Martha Shelley put it, even 'the average student male radical want[ed] a passive sex object cum domestic cum baby nurse to clean up after him whilst he does all the fun things and plays at Che Guevara'.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 154.

⁶¹ Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 21.

⁶² Quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 139.

⁶³ Anonymous, quoted in Anderson, *The Movement*, p. 286.

⁶⁴ Martha Shelley, in Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood*, p. 309.

Women were also expected to fulfil the domestic role. 'Men's ideal was the guru, women's the Earth Mother', Todd Gitlin asserted. Further, '[W]omen were expected (and expected themselves) to... step off their pedestals, take off their bras, put on long dresses and bake bread'.⁶⁵ Moreover, the composition and preoccupations of the hippie movement meant that, for some women, there was no possibility that their grievances would be listened to. 'I began to feel', Leni Wildflower contended, that 'there wasn't any space within hippie culture to even raise these issues....Marijuana played a part in their whole way of interaction because they didn't interact very much. Hippie men', she added, 'were the ultimate form of sexist creeps'.⁶⁶

The sexualisation of women, and its accompanying machismo, also prevailed in the main body of SDS. 'It was clear', Cathy Wilkerson contended, 'that the only way a girl could be anybody was to flirt with one of the boys....There were all these very articulate male leaders and the only women who seemed to be accepted were the women who were in relationships with them....If you wanted to make it in the political world', she explained, 'you had to concentrate on the relationships with the men'.⁶⁷ 'There were', asserted Todd Gitlin, 'staffs that were, in effect, serial harems. Packing more clout as the heavies' consorts than on their own, women were willing to play along - hoarding their resentment'.⁶⁸ Women were treated as 'sexual garbage cans' according to Francine Silbar, '...and reservoirs of mechanistic lusts to be tapped at the whim of our thoughtless, self-centred "small master"'.⁶⁹ Cindy Decker recalled how, 'guys were always coming up to me. They couldn't see beyond the fact that I

⁶⁵ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 372.

⁶⁶ Wildflower, OHC CU, pp. 2-76, 1-49.

⁶⁷ Wilkerson, quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 169.

⁶⁸ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 371.

⁶⁹ Silbar, quoted in Echols, *Daring*, p. 43.

was an attractive female to dealing with me as a person and dealing with my ideas. I was extremely resentful'.⁷⁰ Sex and ego became intertwined, with machismo the result. 'By the late 60s', Gitlin contended, 'there were a few dozen men who stood out as incarnations of The Revolution, so that to sleep with them was the equivalent of taking political communion; and they cut a considerable swath'. These "'engorged egos'", he remarked, 'had fewer scruples about making promises, turning women against one another, dividing and ruling...[W]omen became not simply a medium of exchange...but rewards for male prowess and balm for male insecurity'.⁷¹ 'Some men', Marge Piercy commented, 'consider themselves revolutionaries and in some circles female submission becomes a revolutionary duty'.⁷² 'Here they come', Leni Wildflower bitterly commented, 'those strutting roosters, those pathetic male chauvinists....Here come the freaks...in those tie-dyed T-shirts which their old lady made for them....Male liberators, you are stepping on my neck'.⁷³

Women, therefore, faced similar problems in the main body of SDS to those that they encountered in the counterculture; they could be treated as either purely sexual beings, or they bore the brunt of an expectation that they fulfil a domestic role. Moreover, the makeup of the organisation in its latter years meant that the space women had cultivated during the early spell of SDS and in ERAP shrunk considerably as the organisation was flooded with applications to join and with requests to establish new campus chapters. In October 1965, the membership of SDS was counted at 10,000, with 89 chapters established. By November 1968, the numbers had rocketed

⁷⁰ Decker, quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 169.

⁷¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 372.

⁷² Piercy, 'Grand Coolie Damn', in Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood*, p. 425.

⁷³ Leni Wildflower, introduction to Paul Potter, *A Name for Ourselves* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), pp. xv-xvi.

to estimated numbers of 80,000-100,000 members, with between 350-400 chapters.⁷⁴ The Prairie Power influx into SDS after 1965 also saw the displacement of the Old Guard leadership. However, despite their desire to eliminate the previous leadership's intellectual style and inject new impetus, vigour and action into the organisation, the elitism that was in evidence in early SDS was also apparent under the Prairie Power tenure. Thus, the sexism of the organisation, its rapidly increasing size and membership, and the problems that it displayed with an, at times, elitist and masculinist leadership had a notable effect on women and on gender relations within the group.

Elitism, despite the new generation in SDS's attacks on the Old Guard for their intellectual snobbery, was very much in evidence in the latter years of the organisation. 'Elitism', Kirkpatrick Sale contended, is the tendency of a handful of top leaders, the "heavies", to dominate an organisation by virtue of their elected positions, or manipulative skill, or oral felicity, or administrative brilliance'. SDS he added, 'no matter how much [it] was aware of the problem, was unable to avoid the trap: good souls became active, activists became leaders, leaders became an elite'.⁷⁵ This was apparent in a report by National Secretary Robert Pardun. 'People', he noted, 'who are doing full time organising should be seen as a very important part of SDS. The National Council', he added, 'no longer represents the base...most chapters never report [to the National Council]...We need to begin to develop a regional strategy which is closely in touch with the bases, so the national strategy can be by and be responsible to the local constituency'. However, Pardun did go on to argue that the new leadership of SDS had, by accepting the need for effective administration, gone a

⁷⁴ Sale, *SDS*, p. 664.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 356.

long way to eliminating the problems that plagued the Old Guard. 'I think', he asserted, 'that it is common knowledge that the previous hang-ups about leadership are outdated, and, as we have gone beyond rebellion against all leadership to a more refined understanding of the nature of leadership, we found that SDS always had a leadership'.⁷⁶

Ironically, in 1966, Old Guarder Todd Gitlin also commented on the elitism that prevailed in the latter years of SDS. 'The no leaders debate, when it surfaces', he argued, 'usually arises as an over-preoccupation with democratic forms, rather than a serious, hard and honest talk about elitism, personal styles etc'. 'Elitism', he added, 'should be a matter of central concern, but it cuts so close to many exposed nerves that both elites and non-elites circumvent the paralysing substance of the issue'.⁷⁷ Other SDSers commented on the elitism evident in the organisation. 'At national meetings', noted Don McKelvey, 'decisions don't get made, discussions are not had and thus issues are not made clear and people are not involved in making decisions which affect their lives'. An 'important reason' for this, he stressed, was the 'intellectual elitism...the most important way in which [it] manifested itself is in the lack of thinking out of the council or in public'.⁷⁸ Don Castleberry saw that 'elitist orthodoxy is fast becoming apparent in SDS'. 'Thus', he insisted, 'whilst professing a belief in the right of everyone to pursue their ideas...SDS is beginning to use the same deceitful manipulation methods, the same powerful elite, the same contempt for the masses as exists and helps to pervert the society we condemn'. 'One does not', Castleberry

⁷⁶ Robert Pardun, 'On Cadre vs. Mass Organisation', in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 97.

⁷⁷ Todd Gitlin, 'Notes on the Pathology of the National Council', in *NLN* February 18, 1966, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

⁷⁸ Don McKelvey, 'Intellectual Elitism and the failure of teaching', in *NLN*, August 12, 1966, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

concluded, 'open minds by puritanical bigotry'.⁷⁹ 'Part of SDS', Karen Gellen noted in 1968, 'is very authoritarian and manipulative. [There is] conflict over the correct line and an insistence [by the leadership] on getting approval'.⁸⁰

Frequently the elitism displayed by the SDS leadership, and the male chauvinism that plagued the organisation, were intertwined. As Kirkpatrick Sale noted, elitism 'elided very easily into male chauvinism, since the leaders were usually men or women who identified with and modeled themselves after men...and the followers, bearing the flags were usually women'.⁸¹ Moreover, the size of the organisation in the late 1960s compounded women's problem. 'Meetings of hundreds', Sara Evans contended, 'rallies of thousands, marches of hundreds of thousands, did not constitute arenas conducive to female leadership, except for those already exceptionally strong and self-confident'.⁸² Although women had gained invaluable experience and self-confidence in SDS's ERAP scheme in particular, many were overawed by the prospect of speaking in front of lots of people, or by the possibility of having to engage with the intellectual elite of SDS. Todd Gitlin underlined the veiled chauvinism, and egotism that was at play through the elitism of the upper echelons of SDS.

If you can make a good speech, you're in, otherwise you're out. This is a statement of the deplorable reality, SDS's status system. The elite are often able to make coherent speeches....The non-elite feel forced to compete for that status, so they make speeches too, usually, although not always, less coherent.

⁷⁹ Don Castleberry, 'Elite or Pica', in Newsletter 6, November 3, 1967, *ibid*, S2A No. 46.

⁸⁰ Karen Gellen, chapter correspondence letter, February 28, 1968 in *ibid*, S3 No. 46.

⁸¹ Sale, *SDS*, p. 356.

⁸² Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 176.

At the root of all of this is unbridled ego involvement, as egos become tied to words.⁸³

'The typical Movement institution', explained Marge Piercy, in her 1970 polemic *Grand Coolie Damn*, 'consists of one or more movement men who act as charismatic spokesmen...who manipulate the relationships to maintain his or their position. Most prestige in the movement', she went on, 'rests not on having done anything in particular, but in having visibly dominated some gathering'.⁸⁴ 'I organised my corner of the movement...', asserted Nick Egleson, 'top down, with regard for ideas and product but not for emotions of people: with structures that looked democratic, but which let hustlers with my traits, chiefly other men, rise to the top'.⁸⁵

Some women were intimidated by the leadership's domineering style. 'It was so male', remarked Naomi Schapiro. 'All these people arguing and fighting and using rhetoric that I didn't really understand...so that I felt like I couldn't say anything....' [It was], she added, 'not particularly welcoming'.⁸⁶ 'It's the men', Beth Ogelsby asserted, 'who talk...who theorize, and it's the men who make the decisions. Except for a few articulate women, most of the women were not listened to'.⁸⁷ This elitism was often built on sexism and prejudice. Women were either intimidated by the overt cerebralism at meetings, or were marginalised by a presumption, held by many in the elite, that women would have little of significance to say. 'One way', maintained Jeanne Friedman, 'the sexism was manifest was that you had these men telling you what correct ideology was...telling very politicised women...who were able to read

⁸³ Gitlin, 'Notes', in *NLN*, February 18, 1966, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

⁸⁴ Marge Piercy, 'Grand Coolie Damn' in Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood*, pp. 424-7.

⁸⁵ Nick Egleson, quoted in *Liberation*, April 1970, quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 356.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 168.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 168.

and think for themselves...it would translate as sexism under the guise of ideological struggle'. The men were the experts and women didn't know anything'.⁸⁸ Judy Baker recalled that she 'would get up at meetings and I would demand to be the chair person...people would get very angry at me'.⁸⁹ Machismo, typically, was also a factor. 'As SDS grew', maintained Vivian Rothstein, 'without time and opportunity to get to know people well, people were judged by how often (or loudly) they spoke. Macho', she added, 'seemed to flourish in that scene'.⁹⁰

There were women who assumed leadership positions in SDS. Jane Adams served as National Secretary between 1965-66 and Bernadine Dohrn was Inter-Organizational Secretary between 1968-9.⁹¹ Helen Garvy was also assistant national secretary in 1964. She downplays the possible discrimination that restricted women's official roles. 'There were', she asserts, 'women on the national council [in] very important positions and many women active (and leaders) on the chapter level'.⁹² However, women in leadership positions were very much in the minority, and only Adams, and Dohrn became national officers throughout the whole of the 1960s. 'On the one hand', Bernadine Dohrn asserted, 'I felt that I was often caricatured, stereotyped, diminished. On the other hand', she added, 'I felt like [I] was an important role model'.⁹³ Jane Adams also stressed the mixed feelings that her assumption of a national role awakened. 'I was coerced into doing it, felt I was out of my element', she asserted, 'but others saw me as a bridge between the Old Guard and the new folks. Organising conferences was my cup of tea, but managing an office and an organisation, with all

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.178.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 169.

⁹⁰ Rothstein, OOI.

⁹¹ Sale, SDS, p. 664.

⁹² Garvy OOI.

⁹³ Dohrn, quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, p. 167.

the politics that entails, was not'.⁹⁴ She also identified the intimidatory effect that her change in status had on men. 'It was very clear', she explained, 'that my being an independent woman was having some fairly serious consequences on my sex life'.⁹⁵

Sexist attitudes were widespread, and impeded women's progress in SDS. Despite the previous occasions where women had identified the problems of chauvinism, the issue had not been resolved. Indeed, with the organisation's preoccupation with violence, combative action and rhetoric, and its embrace of the counterculture's sexualisation of women, machismo (and the sexism that accompanied it) grew more overt and prevalent in the latter years of SDS.

As in the counterculture, women were still expected to perform the traditional women's role, and to fulfil their domestic duties. 'I felt used', Betty Chewing described, '[because of] the kinds of things which I had to do in the organization, which included mimeoing, typing, secretarial types of things, but when it came to making real decisions about marches, when and where, what would be the content of speeches...the decisions were already reached by the time I was involved in it'.⁹⁶ Beth Ogelsby, SDSer and future participant in the women's collective Bread and Roses, complained that '[w]omen were doing too much of the office work. Women were doing the footwork of the organising....They were doing the phone stuff. They were doing the mailings'.⁹⁷ This prejudice was apparent at national and local level of SDS. 'Columbia SDS', asserted Sharon Krebs, 'was completely sexist'. She told how Columbia leader and future Weatherman Mark Rudd would order that 'someone get

⁹⁴ Adams, OOI.

⁹⁵ Adams, quoted in Klatch, *Generation*, pp. 167-8.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 177.

⁹⁷ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 168.

me a chick to do some typing'.⁹⁸ Marge Piercy's frustration and suffering in light of similar experiences caused her to attack the movement and its sexism.

If the rewards are concentrated at the top, the shitwork is concentrated at the bottom. The real basis is the largely unpaid, female labor force that does the daily work...There is no prestige whatsoever attached to actually working. Workers are invisible...The production of abstract analysis about what should be done and production of technical jargon are far more admired than what is called by everybody shitwork.⁹⁹

This chauvinism was apparent in the pages of SDS's in-house newspaper, *New Left Notes*. A 1967 letter from Neil Buckley to *New Left Notes*, observed a 'definite feminine touch. What other leftist publications' he asked, 'runs a half a page recipe for bean soup?'.¹⁰⁰ A seductively positioned and scantily clad woman with long blond hair adorned a page of June 1967's *New Left Notes*. 'There is a certain type of women who reads *New Left Notes*', the advert stated.¹⁰¹ Other statements made through the pages of SDS's weekly magazine were more sinister, deliberately belittling or mocking women and their demand for equality and respect through sexist or dismissive imagery. It was with the advent of the emergence of a feminist consciousness within SDS that the backlash was the most vitriolic. In the wake of the women's liberation workshop at SDS's June 1967 convention, the editors of *New Left Notes*, printed, next to the statement of events, a picture of a woman wearing a polka dot mini skirt and matching (and visible) underwear holding the sign 'We want our rights and we want them now'. Moreover, an editorial comment on the workshop's statement, seemed encouraging, but was undermined by its flippant and dismissive

⁹⁸ Lader, *Power*, p. 293.

⁹⁹ Piercy, 'Grand Coolie Damn', in Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood*, p. 424.

¹⁰⁰ *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 59.

¹⁰¹ *NLN*, June 26, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

language; 'be it resolved, baby, that the National Council suggests to all SDS organisations that they encourage the formation of women's liberation workshops and projects'.¹⁰²

Indeed, it was at the 1967 conference that the full extent of SDS's chauvinism towards women, which was evident at all levels of the organisation, became fully apparent in a public arena and at a national event. A statement from the women's workshop at the conference, drafted by Jane Adams, Susan Cloke, Jean Peak and Elizabeth Sutherland stressed the women's position:

Women, because of their colonial relationship to men, have to fight for their own independence....Only independent women can be truly effective in the larger revolutionary struggle....People who identify with the movement must recognise the necessity for the liberation of women...

