



Throwing Away the Ladder: the Universities in the Crisis

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(1975)

Strikes, sit-ins, mass demonstrations? The stuff of the Sixties have appeared on the campuses of the U.S. in the last year. But as the media have pointed out, there is a "hardheaded" economic character to these actions. No more psychedelic guerrillas dropping pig's blood on the college president. In its place we have "student worker strikes" in Athens, Ohio; a sit-in to protest tuition increases in Cornell; the first statewide college teacher's strike in N.J.; strikes and demonstrations protesting the cutting of student funds and teacher firings in New York City University of N.Y. The "political" demands of the late Sixties: end university complicity with the draft and war-research, end grading and "free speech" restrictions, institutions of "alternative" courses, open admissions to all students ("end stratification") have turned to the "economic" demands of the middle 70's: no tuition increases, no productivity deals, no firings, wages for schoolwork. From day-glo politics to grey economics all in the space of four years?

Surely we can not be satisfied with such a description of the student and faculty movements on the university campuses of the States; there are undoubtedly differences between 1965 and 1975 but they cannot be compartmentalized into a politics/economics distinction because such a distinction invariably mystifies any analysis of class struggle in capitalist society. In this society economic relations are power relations, and so political. "All this might be right for capitalism in general", some might say, "but there is no class struggle in the universities; university movements might *reflect* and *support* working class struggle, but. . ." Behind such an objection is the lingering distinction between economic base and ideological superstructure. Of course, the university falls on the ideology side and so it appears to be external to the basic dynamic of class struggle in capitalist society. This is not the place to discuss all that goes by the name of "ideology" but something must be said about it since the distinction between economics and ideology can severely limit political action with respect to the university. *The Left frequently identifies the economic base with the sphere of waged labor while it reserves the category of ideology for unwaged labor.* In terms of revolutionary organization this comes down to taking the waged part of the working class as primary and effective while taking the unwaged part as secondary and, at best, supportive. But these identifications only accept the capitalist division of the working class and recapitulates the basic illusion (or ideology) of the wage!!! The wage is the most illusory relation between capital and the working class since it hides unwaged labor, i.e., the part of the working day that capital appropriates without exchange. Surely the Left has emphasized the part of the working day unwaged *inside* the factory, but it has consistently been blind to the unwaged labor *outside* it. In fact, it is exactly during the period when capital has increasingly been dependent upon appropriating unwaged labor outside the factory that the Left has not challenged capital's power, but has indeed collaborated with it.

In the University two forms of unwaged labor for capital is appropriated:

1. the development of new "forces of production" through scientific research and what Marx called "the power of knowledge objectified";
- 2) the reproduction of labor power and so reproduction of the hierarchy of labor powers of different qualities (selection, division and stratification).

Thus capital appropriates science and education as a costless part of the cycle of its own

reproduction. U.S. capital, befitting its advanced status, recognized the importance of these kinds of labor from a very early date. Thus, land grant colleges in the early nineteenth century were set up to promote agricultural research, while in the commercial and transportation center of New York City a "free" university was set up for the explicit purpose of training clerical workers and others for the local labor market in 1847. So from the nineteenth century capital recognized that the university was not merely a feudal throwback or an ideology mill.

In this article I want to sketch out the development of class struggle in American universities since 1960. I will divide it up into four parts with rough chronological limits: the Kennedy human capital strategy (1960-1965); the refusal of development (1965-1970); the "fiscal" counterattack (1970-1975); the wage struggle and the Left (1975).