1) We demand that our brothers...deal with their own problems of male chauvinism in their own personal, social and political relationships.

2) ...We call upon women to demand full participation in all aspects of movement work, from licking stamps to assuming leadership positions.

The struggle for liberation of women must be part of the larger fight for human freedom. We recognise the difficulty that our brothers will have in dealing with male chauvinism and we will assume our full responsibility in helping to resolve the contradiction. Freedom Now! We love you!¹⁰³

This statement, asserted Kirkpatrick Sale, was approved 'with a great deal of uneasiness from the men'.¹⁰⁴ Sara Evans was more strident in her telling of events. She maintained that after the statement had been read, '[t]he meeting hall erupted.

¹⁰² *NLN*, October 23, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁰³ *NLN*, July 10, 1967, in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

Men were yelling, arguing, cursing, objecting all over the floor....When someone proposed that all discussion on the issue involve only women there was applause. Some men were furious. They thought the analysis was stupid....The women had hit a nerve. They were on the verge of declaring independence, and men were not willing to grant that they had rights to self-determination analogous to those the movement accorded blacks'. Evans also stressed the hostile tone of the meeting. 'Apparently the discussion', she emphasised, 'was a hard one for men even to listen to, and they retaliated by creating a "constant hubbub" of noise interspersed with derisive hoots and catcalls'.¹⁰⁵ Don McKelvey wrote that 'men were noisy throughout...in objection to unamendable women's resolution on grounds of participatory democracy'. The men's reactions to the statement, he added, highlighted 'the existence of a really vicious and deep-seated sexual caste system'.¹⁰⁶

Just as Mary King and Casey Hayden's 1965 Sex and Caste memo was a spark for the early tide of feminism, so the 1967 women's workshop's statement was the inspiration for hundreds and thousands of women in late SDS. Moreover, unlike the women in 1965, this rising feminist consciousness within SDS would not abate. This impulse within the organisation was not to be overwhelmed by events such as the anti-war and anti-draft opposition, or by the rapidly expanding movement that derailed the first wave of protest in the 1960s. Indeed, this second wave, consisting of increasing numbers of SDS women, had more ammunition, was angrier about women's situation in the movement and was resolute in its determination not to be diverted from the path towards women's liberation. If SDS was not prepared to change its ways, then some

¹⁰⁴ Sale, *SDS*, p. 362.

¹⁰⁵ Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 191-2.

¹⁰⁶ Don McKelvey, 'Thoughts on the Convention', in *NLN*, August 21, 1967, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

amongst this second wave of women in the organisation were more than ready to split with the group, its prejudice and its machismo, and set out for their own feminist agenda.

Other factors contributed towards certain SDS women's desire for a change in the political landscape, as they were influenced by discourses propounded by the black and white New Left, and then identified aspects of these conceptual frameworks to appropriate for the emerging women's movement. The ethos behind black nationalism was a key inspiration. The Black Power notion of organising around their own oppression, taking pride in themselves and promoting their own political unity in the face of white oppression, resonated with feminists in SDS, who also spoke of a colonial relationship between men and women in the organisation. Indeed, the correlation between, 'treatment of Negroes and [the] treatment of women in our society as a whole' was noted by Mary King and Casey Hayden in 1965.¹⁰⁷

By 1967, with the advent of Black Power and the emergence of a feminist consciousness in SDS, this notion had even more relevance, and Jane Adams *et al* appropriated the language of Black Power to identify that their own oppression was similar to that faced by both African-Americans and the Vietnamese. Significantly, no self-respecting radical in 1967 would fail to acknowledge the plight of these two persecuted groups. 'As we analyze the position of women in capitalist society', they told the 1967 National Convention, 'we find that women are in a colonial relationship to men and we recognise ourselves as part of the third world'.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, it was not

¹⁰⁷ Mary King, Casey Hayden, 'Sex and Caste', November 18, 1965, reproduced in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 235.

¹⁰⁸ *NLN*, July 10, 1967, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

only in their treatment by men that women's liberationists utilised black nationalists' discourse of colonialism. As Alice Echols emphasised, by the late 1960s they also 'made women's bodies the site of political contestation' and challenged 'tyrannical beauty standards, violence against women, women's sexual alienation, the compulsory character of heterosexuality and its origin around male pleasure and women's lack of reproductive control'.¹⁰⁹

Women were also inspired by the creation of alternative political parties that worked outside the system, such as the establishment of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the legacy left by the Freedom Schools in the Freedom Summer Project, which championed the cause of the oppressed in a political setting that was outside the establishment. Moreover, in adopting rhetoric spoken by senior figures in the African-American struggle such as Stokely Carmichael's 'every Negro is a potential black man' slogan, women's liberationists emphasised the possibility of a political awakening existing within everyone (ignoring Carmichael's latent sexism) and, Echols asserts, 'unlearn[ed] niceness, and challenged the taboo against female self assertion'.¹¹⁰ As Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt explained, 'The most exciting thing to come out of the women's movement so far is a new daring...to tear down old structures and assumptions and let real thought and feeling flow'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Alice Echols, 'Women's Liberation and Sixties Radicalism', in David Farber (ed.), *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 158.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 164; See Carmichael 'A Declaration of War', in Teodori Massimo (ed.), *The New Left: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 277. The sexism evident in the black nationalist movement is discussed in Chapter Three.

¹¹¹ Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt 'editorial' in Firestone/Koedt (ed.), 'Notes From the Second Year' in *ibid*, p. 164.

Women's liberationists were also motivated by concepts and discourses that came out of the white left. The notion of participatory democracy that emanated in the early years of SDS and was increasingly being sidelined within the mass organisation of late SDS, was a key influence of radical feminism. Women also appropriated the concepts that the 'personal is political', which had its roots in C. Wright Mills' writings and was the main philosophy evident in the Port Huron Statement. These tropes set in motion the ideas that would inspire women to look inward and politicise their own personal lives and critique marriage, family and sexuality.

Moreover, the motivation that women gained from black nationalist ideology was supplemented by the students as the new working - class theory that circulated in SDS in the spring of 1967. This too was, in part, inspired by Black Power, as it urged students to look to their own oppression. Students were, the theory went, being trained and socialised in universities to perform the roles of educated clerical, service and professional workers. These jobs, SDS argued, were the key components that constituted the modern working - class in the emerging high tech American society in the 1960s. 'We must stop apologising', asserted the theory's originator Greg Calvert, 'for being students or organising students'. 'Students', he argued, 'are in fact a key group in the creation of the productive forces of this super-technological capitalism. We have organised them out of their own alienation from the multiversity and have raised the demand for "student control"'. 'We can see', he added, 'that it was a mistake to assume that the only radical role that students could play would be as organisers of other classes'.¹¹² At the 1966 Iowa convention, Carl Davidson argued that universities were reproducing on campus 'all the conditions and relations of corporate capitalism -

¹¹² Greg Calvert, 'In White America', quoted in Sale *SDS*, pp. 339-40.

isolation, manipulation and alienation'.¹¹³ As Kirkpartick Sale emphasised, 'liberals operate out of other people's oppression; the radical operates out of his own'.¹¹⁴

Although the focus of attention was different, women in SDS were motivated by the introspective nature of the new working - class theory and were inspired by what had attracted them to the black nationalists' message and the tropes laid down in the Port Huron Statement; the concept of making the subjective experience the definitive one. Women's liberationists took Greg Calvert's assertions that 'the student movement has to develop an image of its own revolution...instead of believing that you're a revolutionary because you're related to Fidel's struggle, Stokely's struggle, always someone else's struggle', and reconstituted them to fit their own particular conflict.¹¹⁵ Kathie Amatniek identified SDS's new working - class theory as the main influence on her turn towards women's liberation. She was not active in any specific movement organisation and was made aware of SDS's new philosophy, "to fight against your own oppression" by a friend. It was, paraphrased Evans, the 'final theoretical link needed to become a full-blown, single-minded radical feminist'.¹¹⁶

The National Convention for New Politics (in August 1967) marked the ultimate insult for women in SDS, and in the wider movement, and was the last snub that impelled them to break away from the established left, and organise on their own behalf. The convention was rife with disagreements, highlighting the fractured nature of the movement. The primary focus of discord was the obvious tension between

¹¹³ Carl Davidson, 'The New Radicals in the Multiversity' SDS Pamphlet, in Allen J Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), p. 324.

¹¹⁴ Sale, *SDS*, p. 340.

¹¹⁵ Greg Calvert interviewed in *The Movement* 3 (1967), p. 6

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 174.

races, as white delegates hoped for an interracial coalition, while the black caucus either favoured separatism or advocated working with whites on their own terms. Indeed SNCC chairman H. Rap Brown refused to talk to whites and argued that the leadership of the movement 'should always remain in the hands of the dispossessed'.¹¹⁷ However, there was further friction at the conference caused by the issue of women's oppression and movement chauvinism. Certain female delegates organised a women's caucus, and from it, Jo Freeman and Shulamith Firestone drafted a resolution that demanded that the convention condemn the mass media for 'perpetuating the stereotype of women as always in an auxiliary position to men [and as] sex objects', and support the 'revamping of marriage, divorce and property laws'. They also called for 'complete control by women of their own bodies, the dissemination of birth control information to all women regardless of their age and marital status, and the removal of all prohibition against abortion'.¹¹⁸ When the women came to present their resolution to the convention, however, they were preempted by a discussion of the oppressed status of the American Indian, and were not allowed to present their statement. To compound the insult, the chair of the panel 'patted Shulie [Firestone] on the head and said "move on little girl; we have more important things to talk about here than discuss women's liberation"'. 'That', according to Jo Freeman, 'was the genesis. We had a meeting the next week with women in Chicago'.¹¹⁹

Of course, there was another strand of feminism, which had blazed the trail for women before the emergence of radical feminism in the latter half of the decade.

¹¹⁷ This account of the NCNP is taken from Echols, *Daring*, pp. 46-9.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in *ibid*, p. 48.

¹¹⁹ Jo Freeman, quoted in *ibid*, p. 49.

Indeed, liberal feminism had been inspired by Betty Friedan's 1963 polemic *The Feminine Mystique*, and according to Douglas Tallack 'inaugurated the second wave of the women's movement'.¹²⁰ Liberal feminism appealed to women who were the subject of Friedan's book, the 'suburban wife as she made the beds, shopped for groceries...ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies lay beside her husband at night afraid to ask even of herself the silent question, "is this all?"'.¹²¹ Friedan helped to found the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966 which primarily addressed institutional reforms and the issue of childcare, but also built on *The Feminine Mystique* which was instrumental in the rejection of women's role being defined by their biology as nurturing, domestically orientated and sexually passive. Moreover, because of its emphasis on legal advancement, NOW sought to work within the system. In 1967 it drew up a Bill of Rights, calling for an equal rights constitutional amendment, anti-sex discrimination legislation, maternity benefits, childcare provision and women's rights to control their own reproductive lives.¹²²

NOW was overwhelmingly situated within the mainstream and appealed to the predominant white, middle-class suburban women who were depicted in *The Feminine Mystique* and who bought it as an indicator towards improving their situation. However, whilst appealing to the experiences of the majority of women, NOW failed to attract and hold onto the support of those outside the mainstream; black and white working-class women, radicals and lesbians all were distanced from Friedan and NOW's liberal vision. Its desire to cast off society's constraints and

¹²⁰ Douglas Tallack, *Twentieth Century America: The Intellectual and Cultural Context* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), p. 282.

¹²¹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 9

¹²² Tallack, *Twentieth Century America*, p. 291.

change the public world so that women became accommodated and immersed in the mainstream highlighted the differences between liberal and radical feminists, as liberals sought to work within the system and did not seek the major overhaul that the radical feminists demanded. The two wings of feminism in the 1960s did have significant effects on each other. As Alice Echols detailed, 'radical feminists succeeded in pushing liberal feminists to the left'. By 1969 Betty Friedan had declared that NOW women must 'form a power bloc or alliance' with women's liberation groups, whose 'style, origins, structure and general ambitions might be quite different from ours'.¹²³ Furthermore, certain radical feminists gaining important political training within NOW, and women such as Ti-Grace Atkinson and Kate Millett were members of the New York chapter of NOW, although the associations, particularly between Atkinson and the NOW leadership ended in disillusionment and acrimony.¹²⁴ Women's liberationists condemned the tactics and integrationist approach of Friedan and NOW, claiming that by the nature of its mainstream positioning, the organisation ignored the racial and class inequalities on which the mainstream was founded, and which NOW was committed to integrating.¹²⁵ Essentially, the organisation was, according to other feminists, 'the NAACP of the women's movement'.¹²⁶ 'NOW is essentially an organisation', wrote Robin Morgan, 'that wants reforms about [sic] the second class citizenship of women - and this is where it differs drastically from the rest of the Women's Liberation Movement'.¹²⁷

¹²³ Echols, *Daring*, p. 4. Friedan quoted in *ibid*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p.167. See pp. 167-9 for a assessment of Atkinson's time in NOW and her increasing disillusionment with liberal feminism.

¹²⁵ Echols, 'Women's Liberation', in Farber (ed.), *Sixties*. pp. 156-7.

¹²⁶ Robin Morgan, Introduction to Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood*, p. xxii.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. xxii.

Often women from SDS were at the forefront of the impulse towards radical feminism within and outside the movement. SDSers such as Heather Booth, Sara Evans, Vivian Rothstein, Sue Munaker, Evelyn Goldfield, Naomi Weisstein and Linda Freeman arranged meetings for the Chicago group of women directly in the wake of the NCNP. In Washington DC, SDS women included Marilyn Webb and Barbara Haber.¹²⁸ The other prominent women's group formed at the end of 1967, New York Radical Women, had fewer organisational ties to the left and was on the 'Movement's periphery, rather than at its epicenter'.¹²⁹ Its members' frustration and anger at their current situation was apparent in articles published in *New Left Notes*, or in the SDS papers. Many of the articles stressed similar issues and concerns, although certain publications took the 'politico' or 'radical' line, highlighting the split that characterised the women's liberation movement at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s.

Much of the documentation on women's liberation referred to the similar status of women and blacks. Anne Koedt's *Women and the Radical Movement*, signed by SDSers including Leni Wildflower (then Zeiger), stressed the 'strong parallels between the liberation of women and the black power struggle, being oppressed', she argued, 'by similar psychological/economic dynamics'. Koedt also saw similarities in these two 'oppressed groups' acceptance of 'their inferior-colonial-secondary status'. 'Taught self hatred, they identify with the oppressor...thus such phenomenon [sic] as blacks straightening their hair...and women responding in horror at the thought of a women president'.¹³⁰ 'Women recognise that they are not really liberated', maintained Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker and Heather Booth in *Women in the Radical*

¹²⁸ Echols, *Daring*, pp. 65-74.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹³⁰ Anne Koedt, 'Women and the Radical Movement', in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 123.

Movement. 'All women', they contended, 'like all black people, share a common oppression'.¹³¹ Beverley Jones and Judith Brown, both former CORE and SDS members, also saw an 'exact parallel between the role of women and the role of black people in this society', in their June 1968 article *Toward a Female Liberation Movement*. 'Together', they argued, '[women and blacks] constitute the great maintenance force sustaining the white American male. They wipe his ass and breast feed him when he is little...and all through his life they...sew for him, stoop for him, cook for him, clean for him, sweep, run errands, haul away his garbage, and nurse him when his frail body falters'.¹³² 'We, as radical political people', Marilyn Webb asserted, 'have learned from...the Vietnamese and black people...we saw ourselves as colonized in the same way that [Franz] Fanon described the Algerians'.¹³³

Indeed Webb was also one of many emerging feminists to focus on the unfavourable perception of women and the dominance of the masculine over feminine traits. 'Women', Webb argued, 'are treated as a colonized class that is incapable of intellectual thought and analysis. We are made to feel that the traditional view of women as feather-headed, frivolous and infantile is indeed the case'.¹³⁴ This idea, that women were slaves to their biological make-up and the perception that all women displayed traditional female attributes, was, women charged, prevalent throughout society and was also endemic in the Movement and in SDS. Goldfield, Booth and Munaker asserted that,

¹³¹ Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker, Heather Booth, 'Women in the Radical Movement' (draft version) in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹³² Beverley Jones and Judith Brown, 'Toward a Female Liberation Movement', in *ibid*, S33 No. 122.

¹³³ Marilyn S. Webb, 'Women: We Have a Common Enemy', in *NLN*, June 10, 1968 in *ibid*, S3 No. 210.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, S3 No. 210.

Women are taught to play a passive and secondary role in society. If they are often petty, concerned with trivia, ignorant, submissive...institutions which are set up and run by men educate and shape them for their feminine role. Myths have always defined the essence of 'true women'...woman is wife, mother, sexual object. She was given to man to comfort and serve him. She is submissive, gentle, emotionally sensitive, intuitive, chaste. She is weak, unable to cope with the world without a man, not given to thinking and acting rationally...Our desire is for a society which brings out the best traits in every human being...which is not based on notions of masculinity and femininity.¹³⁵

Women's previous lack of control over their self-definition was a key factor in male domination, and feminists urged women to challenge their prescribed role and to regain control over their own image. 'Women must learn', asserted Anne Koedt, 'what the specific methods used [by the 'System' are that] convince her she is at all times secondary to man and that her life is defined in terms of him'.¹³⁶ Sue Munaker saw that 'we need to seek our own identity so that each of us can live a full life, not only in relation to men, but for ourselves...We need to redefine ourselves as women'.¹³⁷ Naomi Jaffe and Bernadine Dohrn's confrontational language impelled women to reject the social and cultural perceptions of women as subordinates. 'Women are culturally manipulated', they argued, 'to see that our work loads are of secondary importance...and told to find fulfilment at home when employment is slack...Women

¹³⁵ Goldfield, Booth, Munaker, 'Women', in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹³⁶ Koedt, 'Women', in *ibid*, S3 No. 123.

¹³⁷ Munaker, 'A Call', in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

power is the power to destroy a destructive system by refusing to play the part(s) assigned to us by it'.¹³⁸

These radical women also turned their criticism to the movement that they were part of, attacking men in the New Left for judging women and allocating them menial tasks purely as a result of their biology. Men in the movement, they insisted, also defined women and constructed a passive identity for them. This analysis built on the women's statement at the 1967 SDS convention, and recycled many of the grievances that SDS women had articulated from the organisation's inception; that despite presenting an image of an inclusive and representative society, women would still be marginalised within SDS.

'We realise', Jaffe and Dohrn asserted, 'that women are organised into the movement by men and continue to relate to it through men. We find', they went on, 'that the difficulty that women have in taking initiative and in acting and speaking in a political context is a consequence of internalizing the view that men define reality and women are defined in terms of men'.¹³⁹ Marilyn Webb maintained that 'only certain roles are open to women in the movement. Women do office work and even run offices, but are discouraged from articulating political positions and from taking organisational leadership'. 'This', she argued, 'exemplified women's position within society, but is even more degrading in the context of a political and social movement for equality amongst all'.¹⁴⁰ Women 'who have played passive political roles--the legendary followers and shit worker' participate in women's meetings', according to Goldfield,

¹³⁸ Naomi Jaffe and Bernadine Dohrn, 'The Look is You: Toward a Strategy for Radical Women', in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹³⁹ Jaffe/Dohrn, 'The Look', in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹⁴⁰ Webb, 'Women' in *ibid*, S3 No. 97.

Booth and Munaker, are 'talk[ing] about feelings of inadequacy...about how men often refuse to take us seriously, about the difficulties of being both a woman and an articulate, responsible political person'.¹⁴¹ Jones and Brown were the most strident in their attack on male chauvinism. They asserted that the 'equality between the sexes in the movement is non-existent. Women are silent at meetings....Men formally or informally chair the meetings. Women, like all good secretaries', they noted, 'take notes, circulate lists, provide ashtrays, or prepare or serve refreshments'. Refuting the 'erroneous assumptions of the female caucus at the 1967 SDS convention' they emphasised male SDSers' opposition to women's liberation. 'Radical men are not fighting for women's liberation', Jones and Brown contended, 'and in fact become quite queasy when the topic is broached. Indeed, in plain and urgent language, they maintained that women must seize the initiative and liberate themselves. The females in SDS [need to realise]' they added 'that no sweet-talking list of grievances and demands, no appeal to male conscience...is going to get power for women'.¹⁴²

Indeed, it was women's reaction to how they could achieve their liberation that caused a schism in this emerging movement, between so-called politicians and radicals. As Alice Echols explained, 'most early women's liberation groups were dominated by "politicos"...[;] "radical feminists"...were an embattled minority in the movement's infancy'.¹⁴³ Politicos such as Jaffe and Dohrn, Marilyn Webb, Munaker, Booth and Goldfield all pledged their primary loyalty to the left. They wanted to confront leftist males with their sexism from their position connected to the movement and make them acknowledge that male chauvinism was a problem rife, not only in society, but

¹⁴¹ Goldfield, Munaker, Booth, 'Women', in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹⁴² Jones/Brown, 'Toward' in *ibid*, S3 No. 122.

¹⁴³ Echols, *Daring*, p. 3.

in SDS and the left itself. They also subscribed to the popular radical left's thinking in the late 1960s that the fundamental problems of society were rooted in capitalism. Marilyn Webb's polemic encapsulated the politico stance. She envisaged organising around 'corporate power, militarism, poverty, Vietnam and the 1968 election. We spoke of freedom', she emphasised, 'in the context of a broader social and political analysis that included a denunciation of corporate capitalism and its crutch, imperialist intervention'. 'We want to organise for our own equality', she stressed, 'within this broader issue'.¹⁴⁴ Bernadine Dohrn remained firmly within SDS and was a key player in Weatherman faction as the organisation imploded in the late 1960s.

Radical feminists, however, such as Beverly Jones and Judith Brown and Anne Koedt, rejected the notion that the movement was willing to change its sexist ways, and refuted the idea that all of women's problems stemmed from capitalism, placing gender above class in their political analysis. They were disgusted with the movement, its institutional sexism and its unwillingness to change, and called for women to turn their backs on the organisation where many radical feminists had gained their political awakening, and forge their own separatist path. 'The best thing' asserted Beverly Jones and Judith Brown summing up the radicals' position, 'that may happen to potentially radical young women, is that they will be driven out of [SDS]. They will be forced to stop fighting for the movement and start fighting primarily for women's liberation'. 'Women', they emphasised, 'must resist pressure to enter into movement activities on their own....The most serious problem for the movement, is not the war, the draft, the presidency, the racial problem, but our own problem'.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Marilyn S. Webb, 'Women', in *NLN* June 10, 1968, in *SDS Papers*, S3 No. 210.

¹⁴⁵ Jones/Brown, 'Toward', in *ibid*, S3 No. 123.

Thus, by the end of 1968, women had made an initial and sustained challenge to the male domination and chauvinism of SDS and the wider leftist Movement. The split between politicians and feminists in the burgeoning women's movement added to the discord and fragmentation of SDS by 1968. The organisation had changed enormously since the first wave of women's consciousness in 1965; thousands poured into SDS, spurred by their frustration at the ongoing Vietnam War, their opposition to the draft, and by emerging black nationalism. All of these events forced American leftists to look introspectively at the capitalist system on which their country was founded, and many began to ally themselves with the black nationalists' perspective that capitalism was fundamentally flawed. Both leaders and supporters of SDS rapidly began to see revolutionary socialism as the panacea to society's ills, and this revolutionary rhetoric was often presented in aggressive and confrontational language. Gender played a vital role in late SDS. The counterculture, with its permissive attitudes to sex and drugs, ushered in a sexual awakening for many women in SDS and had an important effect on gender roles. Women became more sexually active and enjoyed more sexual partners, yet this supposed sexual liberation was a double-edged sword for women, who were expected to engage in sex with abandon, whilst also being expected to fulfil the traditional female domestic role. Many women were exploited sexually, and had to contend with explicit and sexist slogans and images which adorned the leftist press, including SDS's very own *New Left Notes*. The sexualisation of women epitomised the machismo that prevailed in both the counterculture and SDS as revolutionaries sought to prove themselves by the notches on their bedpost. Access to the upper echelons of power was often women's reward for these liaisons. The structure of SDS, despite efforts to make it more representative

was still elitist and male dominated, and the sheer size of the movement by 1968 ensured that the vast majority of women were more marginalised than ever. Indeed, only two women ever made it to the upper echelons of power in the SDS National Council.

Significantly, whilst the rise of Black Power had had a important effect on SDS and its move along a socialist trajectory, the ethos of black nationalism also had a key impact on women within SDS and the wider movement. Radical women were greatly influenced by the Black Power notion of organising against their own oppression. No longer prepared to wait for equality within the movement and within society, women saw the opportunity to present their case to the organisation at the 1967 SDS conference and the NCNP convention. Faced with opposition, hostility and even ridicule at gatherings most likely (theoretically) to be supportive of women's calls for equality, women had had enough, and took an active stance to follow in the footsteps of black nationalists and seize the opportunity to combat their own oppression. The question of whether this should be through the rapidly imploding organ of SDS, or through a completely separate women's movement, would be fought over in the following two years between the politicos and the radicals of the emerging women's movement. In SDS, a small and committed subgroup, Weatherman, was emerging to challenge for the leadership of the organisation. Revolutionary Marxist-Leninists, with politico Bernadine Dohrn in its ranks, Weatherman had a novel approach to the question of women's equality and with its aggressive language and confrontational tactics, had a contribution to make to the machismo that was enveloping SDS by the end of 1968.

Chapter Six

Weatherman

By 1969, SDS was disintegrating as an organisation and Weatherman emerged as both a cause and as a consequence of this descent into factionalism and chaos. The final death knells for SDS were heard at its national convention held in Chicago in June 1969, as Progressive Labor (PL) and Weatherman asserted their individual claims to SDS's radical mantle. This chapter charts the rise of Weatherman, concluding at the end of 1970. A particularly salient year in the chronology of Weatherman, 1970 saw the Greenwich Village townhouse bombing which killed 3 Weather people, effectively heralding the end of Weather's public existence as the successors to SDS's throne of radicalism, and signalling the beginning of the group's solely underground existence.¹

This chapter discusses the pivotal role that gender played in Weatherman, and reflects on the considerable effects that both traditional and unconventional constructions of masculinity and femininity had on the philosophies and dynamics of the group. Machismo and identity had a significant impact on gender relations within Weatherman. This analysis will show how the group's aggressive discourse and violent tactics were fundamental to their beliefs and that they had a profound effect on

¹ Throughout this analysis, the terms Weatherman and the abbreviated Weather are interchangeable. This is purely for the purposes of avoiding undue repetition. However, it is important to recognise that, in a contemporary timeframe, both sexes were referred to as Weatherman. It was only later in Weatherman's existence that the sexism inherent in this terminology was fully recognised and Weatherman as a name was changed to the more gender neutral Weather Underground.

the creation of both individual and collective macho identities. Both sexes utilised aggressive language to advocate and execute armed struggle and great importance was placed on displays of machismo and strength amongst both sexes. The group sought to create a collective Weather identity where the individual persona, both politically and personally was focused on the revolutionary struggle. Weather's rejection of monogamy was viewed as a liberating and holistic experience by male and female Weather members, but it also fuelled macho attitudes within the group. Radical feminists were amongst some of the group's severest critics. This chapter also considers how machismo affected women in Weatherman. The construction of macho identities was encouraged amongst female Weather members, as the group correlated strong revolutionary women with the achievement of revolution. Ultimately the analysis reveals that Weatherman's focus on machismo, aggression and confrontation, *did not preclude* the existence of women who became leaders of the group or who successfully exercised influence in Weatherman. Macho in the group did inhibit individuals, but it was also a tool of political expression, a desperate last throw of the dice, that proved beguiling in an era where the majority of political means of expression had been tried and proved wanting. Weatherman, however, only offered men and women in the group a very narrow outlet down which they could funnel this desperation at the political climate.

Weatherman emerged out of the SDS faction RYM, which was named because of its support for Mike Klonsky's 1968 essay 'Towards a Revolutionary Youth Movement'. Klonsky's piece was highly influential to the founders of Weatherman. He saw youth as a revolutionary class in itself, and argued that to achieve revolution in the United States, organisers should go beyond the narrow confines of students who were

primarily middle - class to 'build links through working class youth to the working class [in order] to bring the dynamic of the student movement to the workers'. The influx of youth into the working class, Klonsky argued, would increase militancy. Youth would become the focus of organising efforts, as young people both felt their oppression more tangibly because of the draft, poor jobs and schooling, and, because of the nature of youth culture, had already laid the base for revolution in their embrace of anti-establishment ideas.² Interestingly, Klonsky himself established a rival group to Weatherman, entitled RYM II, which, whilst also stressing the revolutionary importance of the working class youth and recognising Weather's anti-imperialist framework, were less disposed towards violence and took a more sympathetic approach towards the traditional working classes.³

Marxist rhetoric came to be the dominant political philosophy within SDS by the end of the 1960s. Marxism was embraced by both sides of the SDS divide, Progressive Labor (PL) and Weatherman. PL and Weather differed in their particular doctrine of Marxism and in the interpretation of working class, as well as in their differing lifestyles. PL originated in 1962, taking up an ultra-leftist position causing the group to be expelled from the Communist party. The group was committed to Maoist thought and placed total emphasis on the revolutionary potential of the industrial working class in the United States. It asserted that it was the American working class and not peasant workers in the Third World or minorities in the US that would overthrow capitalism.

² Much of this synthesis of the Klonsky's essay was influenced by the analysis in Ron Jacobs, *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), pp. 19-20.

³ Allen J. Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984), p. 339.

In 1966, PL joined SDS *en masse*, seeking to gain recruits and influence.⁴ Indeed, their power within the organisation increased with the rise in Marxist-Leninist thought within SDS as the 1960s progressed. As Todd Gitlin asserted, 'PL helped to Marxise SDS, and PL fattened, parasitically, as Marxism and then Marxist-Leninism became SDS's unofficial language'. 'After PL', he added, 'Marxism entered SDS as a way to make respectable the idea' of them for itself.⁵ Bernadine Dohrn, a key Weather figure, declared herself as 'revolutionary Communist' on her election as interorganizational secretary at the 1968 SDS convention.⁶ 'You have to [read Marx and Lenin]', stated Weatherman Jeff Jones, 'if you are serious about making a revolution...all of your energy had to be geared toward creating the most perfect form of human organisation—the Leninist Party'.⁷ Bill Ayers helped to explain that Weather's embrace of Marxism was partly a result of the rise of PL within SDS. As 'they kept growing in strength...we had to know Marxism in order to talk to the Marxists, so we became Marxists ourselves', he asserted, 'even though we were the silliest, least intellectual group of Marxists ever'.⁸ By 1967, PL was gaining further influence within SDS and PL's membership increased as the group made a determined effort to recruit SDSers through the 'worker student alliance' (WSA) programme.⁹ In this, PLers urged students to unite with the working class in supporting strike actions, advancing campus workers demands and involving workers in anti-war protest.¹⁰

⁴ Matusow, *Unravelling*, p. 336.

⁵ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 383.

⁶ Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: the New Left, the New Right and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 191.

⁷ Jeff Jones, Oral History Collection Columbia University (hereafter OHC CU), p. 1–88.