1960-1965: The Human Capital Strategy

Immediately after World War II, as part of the general disarming of the working class and the "reconversion" of the economy, the G.I. bill's education allotments brought about an increase in Federal funds into the universities. With this money came a "new type" of student given an explicit wage for school work as training for a new post-war labor market. But this experiment in manpower planning proved temporary, and so throughout the Fifties Federal funding for the universities stagnated at about one billion dollars a year. In the decade of the Sixties there was a flood of investment by the state from one billion in 1960 to about seven billion in 1970. Why? This shift in the State investment arose in the early Kennedy years and centered around the two basic issues of the 1950's as expressed by politicians and economists of capital: growth and unemployment. Through recession cycles of the 50's there were ominous fears of stagnation due to the low rates of accumulation of domestic capital. Further, as the decade closed the unemployment rate rose gradually but steadily, especially for categories of workers that had been displaced by various forms of mechanization, most notable among them were the southern agricultural workers and miners in Appalachia. If all was going as usual for capital these "displaced" workers should have drifted into the cities and formed a fresh pool of labor power for the urban factories by lowering wages through intensified job competition as in the primitive accumulation sequence. But the usual sequence did not unfold, due to complimentary aspects of working class power. On the one side, the unionization of the dynamic industrial sectors made it difficult to employ the classical labor market competition to lower wages and increase controllability; on the other, the "surplus" workers were beginning to organize demands for income from the state, e.g., the welfare struggles. In order to describe this development in the class struggle, capitalist economists referred to this part of the working class as structurally unemployed, i.e., workers who would not fit into the "labor market" whatever the level of aggregate investment and consequently would not be transformed into labor power even in times of boom. The existence of the reserve army of the unemployed was always a fulcrum for capitalist accumulation but structural unemployment seemed to form a new and somewhat "mysterious" rigidity in the labor market eluding capital's planning. Since much of this structural unemployment was strategically concentrated in the cities by the end of the Fifties and the early Sixties there was obvious danger or, in other words, an "urban crisis".

What did the university have to do with the problems of growth and unemployment? The connecting link in capital's strategy was the notion of human capital. First, it was argued by the economists of the "New Frontier" that the fundamental sources of GNP growth were not the increase in population nor the investment in "physical" capital but technical changes spurred by research and development efforts (especially during the world wars) and even more importantly by the increasing education and training of the "labor force". Thus in Dennison's influential work, titled appropriately, *The Source of*

Economic Growth in the US and the Alternatives Before Us, there are a number of specious but at the time widely touted statistical arguments that purported to show that 40% of the growth rate between 1929-1956 could be attributed to the greater education of workers. Although there was the usual scholarly caution and qualification, the general consensus of the Kennedy strategists was: if increased "growth", hence increased rates of profit and exploitation, were the order of the day, then increased investment in university both for general R&D work and the training of the working class on a mass scale must be instituted. Second, there was the question of the structurally unemployed. Here the answer lay, presumably, in the lack of fit between skilllessness or the obsolescence of the skills of those who have been "made" unemployed by increasing mechanization with the skills required by the labor market especially given the shift away from agricultural and manufacturing to service industry employment. Thus from the capitalist perspective what was required was a retraining and even more importantly a general upgrading of the "work force" to prevent massive structural unemployment in the future. In a rather late study of the matter (1965), Killingsworth concludes:

... automation and the changing pattern of consumer wants [i.e., increased demand for "services", G.C.] have greatly increased the importance of investment in human beings as a factor in economic growth. More investment in plant and equipment without very large increases in our investment in human beings seems certain to enlarge the surplus of underdeveloped manpower needed to design, install and man modern production facilities.²

"Investment in human beings," "manpower planning" and so "human capital"-a telling phrase-is indeed the capitalist version of Marx's even more telling one: variable capital, for what is crucial is not the humanity of the capital (a rather sentimental leftover) but its ability to increase, to a variable quantity, value. It constitutes the capitalist recognition that merely planning the level of constant capital does not automatically lead to appropriate changes in the composition of the working class. The working class does not merely follow along with the level and kind of investment, as in the Keynesian supposition, but must also be explicitly planned. And so investment in the university system got pushed through Congress as part of a more general strategy to deal with this new aspect of class struggle. Thus in class terms investment in human capital arose when capital had to begin to take into account in an explicit way the whole social circuit of capitalist society in which labor power is produced, qualified and reproduced. In this attempt to plan social capital in both its constant and variable parts, the previously "non-productive" relations and institutions of capitalist society had to be recognized as productive. The Keynesian integration of the labor unions in the process of production was only a part of a larger integration of the whole reproductive cycle of labor power which could no longer be left to chance, the "automatic" market forces, or ideology. Consequently, the previously "costless" (for capital) and "wageless" (for the working class) work began to change its status for social capital.