⁸ Bill Ayers quoted in Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience Through the Eyes of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 317.

⁹ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 190.

¹⁰ Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS*, (New York: Random House 1973), p. 333.

Although PL rode the Marxist wave within SDS and Weatherman shared a commitment to the doctrine of Marx and Lenin, there were fundamental differences between the two factions. Whilst Weatherman was dedicated to the liberating experiences that came from experimenting with the drugs and sex of the youth culture, PL had a very puritanical approach and outlook. As PL national leader Steve Goldstein saw drugs as 'an impediment to building a movement; one couldn't organise whilst being stoned'. '[D]rugs', he explained were 'an avenue by which the government could infiltrate the movement'.¹¹ Other PLers saw the counterculture as a flight from realism. 'I liked the music and I certainly liked the sexual liberation of the sixties...', Norm Davies maintained, '[but]...my recollection of the sixties and early seventies was not a period of sitting back and taking drugs and listening to revolutionary music and so on but grueling hard work [and] enormous tension....So I saw', he went on, 'the cultural revolution... as a great diversion. I thought [communes and alternative lifestyles] was just pure escapism'.¹² Moreover, taking drugs, growing long hair, wearing denim and communal living were all seen by PL as evidence of a bourgeois approach to life that characterised the youth culture and that would alienate the workers that the group was determined to recruit to their revolutionary cause.¹³ Kirkpatrick Sale described certain PL men as 'noticeable for their purposely straight hair, starched workshirts and coats and ties, fifties short hair and smooth-shaven faces'.¹⁴

¹¹ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 143.

¹² Quoted in *ibid*, p. 144.

¹³ See Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 121-3.

¹⁴ Sale, *SDS*, p. 456.

Politically, there were also important differences between PL and Weather. Although self-entitled Maoists, PL followed a traditionally Marxist line. They denounced the violent rhetoric and action that enraptured the New Left by the late 1960s, as it isolated workers, and instead advocated what became known as 'base-building'. 'Our ability', asserted Rosen, 'to grow from [open agitation] to this has been very limited. People in the community are not ready to organize directly against the war...under revolutionary banners....We reject tactics like "resistance" because these tactics will not only isolate radicals from workers, but from other students and intellectuals that could be won'.¹⁵

PL also differed from Weather in its approach to racism and to the African-American liberation struggle, believing that racism was a device of the ruling classes to divide the working classes, and arguing against a separate black struggle as it divided the workers and therefore potentially would derail the revolution. Blacks, PL argued, were the most exploited of the working class, and therefore needed to align with the workers in the fight against capitalism in America.¹⁶ A 1969 PL statement explained that 'It is in the class interests of U.S imperialists to promote nationalist ideas amongst workers since it divides them from loyalty to their own class'. 'Nationalism', it maintained, 'is a bourgeois idea, which infects workers and prevents them from winning their freedom from the capitalist class'.¹⁷ Thus, whilst Weatherman revered the Black Panthers as the leaders of the revolutionary struggle and, as we have seen in a previous chapter, formed an ill-fated alliance with them, PL asserted that the

¹⁵ Milt Rosen, 'Build a Base in the Working Class', report to 1968 PL convention, quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 397.

¹⁶ Sale, *SDS*, p. 508; Klatch, *Generation*, p. 190.

¹⁷ 'The Ruling Capitalist', in *Progressive Labor* (hereafter *PL*), February 1969, quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 534.

Panthers 'ignore the working-class demands...don't attempt to organize Black workers...have no class outlook and believe they are out to fight a war against white people in general.'¹⁸ Similarly, PL was also opposed to the national liberation struggles of the Vietnamese and the Cubans, whilst Weatherman cast them as heroes to emulate. The NLF and the Cubans were, PL contended, 'revisionist' for co-operating with the Soviet Union and accepting its aid.¹⁹ Bill Ayers maintained that his opposition to PL was because the group's Maoist doctrine often ran contrary to Weather's Marxist-Leninism. 'They took the position', he explained, 'that nationalism was reactionary, so they opposed the Vietnamese national liberation...we found it very difficult to live in the same organisation'.²⁰ Women's Liberation struggles were a further area that PL failed to recognise as a legitimately separate concern. As this chapter will show, this approach had much in common with Weather's stance on the subject. Both PL and Weatherman maintained that separate women's groups were bourgeois, reactionary and going against the revolutionary conflict. PL, however, placed women's oppression within the overall oppression of the working classes and argued that their battle must be fought as part of the workers' revolutionary struggle.²¹ PL, therefore, placed women's liberation as secondary to the class struggle, whereas Weatherman viewed the battle against male chauvinism as subordinate to the fight against imperialism.

'Few of the delegates to PL's founding convention', Todd Gitlin noted, 'came from the industrial working class, but inexperience boosted the fantasy: it equipped PL sympathizers to think that by taking a summer job in a factory (a "work in") they

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 534.

¹⁹ 'The People's War', editorial, *PL*, June 1968; Jake Rosen, in *PL*, November 1969, in *ibid*, pp. 534-5.

²⁰ Bill Ayers quoted in Morrison/Morrison, *Camelot to Kent State*, p. 317.

²¹ Sale, *SDS*, pp. 508-9.

could bring correct politics to the historically predestined agency of change'.²² PL's austere and rigidly disciplined approach smacked, for some, of the oppressive Communist regimes. When Steve Goldstein realised the PL had begun 'the process of Stalinising us', he left the group.²³ 'That was the image [of PL], brainwashed Maoists', Aldyn McKean maintained. 'So then I went out and became a brainwashed Maoist myself'.²⁴

The actual name of Weatherman didn't emerge until the 1969 SDS National Convention (NC) in Chicago, using the Bob Dylan lyrics: 'You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows', from *Subterranean Homesick Blues*. This immediately stated Weather's rebellious and anti-authoritarian appeal, and showed their embrace of counterculture and the rock and roll lifestyle that Dylan himself had personified, gesturing to PL's abhorrence of youth culture at the same time.²⁵ The 1969 NC conference was a pivotal one for SDS as Weatherman revealed its ideological beliefs, asserted its position at the forefront of SDS, and categorically ended PL's reign of influence in the organisation. After a climactic showdown, between PL and the main body of SDS, involving both Black Panthers and women's liberationists, the 1000-strong SDS caucus debated for 24 hours before voting to expel PL from SDS's ranks. PL, its enemies within the organisation stated, were 'objectively anti-communist' and 'counterrevolutionary'. 'Long live the victory of the people's war', Weatherman (sic) Bernadine Dohrn proclaimed.²⁶ By the end of the last official

²² Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 382.

²³ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 210.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 193.

²⁵ Bob Dylan's motorcycle crash in 1966 had brought an end to his rock and roll lifestyle, and by 1969 he had shown his fundamental rejection of the music that epitomised counterculture with the release, in 1968, of the back to basics folk roots album *John Wesley Harding*. However Dylan was still an antiestablishment icon for rebellious youth and the song quoted was taken from the 1965 album *Bringing It All Back Home* where he was at almost the peak of this persona.

²⁶ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 388.

SDS national convention, the balance of power had unequivocally shifted towards Weatherman. PL was no longer recognised within SDS and the National Office now contained Weather people Bill Ayers, Jeff Jones and Bernadine Dohrn. Mark Rudd, Kathy Boudin, Bernadine Dohrn and Terry Robbins who were all present on the Chicago demonstrations organisational committee.²⁷

Weather's emergence as the political force within SDS built on the increased radicalism evident within SDS post-1965. The group's philosophy was influenced by Marxism, black nationalism and the counterculture. Weather's ideology changed over time and in focus and the changing direction of Weather can be placed into three notional periods. The initial phase came immediately after the group heralded its existence and stated their core beliefs in 'You Don't Need A Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows', published in June 18th 1969. The second phase was in existence prior to the Days of Rage of October 1969, and the third phase occurred after the Days of Rage as Weather members went underground to continue their revolutionary campaign. All three of these notional phases had a salient effect on identity issues, and also impacted on gender roles and representations of masculinity and femininity.

'You Don't Need' established Weather's ideological themes that were evident throughout the group's existence. It also helped to pinpoint Weatherman as a new force in the Movement, and made a significant and successful initial effort in creating a strong and combative collective identity for Weather members. 'We need to make it

²⁷ Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, p. 27.

clear from the very beginning that we are about revolution', the document stated.²⁸ 'You Don't Need' also highlighted a fusion of the group's political beliefs. Weather saw imperialism at home and abroad. Their commitment to the black revolutionary struggle also established a collective identity through socialism. Both black radicals and Weatherman were intent on establishing a world-wide revolution to defeat US imperialism...toward the goal of creating a classless world.²⁹ As Chapter Three has illustrated, Weatherman was highly influenced by black nationalist ideology, and by the Black Panthers in particular. Indeed, 'You Don't Need' frequently appeared to be almost wholly derivative of black revolutionary nationalists' doctrine when discussing the situation of African-Americans. Blacks, Weather argued, were 'an internal colony within the confines of the oppressor nation'.³⁰ 'You Don't Need' also supported the notion of a supportive and subsidiary role for whites, stating that 'it is necessary for black people to organize separately and determine their actions separately at each stage of the struggle'.³¹ This affinity was also apparent in Weather's language. Weatherman adopted and often paid homage to the black nationalists' word 'pig' to represent and dehumanise 'the enemy'. 'The Pig' was a state tool of repression, and also became a metaphor for the capitalist state in all its manifestations: in the school, welfare, the police and on the street.

'You Don't Need' was forthright in its support of 'armed struggle' to achieve revolution. Weatherman's choice of language reinforced this message, using phrases such as 'increase our power' and 'maximum active participation' to represent the

²⁸ 'You Don't Need A Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows' in Harold Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman* (New York: Ramparts Press, 1970), p. 75.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 57.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 53.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 55.

group's desire to combat American capitalism through aggressive thought as well as in deed.³² The emphasis on these qualities synonymous with traditional masculinity in 'You Don't Need' was initial evidence of Weather's preoccupation with macho. The document also introduced Weatherman's attitudes to women and gender issues. SDS, it argued, 'has not dealt in any adequate way with the women question', and also placed great emphasis on the need for women to be revolutionary. Weather equated the relationship between imperialism and the women question, stressing 'the real reactionary danger of women's groups that are not self-consciously revolutionary and anti-imperialist' and highlighting the importance of women breaking out of traditional female roles, before they could 'undertake a full revolutionary role'.³³ On its release, the document was criticised for its vague, turgid language, and a rhetoric which was derivative of both old left dogma and discourses of black power. 'Who knows', commented Todd Gitlin, 'how many of SDS's hundred thousand or more members actually read this clotted and indeterminable manifesto, which raised obscurity and thickheadedness to new heights?'³⁴ 'Any close reading of the RYM's Weatherman statement', SDSer Carl Ogelsby also remarked, 'will drive you blind'.³⁵

The second notional phase in the development of Weatherman emerged prior to the Days of Rage in Chicago in 1969. The Days of Rage marked the first anniversary of the events at the 1968 Democratic Convention, and intended to replicate similarly violent scenes. 'This fall' an SDS pamphlet stated, 'people are coming back to Chicago: more powerful, better organized, and more together than we were last August.... We are coming back to Chicago and we are going to bring those we left

³² Ibid, pp. 51-90.

³³ Ibid, p. 79.

³⁴ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 385.

³⁵ Carl Ogelsby, quoted in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 129.

behind last year'.³⁶ Moving away from the more working-class oriented organisation of youth evident in 'You Don't Need', Weatherman identified their Days of Rage as the opportunity to put the armed struggle into action, and to appeal to a larger section of radicals with their desire to 'tear the motherfucker [United States] apart', by smashing cars and shops, and fighting running battles with the police.³⁷ Initially anticipating the participation of 'tens of thousands' of radicals, the attendance was estimated, however, at less than 1000. Weather members failed to be deterred from their goal, and Weatherman Jeff Jones encapsulated their bravado. 'There was a position', he argued, 'which was "it was a failure we shouldn't have done it", and there was a position... [which Weather favoured] which was it was a failure, we have to escalate'.³⁸ Weatherman's attitudes to monogamous relationships, the criticism sessions, the use of drugs such as LSD and marijuana and the central role of collectives all developed in the second phase and all fostered a collective identity amongst Weather people. They created a revolutionary body of white men and women, who rejected their bourgeois values in favour of beliefs and a style of living all aimed at attaining revolution.

The third phase of Weather development came after the Days of Rage. The apathetic response by many young American radicals to the demonstration in Chicago, allied to increasing surveillance by the police and FBI saw the group realise that a large-scale revolutionary movement was not going to materialise from the contemporary conditions in America. In mid-December 1969, the group transformed their collectives into small underground cells, which attacked the United States from

³⁶ SDS leaflet, summer 1969, in Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, p. 38.

³⁷ For a full account of the Days of Rage see *ibid*, pp. 51-55.

³⁸ Jeff Jones quoted in Morrison/Morrison, *Camelot to Kent State*, p. 314.

within. Members of a New York collective wrote that 'more than ever, we saw the necessity of moving to a higher level; armed struggle had to become a reality'.³⁹ The developing collective identity evident in the second phase was completed by 1970, as personal life became bound up in the pursuit of being a Weatherman and achieving revolution.

Who, then, was attracted to Weatherman? There is a general consensus amongst historians that those beguiled by Weather were similar to those who joined the main body of SDS. In 1970 the *New York Times Magazine* noted that Weatherman Bill Ayers, 'share[d] with his fellow Weathermen a background of white middle class America, college educated with families that range from comfortable to wealthy; his own father is the board chairman of Commonwealth Edison, the Chicago utility company'.⁴⁰ Ayers' own testimony supported this view. 'I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, went to prep school and led a sheltered and privileged existence'.⁴¹ The background of other key Weather members was also predominantly affluent. Silas Bissell was heir to a carpet-cleaning magnate's fortune, Kathy Boudin was the daughter of Civil Rights lawyer Leonard Boudin and Mark Rudd's father sold real estate and was a lieutenant in the army reserves. Weather members Jeff Jones, Cathy Wilkerson, Bernadine Dohrn and David Gilbert all belonged to the college-educated, white middle class. Weather members had gained organisational skills and developed their political consciousness in the main body of SDS. As Ron Jacobs asserts, their politicisation had been cultivated in the Movement earlier in the decade. Kathy Boudin was an ERAP volunteer, Mark Rudd an organiser at the Columbia sit-in of

³⁹ Quoted in Sale, *SDS*, p. 626.

⁴⁰ 'Vandals in the Mother Country' in *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT Magazine*), January 4, 1970.

⁴¹ Ayers quoted in Morrison/Morrison, *Camelot To Kent State*, p. 316.

1967, Cathy Wilkerson editor of *New Left Notes*, and Bernadine Dohrn became the SDS national secretary in 1968.⁴² Susan Stern told of her position in SDS. 'From the beginning, my encounter with SDS was with the leadership', she asserted, 'to the masses of SDS and to the outside world, I was a top organizer'.⁴³

Weatherman's revolutionary tactics ensured that they gained a committed following. Weathermen were politicised in the Movement, but were also increasingly frustrated by the 'heavy-duty intellectuals' who led SDS.⁴⁴ As the decade progressed, they were awakened to the belief in the necessary role of action and militancy to achieve political change. 'Because of the dynamics of the time', Gilbert argued, 'from protest to resistance and black power, some of the younger people coming in were impatient'. Thus, Weather's violent armed struggle in the name of revolution must have proved a telling attraction, especially with the demise of SDS. 'Where [Weather's] adherents find much of its appeal', the *New York Times* noted, 'is a total commitment to the revolution'.⁴⁵ Susan Stern saw that 'the Weatherman militancy appealed' to a fellow follower because 'she liked street fighting'.⁴⁶

There was a dual attraction to Weather as an organisation that supported blacks and opposed the Vietnam War. In the wake of the demise of SDS, Weatherman was at the forefront of the domestic battle against US imperialism at home and abroad. Weather 'was raising the level of the struggle' David Gilbert noted, '[and] was physically attacking the symbols of the war machine [and of] racism'.⁴⁷ The war and the

⁴² Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, pp. 203-209.

⁴³ Susan Stern, *With The Weathermen* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 19.

⁴⁴ David Gilbert, OHC CU, p. 2-18.

⁴⁵ *NYT Magazine*, January 4, 1970.

⁴⁶ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, OHC CU. p. 2-218.

repression of blacks had an important role in attracting supporters to Weather and alerting them to the necessity of armed struggle. 'The slogan was "Bring the War home"', Jeff Jones asserted. 'The point of that was if they're going to attack Vietnamese and kill Panthers, then Weatherman as young white people are going to attack behind their lines'.⁴⁸ Michael Kazin's role, Klatch explained, was 'supporting other people's revolutions whilst also trying to disrupt [the] country and stop the war'.⁴⁹

Clearly, the Vietnam War was a major politicising factor. According to David Gilbert, this 'mass upsurge...was around the Vietnam War...people had tried everything to stop the war, and now they moved to attack the actual-not just the symbols, but the actual forms [in which] it was built and carried out'. Weather's attraction came as it was seen as the ultimate representative of this political consciousness. They 'were able', Gilbert identified, 'to give [general frustration at the Vietnam War] the most political focus...by being a national political organisation that had come out of SDS'.⁵⁰ 'We felt personally and specifically', maintained Bill Ayers, 'the full weight of the catastrophe unfolding before us. The world was in flames....The dreadful and inescapable fact was that it was up to us to rescue everyone'.⁵¹ Weather ideology behind the Days of Rage demonstrations reinforced the message that Weatherman were actively combating 'what the US was doing' [in Vietnam]. Jeff Jones saw that 'the situation was so grave...that Weatherman had to take extreme measures to stop it'.⁵²

⁴⁸ Jeff Jones, *ibid*, p. 1-85.

⁴⁹ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 195.

⁵⁰ Gilbert, OHC CU, p. 3-278.

⁵¹ Bill Ayers, *Fugitive Days* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), p. 141.

⁵² Jones, OHC CU, p. 1-85.

Weather's commitment to fighting racism and their affinity with revolutionary black nationalism was another compelling factor in the group's appeal. Cathy Wilkerson was drawn to Weather because 'they also claimed to have close relations with the leaders of various militant black organisations...We turned to those whites who appeared to be the most committed to supporting the Panthers'. She identified the murder of Fred Hampton in 1969 as having had a particular impact on recruiting people to Weather, as, she argued, it 'organized three-quarters of the membership of Weatherman into Weatherman'.⁵³ Jeff Jones also stated that Hampton's death had a 'very profound' impact on him. 'It confirmed', he maintained, 'everything that we believed, that enraged us and made us all the more determined to avenge him and raise the level of struggle'.⁵⁴ As Bill Ayers saw it, 'we were ready now [after Hampton's death]...to plunge headlong into the whirlpool of violence'.⁵⁵ Weather's combative philosophy was appealing as they were seen to actively tackle imperialism strongly, directly and decisively.

The sense that the group was actively doing something clearly was attractive to certain leftists who had become disillusioned both by the New Left's ineffectual strategies, and by PL's theoretical pontificating. '[People] have come to Weathermen', The *New York Times* observed, 'with a common thread of frustration at their impotence in the face of what they see as the interlocking, oppressive nature of American institutions'.⁵⁶ Weather's action was also an appealing trait for leftists who wanted a more militant and confrontational edge to New Leftist politics. Students told

⁵³ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 193.

⁵⁴ Jones, quoted in Morrison/Morrison, *Camelot To Kent State*, p. 312.

⁵⁵ Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, p. 179.

⁵⁶ *NYT Magazine*, January 4, 1970.

the *New York Times* in December 1970 that bombing 'gave [them] a feeling that [they were] doing something'.⁵⁷ 'I was prepared to take on America', Susan Stern asserted. 'I felt I was a warrior of the people and that I was fighting for freedom'.⁵⁸ Other Weathermen felt that an increase in action was needed. Bill Ayers stated his 'need to take more drastic action. We had done everything we could in our liberal, radical, anarchist, socialist framework...we'd done it all', he maintained, 'but it wasn't enough...it didn't make any difference...it didn't stop the killing in Vietnam, it didn't stop the conduct of the system that was chewing up our lives'.⁵⁹ Jeff Jones emphasised the extent of Weather's desire to do something, as he 'paint[ed] a picture of ever-escalating militancy...what was on everybody's mind in 1969, was: just how much are you willing to risk?' 'And', he added, 'most everybody was prepared to die'.⁶⁰

Inherent within Weather's desire for confrontation was a celebration of macho. Through their pride and masculinity, Weather members believed they would prove their strength in mind and body to the establishment, to others in the Movement and to their fellow Weathermen. A cult of violence grew up around Weather's tactics. Michael Kazin accepted that 'a lot of men me included were into this' and Marilyn Katz, who split with the group in 1969, agreed that there was 'mucho macho' in Weatherman.⁶¹ Jane Adams, who had friends in Weather, saw that certain women were attracted to Weather because of the group's machismo, and the opportunities that it gave; 'it allowed women to be as macho as men...so if you were a really angry young woman it was a good place to go'.⁶² Cindy Decker is testimony to this, she

⁵⁷ *NYT* December 14, 1970.

⁵⁸ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 64.

⁵⁹ Ayers, quoted in Morrison/Morrison, *Camelot To Kent State*, pp. 316-7.

⁶⁰ Jones, quoted in *ibid*, p. 312.

⁶¹ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 200; Marilyn Katz, Own Oral History Interview (hereafter OOI).

⁶² Jane Adams, OOI.

asserted that 'the fact that I could shoot guns, and I was a hell of a good shot, was extremely attractive'.⁶³

Part of this particular appeal of this macho image was its glamour. Indeed, Todd Gitlin suggested that 'Weathermen didn't recruit through force of argument so much as through style. Their esprit was undeniable. They were good looking. They had panache'.⁶⁴ 'Outlaw', Marilyn Katz argued, 'is an attractive status...particularly in the era of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. It was fairly glamorous'.⁶⁵ Jane Adams, also identified the 'cult of the outlaw and macho images in films such as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and Easy Rider'.⁶⁶ Carl Ogelsby later commented that 'Terry [Robbins] and Bill [Ayers] had this Butch Cassidy and Sundance attitude - they were blessed, they were hexed, they would die young, they would live forever'.⁶⁷ A student quoted in the *New York Times* saw that 'there was a romantic thing about it. You can be the revolutionary for the day...like you and your girl going around blowing up bridges'.⁶⁸

The creation of the macho collective image was a further attraction to Weather. This was an important way of attracting and nurturing support within Weather collectives. Often the exhilaration of the Weather experience triggered or reinforced this sense of identity. Members of Weatherman testified to feelings of exhilaration and elation that both attracted new members to the group, and cemented Weather's allure. Speaking of Bernadine Dohrn's speech at the 1969 SDS conference Stern described how 'her eyes

⁶³ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 200.

⁶⁴ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 385.

⁶⁵ Katz, OOI.

⁶⁶ Jane Adams, OOI.

⁶⁷ Ogelsby quoted in Gitlin, *Sixties*, pp. 386-7.

⁶⁸ *NYT*, December 14, 1970.

flashed ...it was one of the most exciting speeches I have ever seen'. She also attributed a sense of belonging and place as a significant reason behind Weather's appeal. 'I felt that I had finally connected with my own personal destiny, that I had a place and a function in life. That place was with Weatherman and that function was to fight for the revolution'.⁶⁹

Despite Weather's reputation and notoriety, the numbers actively working as Weather people remain small. Given the disintegration of SDS, the media and also the left were keen to seize on any scapegoats or future hopes that would emerge from the void left by the organisation's demise. As historian Doug Rossinow argued, Weather 'became notorious left-wing Bonnie and Clydes, the media and political conservatives happy to join them in exaggerating their influence and representiveness'. This was despite the fact that by the time of its Days of Rage Weatherman had, at most, 'five hundred members in the entire country, perhaps fewer'.⁷⁰ This number was in comparison to the membership of SDS between 1968-9 (prior to the split), which Kirkpatrick Sale estimates as between 80,000-100,000 members in November 1968.⁷¹ In all probability, the numbers committed to the Weather cause probably fell further as their retreat underground ensured a higher level of commitment than the overground action demanded.

Weather's attitude to violence and confrontation led to charges of macho posturing. This had a profound effect on gender issues within the group and both sexes displayed outward aggression and glorified violence in a way that embodied their machismo. As

⁶⁹ Stern, *Weathermen*, pp. 63-4.

⁷⁰ Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 206.

⁷¹ Sale, *SDS*, p. 664.

Harold Jacobs argued, 'the Weather Bureau's rhetoric...was a logical extension of the *macho* mentality that characterized much of the male-dominated white Left'.⁷²

Weatherman's tactics and philosophy were attacked as both melodramatic and nihilistic. Certainly, the group's desire for total violence, and obsession with swaggering phrases such as 'off the pig' could be perceived as nihilistic in tone and attitude. Critics attacked Weather for engaging in violence for violence's sake, with the desire to increase the group macho and tough image. Austin radical Michelle Clark likened the Weatherman attitude to violence as 'a culture of death' and argued that Weather's employment of symbols of violence showed their preoccupation with violence as an idea, rather than using it to achieve an aim.⁷³ A *New York Times* editorial also was severely critical of Weather's 'self-indulgent approach to violence' and the group's melodramatic use of combat as a 'guerrilla theatre of the absurd, fashioned by alienated children of the affluent striking out blindly against the establishment'.⁷⁴ Weatherman's use of violence, Jane Adams argued, was 'symbolic without any real strategy...their politics were incoherent and filled with rage'.⁷⁵ Todd Gitlin likened the Weather violence to 'the most rageful [extension] of bad, abstract politics by other means'.⁷⁶ Significantly, former Weathermen David Gilbert and Jeff Jones also supported the view that the group often isolated the need to employ violence for its own sake rather than use it as to support a political conviction. Weatherman, Jones asserted, 'weren't really organizing, [but] were confronting'.⁷⁷ Gilbert argued that Weather 'glorifi[ed] violence, [and made] violence the issue in

⁷² Jacobs, Introduction, Part 3, in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 310. No italics added.

⁷³ Rossinow, *Politics*, p. 206.

⁷⁴ *NYT*, April 29, 1970, p. 40.

⁷⁵ Adams, OOI.

⁷⁶ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 382.

⁷⁷ Jones, OHC CU, p. 1-84.

itself rather than the goals of it. Weather 'was trying', Cathy Wilkerson later maintained, 'to reach white youth on the basis of their most reactionary macho instinct, intellectuals playing at working - class toughs'.⁷⁸ Bill Ayers recounted a conversation between himself and fellow Weatherman Terry Robbins: 'I'll be dead pretty soon – I know it...' said Robbins. 'When I go down, I mean for it to stand for something...I want to storm the heavens, and when I go down I want it to be in a fiery blaze of glory'.⁷⁹ Contemporaries believed that the group's commitment to violence was often a case of bravado and macho talk rather than fundamental action. Jane Adams perceived that 'all of the Weathermen were privileged youth trying very hard to overcome their guilt at their privilege and so they acted as some sort of caricature of street tough'.⁸⁰ Todd Gitlin observed that Weather intended to 'win over the toughs by being tougher-beating white privilege and male supremacy out of them and out of [themselves] in the process'.⁸¹ Marilyn Katz worked as an organiser with working class children and 'often found [Weather people] to be spineless and afraid of the kids... Finding their solution more self serving than brave', she added that they were 'scared to death when they joined [her] in Chicago, so found it amusing that they could be brave en masse'.⁸²

Certain testimonies from Weather members, however, placed great emphasis on the constructive role that offensive action could play. Jane Alpert, in her memoirs of her time with Weatherman, *Growing Up Underground*, told of how she believed that 'bombings could serve a useful purpose'. Drawing parallels with leftist struggles

⁷⁸ Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, p. 43.

⁷⁹ Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, p. 177.

⁸⁰ Adams, OOI.

⁸¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 393.

⁸² Marilyn Katz, OOI.

throughout history she described how 'the radical left believed we were facing a situation similar to that which had prevailed in Nazi Germany'.⁸³ Susan Stern also refuted that Weather 'supported violence just for the sake of violence'. 'We never became autonomous, unthinking tools', she disputed, 'parroting the Weatherman line, with no opinions of our own'.⁸⁴ She was, however, 'disturbed' by 'the theme of violence' at the 1969 War Council. This, she argued, 'seemed more the product of insanity and depravity than revolution'.⁸⁵ Weather indulged in violent symbolism, a technique employed by the group to illustrate their total commitment to 'offing pigs' through violent means and had the additional effect of reinforcing the influence of machismo in the group. *The New York Times* detailed the group's use of symbols such as 'shooting clenched fists into the air', carrying clubs and Vietcong banners on stout poles to display their aggressive intent.⁸⁶ The Weather document 'With a Little Help from Our Friends' had an illustration of a cartoon pig being attacked by a large fist and a pamphlet depicted a revolutionary armed with a machine gun, bullets, a bomb and dynamite, leaving little doubt as to Weather's intentions.⁸⁷ The National Council was held with a large cardboard machine gun hanging from the ceiling, accompanied by the words 'Piece Now'. Weather's aggressive symbolism and rhetoric also took on an increasingly sinister edge at the War Council when Bernadine Dohrn's speech supported Charles Manson, as she extolled the fact that 'The Family' 'killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them, then they shoved a fork in the victim's stomach!'.⁸⁸

⁸³ Jane Alpert, *Growing Up Underground* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1981), pp. 208-9.

⁸⁴ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 116.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 204.

⁸⁶ *NYT Magazine*, January 4, 1970.

⁸⁷ 'With a Little Help from Our Friends' Hoover Institute New Left Collection (hereafter HI NLC) Box 51; 'Communiqué No. 2', Box 51.

⁸⁸ Account of the War Council and Dohrn quote from Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, pp. 86-88.

The language utilised by male and female Weathermen had a significant impact on gender relations. As Richard Flacks observed, 'as the movement became more militant, many males found it an excellent arena for competitive displays of virility, toughness and physical courage'.⁸⁹ 'I wanted to be a tougher man, asserted Michael Kazin, 'and I didn't want to be bookish Michael....Men [were] certainly trying to prove themselves as revolutionaries'.⁹⁰ 'There were these little guys', Marilyn Katz stated, 'who had never even punched anyone, strutting their stuff and trying to get laid'.⁹¹ Todd Gitlin argued that this aspect of Weather was also appealing to women as they 'could prove themselves now by slinging revolutionary jargon and kicking ass with the best of the men'.⁹² Jane Adams maintained there was a class motivation, as well as a gender dimension behind Weatherman's adoption of machismo. Many 'middle-class and intellectual guys', she argued, 'adopted macho as a way of trying to become déclassé...they went to the lumpen and modelled themselves on some caricature of that [working - class] culture'.⁹³

According to historian Alice Echols, the rise and embrace of macho within the group was because 'Weatherman, more than any other group, were obsessed with smashing "honkiness" and "wimpiness" – two words which seemed linked in the Weathermind'. Weather leader Mark Rudd was determined that the group would not be part of a 'sissy movement'.⁹⁴ Certainly, the Weather language underlined the group's desire to present a tough and hardened image. The use of terms such as 'off

⁸⁹ Richard Flacks, quoted in Echols, *Daring*, p. 132.

⁹⁰ Klatch, *Generation*, p. 200.

⁹¹ Katz, OOI.

⁹² Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 386.

⁹³ Adams, OOI.

⁹⁴ Echols, *Daring*, p. 132.

the pig', 'smash Amerika', 'bring the war home' and 'fight back and kick ass' reinforced Weather's preoccupation with machismo and confrontation. *The New York Times* also noted that 'smash (the state)' was a favourite Weatherman verb.⁹⁵ Bill Ayers' 'A Strategy to Win' speech, commentator Harold Jacobs asserted, 'best captures the rhetorical flavour of Weatherman on the attack - combative, uncompromising, confident, audacious and outrageously arrogant'.⁹⁶ Jeff Jones and David Gilbert described how a cult of violence emerged within Weather because so much stress was placed on armed struggle and militancy. It, they argued, initially attracted certain Weather members, and once they had become fully ensconced in the group, employing aggressive rhetoric and engaging in confrontational combat became the way that recruits could prove themselves, and gain respect from other Weathermen and the Weather leadership. Jeff Jones agreed that the macho style was a conscious one, as 'everyone was under pressure to be more militant'.⁹⁷ David Gilbert also recognised this driving force behind Weatherman's machismo. '[W]e mystified violence...we had great contempt for people who weren't willing to do the same thing we were willing to do'. He identified an 'incredible sectarianism and arrogance' in Weather's attitude to the armed struggle which was apparent in the Weather belief that 'if you're not ready to pick up the gun then you're on the side of the pigs'.⁹⁸

Weather's shows of strength and attacks on 'wimpiness' derived from their own insecurity as revolutionaries. Their aggressive rhetoric and actions allowed them to prove themselves as radicals, rather than the white, middle - class, college - educated youths that their background suggested. As Todd Gitlin noted, 'children of privilege

⁹⁵ *NYT Magazine*, January 4, 1970.

⁹⁶ Harold Jacobs, Part 2 Action in the Streets: Introduction in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 139.

⁹⁷ Jones, OHC CU. p. 1-84.

⁹⁸ Gilbert, *ibid*, p. 3-271.

were rediscovering the virtues of command. They relished the “ass-kicking” their childhood’s had denied them’.⁹⁹ Particularly in the wake of the admission that all whites, radicals included, benefited from a ‘white skin privilege’, macho posturing became another way through which recruits could assert themselves as a strong revolutionary force. Weather participants formulated a collective identity out of their radical personas that their machismo underpinned. As Harold Jacobs argued, ‘having lost confidence in their own revolution, Weatherpeople could not help but doubt their own authenticity as revolutionaries. The provocativeness of their flamboyant rhetoric provided them with the illusion of strength’.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Weather’s frustration at their inability to create a mass-based revolutionary youth movement saw them embrace machismo, hate all that America celebrated, and epitomise everything that America venerated. ‘If America hates the devil, fears Manson, and speaks in the guise of goodness and decency’, Jacobs remarked, ‘then the Weather Bureau embraces the devil, lauds, Manson, and equates those virtues with softness’.¹⁰¹

Machismo Weatherman was far from a solely male preserve. Women in the group also indulged in action and language that reflected their embrace and espousal of Weather’s strategy and attitudes, including both their willingness to participate in armed struggle, and their adoption of the same macho and arrogant attitudes that their male counterparts displayed.

Women’s role in defeating imperialism was twofold. In both strategies, the creation of an aggressive front and macho identity was paramount. Firstly, Weatherwomen would

⁹⁹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, p. 393.

¹⁰⁰ H. Jacobs, ‘Introduction: Part 3’, in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 311.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 311.

employ this confrontational edge to become a fighting force equal to their male counterparts in Weather. Secondly, this active participation by women in the revolutionary struggle would combat the imperialist society's perception of women as passive, and would ultimately defeat the ethos of male chauvinism that was allegedly at the heart of America's capitalist society. The article 'Women's Militia', a group of seventy-five women from collectives across the USA and published in Sept 1969 highlighted women's dual role:

The action in Pittsburgh attacked imperialism and racism, and because it was carried out by women alone, it dealt a particularly strong blow to male chauvinism in men and women. It challenged the passive, non-political role which women are forced into, a role which only helps to maintain imperialism. Through the collective struggle of women in Pittsburgh we took one more step in building a fighting force of women, the very existence of which attacks male chauvinism and male supremacy and strengthens the forces fighting imperialism and racism.¹⁰²

'Weatherman actions...', Harold Jacobs asserted, 'gradually defined the nature of Weatherman practice and priorities....To begin with a number of the most significant actions were led, organized and carried out by Weatherwomen'.¹⁰³ Various articles by Weatherwomen reinforce both their fundamental belief in the necessity of violence, and their position at the forefront of this action. 'The Motor City Nine', printed in *New Left Notes* in August 1969, emphasised the salient role that women played in revolutionary acts. The Motor City 9 action was evidence of women's strong, active and individual acts as they 'walked into a classroom at McComb Community College and barricaded the doors....They rapped...about how the Vietnamese women carry on

¹⁰² 'Women's Militia', in *ibid*, p. 65.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 137.

armed struggle together with Vietnamese men against US imperialism....They spoke about...how white people must join the revolution now waged by black and brown people across the world'.¹⁰⁴ Women's Militia discussed, 'an exemplary fighting force fighting on the side of the black liberation struggle and the Vietnamese struggle'.¹⁰⁵ Once again, the independence of the women's action was highlighted. The entire activity was planned and led by a group of women who made up 'the tactical leadership for the action'.¹⁰⁶ Women, therefore, were not only instrumental in their participation, but made a major impact through their singular leadership and organisation of the action. Susan Stern also supported the notion that some Weather action was organised and led by women. At the Days of Rage, for example, female action proved women's active role in the armed struggle as well as showing their desire to present a united female front; 'the women decided to work together and in the event of a riot run together'.¹⁰⁷ Stern vividly illustrated her particularly active participation in the Days of Rage. 'I galloped like one possessed right towards the pigs...then I carefully lifted my pipe and brought it down with all the strength that I had straight on his motherfucking neck'.¹⁰⁸

As well as underlining her own adoption of Weather jargon, Stern's recollections stressed the assimilation of and her absorption of Weather attitudes and beliefs and the merging of her personal identity into the collective Weather persona. She underlined her commitment to violence to achieve the ultimate aim of revolution: 'make bombs, who owns Standard Oil? Let's get his kids, his wife, put acid in the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 161.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 163.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 141.

water supply, go out on a sniping raid and kill pigs'.¹⁰⁹ Stern also highlighted the influence of the group's macho and her embrace of it. 'The vogue was to be tough and macho, and I was... overzealously aggressive and abandoned as a Weatherman'.¹¹⁰ Stern became increasingly self-aware in this role, entitling herself and a friend 'macho mamas' as they 'drugged, drank, roared, swaggered [and were] crude and vulgar'.¹¹¹

Women's attempts to present themselves as strong, aggressive and revolutionary was fundamental to Weather doctrine which stated that women would only gain their own liberation through fighting against racism and capitalism. Revolution, Weather argued, should pre-empt any plans for female liberation. They identified capitalism and imperialism as the enemy, and thus argued that women should be wholly engaged in fighting against the powers of oppression and for the revolution, rather than singularly concerning themselves with the rather narrow aim of achieving their own liberation. Imperialism was the root of all types of oppression, they asserted, and as women combated imperialism they would be taking a large step towards both revolution and realising their own liberation. As we have seen, the Black Panthers were also propounding similar theories on women's role in the revolution at this time. Whilst the Panthers heavily influenced Weather thinking, Weatherman was the most vocal and insistent in its approach to the issue. Weather saw women's active participation in the Weatherman campaign as a way to increase the numbers participating in and the effectiveness of the revolutionary armed struggle. 'Honky Tonk Women', issued at Weatherman's National War Council outlined the role that women could play. 'Our liberation as individuals and as women...is possible only

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 70; p. 204.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 263-4.

when it is understood as a political process - part of the formation of an armed white fighting force'. 'Political power', it stated, 'grows out of the barrel of a gun, and the struggle to gain and use political power against the state is the struggle for our liberation'.¹¹² Indeed, the statement impelled other women to 'undermine and smash the pigs themselves...we must pick up the gun and use it until this system is dead'.¹¹³

Secondly, women could play an active role in defeating imperialism by utilising their macho personas to challenge the perception of women as passive. This, they perceived, was a notion propagated by the capitalist system, which led to male chauvinism and women's oppression in all walks of life. Cathy Wilkerson identified the male chauvinism within society, its manipulation of women and women's revolutionary potential in her July 1969 article 'Towards a Revolutionary Women's Militia'. Indeed Wilkerson saw a failing on Weather's part to identify women's revolutionary potential sooner. 'Women', she argued, 'are affected [by oppression and exploitation]... in a sharper, more extreme, way than men'. 'As', she goes on, 'unemployment, job instability, and working conditions worsen they deteriorate fastest for women'. Moreover, she perceived that '[w]here the noose is getting tighter it is especially tight around the necks of women...[they] who been taught to feel passive and defenceless, especially in physical ways'.¹¹⁴

'Honky Tonk Women' also focused on the male chauvinism that was inherent in a capitalist society. 'We are objectified and used sexually', the document attacked 'the Amerikan culture that has totally dehumanised us'.¹¹⁵ Women 'have been well taught

¹¹² 'Honky Tonk Women' (hereafter 'HTW') in Jacobs (ed.) *Weatherman*, p. 314.

¹¹³ Ibid, pp. 317-8.

¹¹⁴ Cathy Wilkerson, 'Towards A Revolutionary Women's Militia' in *ibid*, p. 92.

¹¹⁵ 'HTW' in *ibid*, p. 316.

by Amerikan society that women are weak - that thinking, struggling and fighting are unfeminine' and often had to meet the expectations of 'an imperialist view of women - a Miss America standard of beauty, desirability, success, and docility...a Pig Woman'. 'We', the article continued, 'are taught to hate our bodies, mistrust our minds, fear ourselves and everybody else'.¹¹⁶ The Honky Tonk Women saw women as having a pivotal role in the revolution. They would actively combat male chauvinism at its imperialistic root, and once defeated, women's liberation would follow. 'A women who arms herself and fights the pig imperialists', the document contended, 'takes the first steps towards becoming free, because she is fighting against what really keeps her down in a way that can win'.¹¹⁷

Many of the articles that highlighted women's revolutionary potential held Vietnamese women as examples of how this could be achieved. The message that the Vietnamese were potential revolutionary role models was evident in many Weather documents, but Weather women used Vietnamese women specifically as an example that they and other radical women should follow. Women in the Motor City Nine 'rapped about how the war in Vietnam and about how the Vietnamese women carry on armed struggle together with the Vietnamese men against US imperialism'.¹¹⁸ 'Honky Tonk Women' described this active role that 'Vietnamese women took...in their victorious war against the US'. 'These revolutionary women', they insisted, 'are liberating themselves by fighting in a national struggle', a process that began when they 'picked up the gun to destroy the US'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ 'HTW', in *ibid*, p. 317.

¹¹⁷ 'HTW' in *ibid*, p. 317.

¹¹⁸ 'Motor City Nine', in *ibid*, p. 161.

¹¹⁹ 'HTW', in *ibid*, p. 313.

Weather saw the rejection of monogamy as fundamental to their desire to 'smash imperialism'. The rejection of conventional relationships in favour of experimentation with multiple and same sex partners was seen as a way to eliminate bourgeois ideas from Weather members as well as fostering a spirit of camaraderie and solidarity. Weather anti-monogamy stance was presented as a means of eliminating sexist attitudes and exploitation, and as a way of increasing women's self-influence and her power over her own sexuality. Significantly, both men and women were equally vociferous in their opposition to monogamy. Cathy Wilkerson raised the issue in July 1969, arguing that 'it is crucial that men and women both begin to fight against the vestiges of bourgeois ideology within themselves, to break down existing forms of social relationships'. 'Only by developing forms in which we can express love in non-exploitative, non-competitive ways', she asserted, 'will men and women develop their full human and revolutionary potential for struggle'.¹²⁰ Monogamy, Bill Ayers declared, 'has to do with my own bourgeois hang-ups....That's something that just has to be smashed'. Capitalism's monogamous values, he argued, were enemies of communism, of relationships in the group and ultimately, of Weather's collective identity. 'We have to destroy all "outs" to destroy the notion', he added, 'that people can lean on one person and not be responsible to the entire collective'.¹²¹

Weatherman believed that monogamy repressed women and was central to the existence of male chauvinism in capitalism society. Thus, women's sexual liberation would lead to their personal *and* political advancement. Indeed, Weather suggested that in repudiating monogamy, women would be liberated, not only sexually and socially, but also politically, and would become independent revolutionary women.

¹²⁰ Wilkerson, 'Revolutionary Women's Militia', in *ibid*, p. 93.

¹²¹ Bill Ayers, 'A Strategy to Win' in *ibid*, p. 190.

Living in collectives, he argued, 'has to do with... the development of women's leadership, the development of women as communists'.¹²² '[W]hen people' he went on, 'are operating in collectives and those [monogamous] relationships begin to break down, the women begin to get strong, begin to assert themselves, begin to come out as leaders'.¹²³ 'Honky Tonk Women' indicated the link between the rejection of monogamy and the creation of Weather's collective identity. The political and the personal were again intertwined. 'Monogamous relationships must be broken up', it argued, 'so that the people involved, but especially the women, can become whole people, self-reliant and independent, able to carry out whatever is necessary to the revolution'. Lesbian relationships were promoted as a way to develop 'full sexual and political relationships with each other' and 'apply revolutionary values to every facet of [their] lives'.¹²⁴

Further advantages of the rejection of monogamy were noted by other Weather members. Women refuted their passive identity and began to take control of their own sexual lives as they 'began to have several relationships and began to feel free to allow others to develop these relationships without the intense jealousy we used to feel'.¹²⁵ 'You could see women getting stronger' Susan Stern noted, 'as the relationships between men and women began to change. The women, who had been really quiet before... began to take meetings'.¹²⁶ Jane Adams also agreed that Weather's stance 'moved the discussion forward in useful ways', helping to release women from

¹²² Ibid, p. 190.

¹²³ Ayers, 'Strategy' in *ibid*, pp. 190-1.

¹²⁴ HTW, in *ibid*, pp. 319; *ibid*, p. 319.

¹²⁵ 'Inside the Weather Machine' in *ibid*, p. 323.

¹²⁶ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 70.

monogamy's 'general enthronement of husbands and fathers as dominant within the family groups'.¹²⁷

The anti-monogamy stance of Weatherman became increasingly important once the group had adopted the policy of retreating underground in order to continue their revolution in their affinity groups. Weather people's sexual, social and political lives became increasingly bound up in one identity focused on the goal of revolution, creating a 'new lifestyle for ourselves with the revolution as our goal'.¹²⁸ Weather members became subsumed in their underground environment, and as collective members 'shared their clothes, food and money, danced, turned on, tripped out and slept together. Every aspect of their existence became self-consciously political'.¹²⁹ 'A Weatherwoman' writing from 'Inside the Weather Machine' reinforced the pivotal role that the rejection of monogamy held in the underground collectives. She spoke about the need to break up monogamous relationships which were usually built up around 'weakness and dependency', as 'women were used and saw themselves as private property'. Women, she argued, 'identify themselves through men and usually get introduced as someone's girl. Private property is what our system is based on and women were used and saw themselves as an extension of this private property'.¹³⁰ Sex and politics became intertwined. 'We do not view ourselves as sex objects', she went on, 'but as part of the revolution. Sex isn't something to happen isolated from daily work'. 'People who live together, and fight together fuck together....We are making something new, with the common denominator being the revolution'.¹³¹ We were, Bill

¹²⁷ Jane Adams, OOI.

¹²⁸ 'Inside The Weather Machine', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 324.

¹²⁹ Jacobs, 'Part 3: Inside the Weather Machine', in *ibid*, p. 306.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 322.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 325.

Ayers recounted, 'an army of lovers....Smashing monogamy took a lot of energy-it was part of the political line to renounce all the habits and cultural constraints of the past, to make ourselves into selfless tools of the struggle...you were supposed to fuck, no matter what'.¹³²

There was criticism of Weather's anti-monogamy position, with rare comments coming from Weather members. 'We found ourselves there, on the sexual front-', Bill Ayers later commented, 'tireless freedom fighters....We assumed an outlaw stance, embraced a subversive sexual style, and resisted civic instruction in sexual property, blazing utopian trails....Or so we imagined'.¹³³ Although a 1969 article by 'A daughter of the American Revolution' denounced the fact that 'monogamy held members of the collective back from relating to each other fully', she also identified the problems within Weather's stance. Emphasising the machismo that often underpinned it, she saw that Weather 'did a flip flop from celibacy to a near orgy state'. 'Fucking became pretty impersonal', she asserted, 'if somebody was a revolutionary, that was a good enough reason to make it....The orgy state was just too much of a "macho", "I don't give a shit" trip'.¹³⁴ As it turned out', historian Allen J. Matusow noted, 'monogamy and male chauvinism died hard'.¹³⁵ Susan Stern recounted an incident with Mark Rudd. As she was trying to sleep, she heard the sobs of her friend fending off Rudd. 'I don't want you, I want Mike...I love him', she said. 'You have to put the demands of

¹³² Ayers, *Fugitive Days*, p. 143.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹³⁴ 'Affinity Groups', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 453.

¹³⁵ Matusow, *Unravelling*, p. 430.

your collective above your love. Nothing comes before the collective'. Upon hearing this, 'perhaps', Stern thought, 'Weatherman is wrong'.¹³⁶

Machismo played a pivotal role in the construction of male and female identities in Weatherman, and had a profound effect on gender relations within the group. Many critics perceived that the rejection of monogamy epitomised Weather's macho outlook. Weather documents identified the male chauvinism within their group, but their criticism was aimed at the male chauvinism inherent within society and which was evident within everyone as a consequence of society's indoctrination. The authors of 'Honky Tonk Women' saw that 'male chauvinism still permeates society...and, in many ways all of us'.¹³⁷ Weather's target was chauvinism as a result of American capitalist society rather than identifying a particular problem in their group, and they failed to equate male chauvinism with the macho attitudes that they embraced.

More understandably, women outside Weatherman criticised the existence of machismo. Most vociferous in their attacks were radical feminists. An article published in 1970 by Bread and Roses, a women's collective from Boston, criticised 'the machismo and militarism [that] character[ised] Weatherman actions'. This 'did not merely reflect tactical errors or improper application of theory', they charged, but 'stem[med] from a basic misunderstanding of the nature of women's oppression.' Women, they argued, were being 'forced into a double bind', as 'not only [were they] told that their oppression [was] less important or compelling than the oppression of blacks or Vietnamese, but their revolutionary commitment [was] measured by male

¹³⁶ Stern, *Weathermen*, pp. 115, 169.

¹³⁷ 'HTW', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 318.

chauvinist standards'.¹³⁸ Characteristically, Bread and Roses argued that women's liberation could and should be considered as a viable struggle on its own terms in the same way as the oppression of blacks and the Vietnamese. It should play a role in the bringing about of revolution, rather than only being contemplated after it had been achieved. Moreover, Bread and Roses attacked the 'Weatherman position on monogamy' which, they alleged, caused women to be 'delegitimized individually and collectively'. They condemned Weather's simplistic approach to the question and criticised the group for its short-term perspective, looking for multiple sexual relationships, rather than taking the long-term view of focusing on reversing women's oppression throughout society.¹³⁹

Former SDSer Robin Morgan bitterly attacked the men and women of the 'WeatherVain'. Morgan found men and women equally culpable for the existence of machismo within Weatherman. The 'Weather Sisters' 'reject their own radical feminism for that last desperate grab at male approval that we all know so well, for claiming that the macho style is their own style by "free choice" and for believing that this is the way for a woman to make her revolution'. Morgan saw that men were the originators of macho, they promoted this style in Weatherman and propagated the myth that through it women would achieve liberation. However, she also highlighted women's culpability and weakness as they sought male approval and swallowed the myth of macho as women ran 'hand in hand with their oppressors'. As Weatherman was no less chauvinistic than society, she argued that the group did little to ameliorate the situation.¹⁴⁰ Morgan was highly critical of Weather's anti-monogamy. She drew

¹³⁸ Bread and Roses Collective, 'Weatherman Politics and the Women's Movement' in *ibid*, pp. 333-4.

¹³⁹ Bread and Roses, 'Weatherman Politics', in *ibid*, pp. 334-5.

¹⁴⁰ Robin Morgan, 'Goodbye To All That' in *ibid*, p. 304.

parallels between the machismo and chauvinism of Charles Manson's family and Weather's treatment of women: in both, man was 'master of the harem women to do all the shit work, from raising babies and cooking and hustling, to killing people on order'. Manson was a fitting choice for a Weather hero as, she argued, he was 'the only logical extreme of the normal male fantasy'.¹⁴¹

Other testimonies revealed the sexism and machismo within Weather's approach to monogamy. Marilyn Katz saw it as a 'way for ugly men to get laid'.¹⁴² Susan Stern used sex as a tool of macho, bravado and proving herself. 'I got the Sundance boys hordes of dope', she argued. 'I forged cheques...I fucked them all methodically. It was part of being the macho mama'.¹⁴³ Ironically, for many, Weather's approach to monogamy often replicated the male chauvinist and oppressive relations that the group opposed. Harold Jacobs cited Weatherwomen who agreed that 'sexual experimentation inside Weatherman collectives took on some of the worst features of bourgeois, exploitative relationships'.¹⁴⁴

It seems ironic that for all Weather's emphasis on macho, and the extension of these attitudes to identity constructions, women played a key role in the upper echelons of the organisation. Women such as Bernadine Dohrn, Kathy Boudin and Cathy Wilkerson had prominent roles in the leadership of Weather. Dohrn co-wrote 'You Don't Need', and she and Boudin co-authored 'Bringing the War Back Home' with Terry Robbins. As well as issuing statements penned by both genders, women also distributed statements pertaining to their role as women in Weatherman and in the

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 304.

¹⁴² Katz, OOI.

¹⁴³ Stern, *Weathermen*, p. 231.

¹⁴⁴ Jacobs, 'Introduction: Part 3', in Jacobs (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 305.

revolution. These individual and collective statements were often autonomous proclamations from groups and concerns such as 'Motor City Nine', and 'Honky Tonk Women', and the documents provide valuable evidence of *Weatherwomen's* belief in violence, and their embrace of the machismo that frequently accompanied it. Weatherwomen participated in, and sometimes led, the group's violent action and utilised discourse that was identical in its confrontational and macho air to that of their male counterparts. Moreover, whilst many of the documents issued by Weather and written by men and women warned of the existence of male chauvinism, both in society and evident in their own beliefs, there also was a strong presence of macho in male and female Weatherman members' ways of representing their particular armed struggle, in their discourse and action. Their desire to 'smash monogamy' also frequently replicated the unequal and oppressive relationships that existed in the capitalist society that they were intent on destroying.

Both genders had to be macho to play any role in Weatherman, yet men and women in the group were vehement in their attacks on male chauvinism. The resolution of this paradox came through Weather's creation of a collective macho identity, which had a telling and profound effect on gender relations. Strong and combative language, symbolism and action attracted recruits. So did the exhilaration and glamour of being part of the tight-knit group that were actively doing something. The macho image helped to cement the collective identity in Weather, as members proved their worth as revolutionaries. Weather's rejection of monogamy also fostered a collective identity that often emanated from macho attitudes in sexual relationships. As we have seen, Weather also offered women a chance to cultivate revolutionary, but also macho personas. The impact of the macho ideology on women's position in Weather was

twofold: Firstly, women were actively contributing to the revolution. Thus, as the group's critique of male chauvinism was inherent within Weather's anti-capitalism, they could not be seen to refuse women an active role in the organisation or in the leadership of the group. Secondly, the macho beliefs which were essential to Weatherman's approach to achieving revolution were also fundamental in creating a mentality within the group that rejected 'wimpiness' and signs of weakness in favour of strength, aggression and combat. As we have seen, this ideology was used by both male and female members of Weather. It impelled women to compete with men on their masculine terms, and to prove themselves as strong and as powerful as their male counterparts in order to become accepted as true revolutionaries. This was recognised by the 'Honky Tonk Women', who asserted, '[w]hen men use these skills in a chauvinistic way...their male chauvinism must be smashed, but these qualities themselves are necessary for the revolution'.¹⁴⁵

The advances that came for women from Weather were that traditional gender roles of women as passive and subservient gave way to the notion of active and strong women. These constructions of femininity in Weatherman, however, were only attained if they fitted in with the group's collective and macho identity, which also saw that existence of unequal non-monogamous relationships and communist revolution to preclude women's liberation. Thus, women's advances came more as a circumstance of the implementation of Weather's core values than from intent to ameliorate women's overall position away from the revolution.

¹⁴⁵ 'HTW', in Jacobs, (ed.), *Weatherman*, p. 319.

Conclusion

The 1960s and the organisations that made up the New Left have fascinated public and academics alike. As the leading student group of the decade and with its affiliation with associate groups and movements such as the Black Panthers, draft resistance and the counterculture, Students for a Democratic Society has been accorded considerable space in the historiography of this turbulent period. Yet, the only full-length study of the organisation was Kirkpatrick Sale's 1973 work *SDS* and the significant role that gender issues played in the organisation has not been recognised in the existing literature.¹ This study has sought to remedy this situation by investigating the interaction between men and women in SDS, and considering the manner in which masculinity and femininity were constructed and represented throughout the organisation's existence.

This project has found important trends relating to gender within SDS. Despite the Port Huron Statement's stress on the inclusivity of participatory democracy, and many SDSers' emphasis on the beloved community, elitism pervaded the organisation. In its early years, intellectualism dominated the upper echelons of SDS; to engage in detailed theory and cerebral debate was to become an important player in the SDS hierarchy. Many women felt distanced from the overt intellectualism of the SDS Old Guard, and were further alienated from the organisation's hierarchy by the male domination of the leadership, which for many replicated the cerebralism of the Old Left. Moreover, elitist attitudes also affected gender relations in the latter years of the organisation. As SDS expanded in size and influence as a consequence of its support

¹ Kirkpatrick Sale. *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973).

of the black liberation struggle and the protests against the Vietnam war and the draft, the organisation became an increasingly competitive arena where skills that men had traditionally had the opportunity to develop (such as theorising, debating and speaking to large groups of people), again came to the fore. Women, in early and later SDS, were intimidated by this atmosphere, and many did not contribute towards large group discussions, or when they took the brave decision to speak, found that their opinions were not heeded.

The elitism that prevailed in SDS frequently emanated from the machismo that often characterised gender relations in the organisation. In early SDS, the Old Guard displayed a macho cerebralism, as they demonstrated a pride in their intellectualism that often resulted in women's exclusion from policy debate and discussion. SDS's community organising projects saw a turn against the cerebral in favour of action-based initiatives. Although ERAP provided women with a pivotal opportunity to utilise their particular skills in a less intellectual atmosphere, traditional masculine values were still placed at a premium, as male SDSers sought to attract male, unemployed, working-class youths to the community projects. Often, male SDSers engaged in pursuits such as drinking, swearing and fighting and utilised macho rhetoric in order to prove themselves and their hypermasculinity to these potential recruits.

As the organisation took on an increasingly radical perspective, machismo and macho attitudes to relations between the sexes flourished. Draft resisters constructed an alternative masculinity, as they sought to reclaim traditional values of manhood in the context of their opposition to the draft. Thus, traits such as courage, valour and

heroism were glorified and were reconstructed as vital components in the alternative masculinity of a draft resister, as a refusal to fight became the ultimate sign of bravery and a true test of manhood.

Sex became an important way for SDSers to prove their manhood and was a further area which, like ERAP, proved both liberating and repressive for women. With SDS's anti-draft involvement, the language of resistance was tinged with macho, as slogans such as 'Women Say Yes To Guys Who Say No!' placed great emphasis on the virility and sexual prowess of the draft resisters. Moreover, the counterculture had an important effect on attitudes to sex in SDS. The typical appearance for political and spiritual 'freaks' of the late 1960s - long hair, beads and bracelets, unisex clothing - suggested the less competitive, gentler perspective that seemed to characterise the counterculture. However, traditional sex roles prevailed within the counterculture and in SDS, as women were represented as earth mothers and goddesses, and were expected to fulfil the traditional female domestic role. Within both political and spiritual movements, moreover, sex often replicated the unequal and patriarchal relationships evident in 'straight' society, and sexually exploitative, explicit and sometimes threatening and violent images and language presented women in a purely sexual way. In SDS, a macho approach to relationships prevailed as male SDSers' egotism often drove their sexual conquests; women became a reward for male prowess as men sought to prove their virility, masculinity and their revolutionary credentials by the notches on their bedpost. Weatherman's anti - monogamy position was presented by the group as a liberating experience, allowing both men and women to exorcise their repressive and bourgeois attitudes to sex in the name of the revolution. However, this stance was frequently fuelled by macho, and radical

feminists in particular attacked the relationships in the group as perpetuating the exploitative and sexist dependence that Weatherman was seeking to destroy.

The violent rhetoric and action that dominated late SDS and was particularly prevalent in Weatherman also carried with it manifestations of machismo, as male SDSers in particular sought to prove their revolutionary worth by emulating Che Guevara and imitating the urban guerrilla. In this, the aggressive language and confrontational tactics of the Black Panthers proved to be a significant inspiration. Weatherman was the ultimate proponent in SDS of this style of macho. The group sought to create a collective macho identity as it rejected weakness in favour of strength and aggression. Women also played a key role in this macho identity and women in Weather competed with the men on their hypermasculine terms as the group correlated strong revolutionary women with the successful implementation of the revolution. Macho for Weatherman, therefore, was the ultimate tool of political expression for disaffected SDS radicals, frustrated at their inability to stop the Vietnam War and the oppression of African-Americans at home.

The study revealed the sexism within SDS. Not only did elitism and machismo prevail in the organisation, but women were habitually accorded a domestic role as their supposedly 'feminine skills' (cooking, cleaning and typing) were put to use in ERAP and in early and late SDS. Women's fulfilment of the domestic role also pervaded in the counterculture and the Black Panthers. This marginalisation of women was also prevalent in the language employed by SDS, as women's voice was absent from the official rhetoric of the organisation. SDS's use of exclusive language was apparent throughout the organisation's existence, despite the rise in feminist thinking as the

decade progressed. The Port Huron Statement exclusively employed the gender specific 'man' and 'male' and the title of the group Weatherman during this period was selectively gendered. Much of the sexism within the organisation and in the wider movement was, in part, unconscious, the result of social conditioning into men and women's gender roles. In the early years of SDS in particular, many men and women were unaware of the sexism inherent in the language and in role playing, and many SDSers idealised their time as the northern manifestation of SNCC's 'beloved community'.

The elitism, machismo, oppressive attitudes to sex, exclusive rhetoric and allocated gender roles all had a profound influence on gender within SDS, and constructions of masculinity and femininity in all manifestations of the organisation and the wider movement throughout the 1960s. There were, however, important roles that women could play in SDS. Evidently, there were areas where women found a niche for their skills. In ERAP, women discovered that their expertise in communicating and organising were ideally suited to assisting and inspiring people in the urban communities where they were working. Moreover, although certain SDS women found that the movement to resist the draft alienated women and relegated them to a supportive role as the organisation's focus rested on the men in danger of being drafted, other women in SDS perceived a key role for women in resisting the draft. They argued that the anti-draft movement went beyond the logistics of draft evasion and felt that they had an essential part in opposing the draft which contributed to the greater aim of ending the Vietnam War. Furthermore, despite the hypermasculinity of Weatherman, certain SDS women became prominent in the leadership of the group, and they and others embraced the group's macho identity and became fully immersed

in the persona of a strong revolutionary woman. Both genders had to be macho to play any role in Weatherman, yet men and women in the group were vehement in their attacks on male chauvinism, and traditional gender roles of women as passive and subservient gave way to the notion of active and strong women. However, the group argued that women's liberation must take second place to the achievement of the revolution. Women's advances within Weatherman stemmed from the group's commitment to defeating capitalism rather than from any desire to improve women's overall position.

As this study has shown, SDS's preoccupation with the notion of groups organising around their own oppression had a salient effect on SDS women, as the organisation's introduction of the new working - class theory and the influence of black nationalist doctrine fuelled the burgeoning feminist consciousness. Women decided to concentrate on their own oppressed status and spoke up about their long ignored marginalisation, the elitism and machismo at play within the organisation. Their decision to organise groups both inside and outside of SDS, in order to discuss their oppression and to suggest the ways and means of improving their overall situation, saw the emergence of the radical feminist and politico stances at the end of the 1960s.

SDS's demise did not seem, on the surface at least, to greatly effect the movement's size or influence. 'On the surface, the student movement', Todd Gitlin asserted, 'went on unabated....More and more students seemed to realize that 'Vietnamization' was not tantamount to ending the war, and concluded-a few years behind SDS-that the war was not merely an isolated "mistake"'. In April 1970, *before* the incursion into Cambodia, a survey showed that 41 percent of students agreed that 'the war in

Vietnam is pure imperialism'. This contrasted with 16 percent who agreed in the spring of 1969.² With Nixon's Cambodia misadventure on April 30th 1970, hundreds of student strikes were organised. At one, arranged on May 4th at Kent State University, National Guardsmen fired on the protesting crowd, killing four students and wounding nine others. Strikes occurred at 30 percent of America's 2500 campuses and over fifty percent of students took part in demonstrations. On May 9th 1970, the police fired on students at Mississippi State University, killing two and injuring nine. Being black, Gitlin argued, their deaths inspired fewer newspaper headlines or demonstrations than the Kent State killings had.³ The spring/summer of 1970 proved to be the pinnacle of student radicalism. Nixon's Vietnamisation programme and suggestions of Paris Peace Talks ensured that the media spotlight turned away from war and anti-war protests. The end of the draft and FBI infiltration of all aspects of the New Left paid dividends for the Nixon administration's desire to nullify the radical left.

Of course, radicals were still at work in the United States, although their potency was severely reduced in the 1970s. Many SDSers became disillusioned with the direction that the organisation was going, alienated by the overtly violent and seemingly unattainable message of Weatherman, and unimpressed by the theoretical rigour of Progressive Labor. Many SDSers drifted away from organised politics at the end of the 1960s as economic, familial and professional concerns took precedence in the next decade. The townhouse bomb in March 1970 hastened Weatherman's retreat underground to conduct the battle against America from within, in collective cells. Weather planted further bombs, targeting the National Guard Headquarters,

² Todd Gitlin. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books. 1987). p. 409.

³ *Ibid.* p. 410.

Washington D.C, and the New York Police Headquarters in 1970, and the U.S Capitol building in March 1971. In September 1970, Weather broke 'freak culture' spokesman Timothy Leary out of a Californian prison.⁴

As the 1970s progressed, the non-fatal bombings continued, as did communiqués from the underground celebrating Weather's lifestyle and political beliefs. Gradually, by the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s Weather people Mark Rudd (1977), Cathy Wilkerson (1979), Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers surfaced (1980), and Jeff Jones and Eleanor Raskin were arrested in 1981. In October of the same year, an armed robbery of a Brinks armoured truck in New York, carried out by former Weatherpeople David Gilbert, Kathy Boudin and Judy Clark under the banner of the May 19th organisation and the Black Liberation Army resulted in the killing of a guard and two policemen. Clark and Gilbert were sentenced to seventy-five years to life and Boudin was sentenced to twenty-five years to life.

The slowing fortunes and expended energy of the New Left contrasted with the rising star of the New Right. This process had begun in the 1960s and Nixon's victory in the 1968 presidential election was proclaimed a victory for the so-called silent majority. Moreover, as Isserman and Kazin argue, the principles of the New Right (the belief in lower taxes, less government interference in business, a reduction in the size of government and an increase in the military, and a rejection of special interests groups such as minorities and the poor) all took prominence in the 1970s and paved the way for the election of Reagan and Bush in the 1980s.⁵ Moreover, in the 1990s the

⁴ Ron Jacobs. *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground* (New York: Verso, 1997), pp. 198-9.

⁵ Maurice Isserman/Michael Kazin. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 294.

influence of the conservative zeitgeist was apparent in Bill Clinton's presidency. Attacked by the Right as the epitome of all that was wrong with liberalism (dope-smoking, abortion rights, government-funded childcare and personal immorality) Clinton hurtled towards impeachment over the Monica Lewinsky affair after the publication of New Rightist Kenneth Starr's comprehensive and damning report. As Senate leader (and neo-conservative) Newt Gingrich bayed for Clinton's blood, Hilary Clinton cried foul and charged a 'vast right-wing conspiracy'.⁶

However, despite the demise of SDS, the decline of the anti-war movement and the marginalisation of the black freedom struggle, the New Right failed to reverse many of the social advances that the 1960s produced. Probably the most successful aspect to emerge out of SDS and 1960s radicalism was the women's liberation movement; the advances that it offered for women resonated most deeply of any of the movement's achievements. Despite the rise of conservatism, the women's movement broke out of the boundaries of the New Left and radical politics, and paved the way for the support for both the (ultimately unratified) ERA and the *Roe v Wade* decision of 1973, which legally sanctioned abortion. As women's studies began to be taken seriously as an academic discipline, the number of courses offered multiplied, from 100 in 1969 to 15000 in 1976, and the emergence of post-structuralism in feminist thinking facilitated new approaches to oppression and the subjectivity of language.⁷ Within the confines of the radical women's movement, the situation was less bright, as, by 1970, conflicts between radicals and politicians, lesbians and straights had crippled the movement, and heralded the end of the notion of universal sisterhood. By 1975, cultural feminism was in the ascendancy, celebrating womanhood, femaleness and

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 293.

difference. The personal really was political, as cultural feminists defined their politics in terms of the lifestyle that they led. Although women failed to attain total equality, the various strands of the women's liberation movement (radical, cultural and liberal) made significant advances in politics, the media, education and in the household and bedroom.

The radicalism of the 1960s lived on in further areas in the following decades. As the old social movements waned, gay rights came to the fore, and after the 1969 Stonewall rebellion, the oppression of homosexuals and an organised gay liberation movement became significant political issues. Gay Pride was celebrated and many homosexuals no longer had to remain silent about their sexuality, and had a sizeable pressure group to lobby for their interests.⁸ Aside from the gay and women's movements, certain former SDSers participated in the environmental concerns (especially anti-nuclear protesting) and became interested in 'New Age' of alternative medicines and lifestyles. Of my own oral history sample, respondents told of their participation in the women's liberation movement, including radical feminist groups, the fight for the ERA and engagement with supportive men's groups. The former SDSers also indicated their activity with environmental issues, work for indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, assistance with the farm crisis, anti-war demonstrations, opposition to American foreign policy and involvement in campaigns for progressive politics. All respondents indicated the diverse nature of their political

⁷ Douglas Tallack. *Twentieth Century America: The Intellectual and Cultural Context* (London: Longman, 1991). p. 294.

⁸ Isserman/ Kazin. *America Divided*. p. 296.

activity and were keen to stress that they remained politically engaged, albeit in a less organised way than their SDS experiences.⁹

Thus, the impact of the 1960s and that of SDS as the largest radical organisation, resonated far into the succeeding decades. SDS's most important and lasting contribution was as an organisation that bound the diverse aspects of the movement together, the fulcrum of 1960s radicalism. During that time SDSers participated in and supported the significant advances for African-Americans, and with their experience in the organisation, many women set in motion the wheels of the women's liberation movement. Events of the next three decades, despite economic insecurity and the rise of the Right, would see the torch of organised radicalism being passed from the now defunct SDS to the women's liberation and gay liberation movements. However, the darker side to SDS, the elitism, the machismo and the marginalisation of women proved to be a portent for society. Gender issues that were raised in SDS continue to resonate today as women still attempt to combat sexism and prejudice and men and women struggle with constructions of masculinity and femininity within American society.

⁹ Marilyn Katz. George Brosi. Heather Booth. Jane Adams. Leni Wildflower. Helen Garvy. All Own Oral History Interviews.

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Appendix A: Own Oral History Interview Questionnaire

Thank you again for the time taken in completing this form. Your help toward my PhD is invaluable.

If you would like to expand at all on any of the questions, please feel free to do so. I am keen to find out as much as I can. Also, if you know of anyone else who would be interested in completing a form and assisting with my project please send him or her my email address or pass the form on directly.

1. Could you tell me something about yourself; where in the United States did you live during your childhood? What is your ethnic and religious background?
2. Could you give me a brief idea of what it was like for you growing up in the 1950s? Did both your parents work, for example?
3. Was there a history of radicalism in your family? Could you tell me in what ways your family's political activism manifested itself? Would you consider yourself to have been a 'red-diaper baby' (i.e. a child with parents who were socialists/communists politically active on the left)?
4. Which university did you attend and during which years?
5. When did you 'join' SDS and how long did you consider yourself a member of the organisation? Did your radicalism extend beyond SDS (for example, were you involved at all with aspects of the counterculture)?
Please give examples.
6. Were you ever a member of Progressive Labor or Weatherman/Weather Underground? Did you ever sympathise at all with their ideology and strategy?

I'd like to ask you a few questions about U.S society now in the 21s century, before moving on to your reminiscences of SDS and the 1960s.

7. What was your reaction to the anti-capitalist demonstrators in Seattle last year and in Prague earlier this year? Do you think that they were justified in their protest against globalisation? Could you ever argue that their violent tactics were justified?
8. Have you ever believed that violent action was an acceptable means of attempting to achieve political aims? If yes, do you still believe this now?
9. Do you believe that the benefits system in the United States is more or less generous that it should be?
10. What are your feelings on inter-marriage between blacks and whites?
11. Would you consider yourself a feminist? For what reasons?
12. Do you believe that there is still a gulf between male and female pay?
13. Do you support affirmative action policies?
14. On the whole, do you believe that the United States is a defender of democracy in the world? Does this policy benefit the world, and in what ways?
15. Can you pinpoint the first time that you felt the desire to become involved in SDS? If yes, when and for what reasons?
16. Could you tell me of any specific events that influenced your decision to join SDS? (This could be a personal or a political experience).
17. Tell me of any intellectual influences that triggered or influenced your desire to participate in New Left politics.
18. What were your initial feelings at being involved in SDS? (For example, feeling overwhelmed, euphoric, intimidated etc.).

19. In your experience, were there any races/religions/sexes that were drawn to SDS more than others?
20. I have heard it argued that men held many or all of the key positions in SDS. Do you think that this is a fair assessment based on your own experience of things?
21. What is your reaction to Kirkpatrick Sale's analysis of women in the leadership of SDS: that they 'were women who identified with and modelled themselves after men. The followers were usually women'?
22. What were your experiences of the SDS national leadership? Did you notice a change in attitudes/ methods and style between the early leadership such as Tom Hayden/Todd Gitlin and the later leadership of Carl Davidson/ Greg Calvert etc.? In what ways?
23. I have read that people's experience of SDS meetings was that of exhilaration, in tandem with intimidation. Please tell me of any experiences that you might have had such as this.
24. What were your feelings on the Prairie Power influx into SDS? Have your opinions significantly changed now?
25. Can you tell me of any sexist attitudes that you encountered in SDS? Were they widespread? Were these attitudes expressed openly or was there a sense that they shouldn't be expressed?
26. Did you think that any sexist attitudes were expressed deliberately to intimidate, or did you feel that they were more a case of people holding prejudiced attitudes that they were unaware would cause offence?
27. Did you notice an increase or a decrease in sexism as the decade progressed?
28. Were there any common terms of address to refer to other SDS members? What were they?
29. Did you ever notice the use of pejorative words to refer to women (or men)? If so, could you give me an example of the most common?

30. I have read an interview with a female member of SDS in the early years who perceived SDS as a sort of a 'beloved community'. Was this your experience of things?
31. Were you active in ERAP? If the answer is yes, could you tell me about your ERAP experiences?
32. What spurred you to joining ERAP? In your opinion, was ERAP more diverse in terms of male/ female ratio than in other SDS activities? What was the reaction of the local people to the ERAP workers? Did you experience any hostilities from them? Can you identify any Civil Rights influences in ERAP (in the approach to organising for example)?
33. Do you think that the grassroots nature of the ERAP project was more conducive to women making an active contribution and participating? In what ways?
34. Can you identify any possible advantages and/or benefits in ERAP?
35. Did you notice any tensions in SDS caused by ERAP?
36. Could you tell me something about the December 1965 rethinking conference? What was your reaction to the raising of the issue of female inequality? Did you think that it was necessary, or maybe it was inappropriate at that time?
37. What was your reaction to the women's discussion group workshop's being female to discuss female issues and oppression? Do you think that some people's complaints that this was another form of prejudice were justified? Why?
38. In what ways, if at all, did you participate in draft resistance?
39. Can you remember any of the draft resistance slogans? Did any offend you in any way?
40. Did you feel that draft resistance could only allow men to actively participate, as by its very nature men were the only sex in danger of being drafted?

41. Did you ever perceive an active role for women in draft resistance, or did you see that women should provide valuable support for the men who were actually resisting the draft?
42. Tell me of any occasion that you experienced, where women led or were at the forefront of a draft resistance event.
43. What was your perception of the image within the New Left generally of men who resisted the draft?
44. What were your feelings on the Weathermen? Were you attracted at all by their message?
45. How did you feel when Weathermen promised to 'bring the war home' and used such language as 'off the pig', 'smash capitalism', etc.?
46. Did you react differently when women used this aggressive language than when men used it? Why and in what ways?
47. What was your reaction to the image of women fighting in the streets for the Weathermen, in the 'Days of Rage', for example?
48. Tell me of any encounters that you had with machismo and macho attitudes. Were you aware of an increase in macho attitudes as the decade progressed or do you believe that a sense of machismo was evident throughout the duration of SDS?
49. Do you think that Weathermen embodied the macho message?
50. Why do you think that so many women were attracted to Weathermen?
51. What do you think of the argument that Weathermen offered women a greater opportunity for leadership?
52. What was your reaction to Weathermen's rejection of monogamy? Do you believe that monogamy was, as Bill Ayers argued, 'a tool of male supremacy'?

53. Tell me of any knowledge or awareness that you had of internal debates about women's position in SDS.
54. If possible, tell me of the first time that you noticed the rise of a 'female consciousness' in SDS.
55. In what ways do you think that the rising women's consciousness contributed to developments in SDS?
56. What were your thoughts on the Marxist approach to women's issues that argued that it was necessary to seek a general liberation, rather than focusing on achieving the liberation of specific oppressed groups?
57. In what ways, if at all, do you think that the Civil Rights movement influenced the tactics and ideology of SDS?
58. Can you identify any parallels between the white New Left and the Black Power movement of the 1960s, particularly with relation to their approach to militancy and violent action?
59. Tell me of any ways in which you were influenced by the methods and/or ideology of the Civil Rights movement (including the militant black movement). Would you consider yourself to have been influenced by certain methods and ideologies of the black civil rights movement? If so, in which ways?
60. Did your involvement in SDS lead to an involvement in the women's movement? Were you at all active in any other radical spheres in the 1970s (the Hispanic, Native American, Gay rights or environmental movements, the push for the Equal Rights Amendment for example)?
61. Are you still politically active now? In what ways?

Thank you very much for your comments.