But if the working class was to be restructured upon a higher gradation through the quantitative expansion of the university system, what was to serve as the necessary source of division of the class? And here the already given stratification and division of the university seemed to naturally fit in. Though the policy of investment seems now rather crude since it involved in many cases rather large block grants to universities with a gross correlation between investments and "output", it was undoubtedly assumed that the universities' setup of grading, testing, tracking, and discarding could do the job of selection into various skill and occupational hierarchies for the labor market. The teacher's traditional powers of gradation of labor discipline (the "standards") and the student's competition for positions on the given stratification leading naturally into the labor market seemed to many to be a quasi-natural consequence of the universities existence. Thus, though the university was transformed in this period from a university to a multiversity, its structure was to both massify and divide working class youth on its way to a new labor market (student population tripled from two million to six million in

the public universities between 1960 and 1970).

1965-1970: The Refusal of Development

It was exactly this ability to collect, divide and select for the labor market that failed the university structures from 1965 through 1970. The general content of the present class struggle (refusal of work) instead of being conquered by the growth of human capital was transferred to the campuses. Semester after semester, from Berkeley to Kent State, the university structure that was to organize and integrate the "new working class" met a decisive refusal of development which, ironically enough, used the money from the very investment funds meant to turn students into human capital against this plan of development. The financial officers who were to dole out money for schoolwork got grass blown in their faces. The professors who were to guide and discipline the "talented" were forced into rap groups or ignored. The most evident defeat of the universities' ability to stratify the student population was in the use of massive tests and grade averages that would make some students eligible for the draft if they ended on the lower end of the continuum. This occurred in the spring of 1966 and rather bluntly identified the university administration with the draft apparatus. Clearly, if the move had proved successful the student movement would have been torn apart in the intense competition to stay out of the war. But it proved to be the State's biggest blunder, for it made the whole system of grading an object of refusal in a way that the previously ideological attacks never could. Once the "F" began to mean death in the jungle no crap about the "community of scholars" was needed to attack the grading process. Once grading showed its immediate quality as a wage in the social factory sequence of school-army-job, the struggle against it became nation-wide. Instead of the underground diffusion of discussion after Berkeley, the initial sit-in at the University of Chicago against the complicity of the university with the draft officials was followed quickly in a dozen other universities, and in the fall dozens of others continued with sit-ins, strikes and riots. Within the year the Johnson administration had to back off, but only after a national transformation of the student movement into something like an organizational network. Most emphatically for capital it became clear that the university structure had failed decisively its first large scale test in the "organization of manpower". Indeed, it is during the late Sixties that not only do we get the intensive sociological investigation of the "activists" with the appropriate harebrain psychological scatology, but we also get an almost frenetic search for "alternative structures" for the university by the large foundations and government agencies.

This hyperactivity on capital's part was quite justified, for what was supposed to have been one of the main stimulators of accumulation had proved completely unmanageable by 1970. Statistical surveys of the "crisis in the universities" showed widespread action not only against the school/ army link, but also on working conditions within the universities (e.g., cafeteria food, sexual restrictions, housing demands, decreased work loads) and attacks on the racial division accomplished through restricted admissions and funding policies. Further, the organizational form of the student movement proved to be both effective and mysterious for it didn't have the structure of a party or a union. Any pretension that an organization like the National Student Association could bargain with the State or individual universities was wrecked with the CIA collaboration revelations, while SDS, for all the moonshine about participatory democracy, seemed at times to have at most an honorific connection with the individual struggles ("Anytime anybody would do anything we would say it was SDS"). Indeed, in 1969 and 1970 when SDS had fallen apart the student movement began an even more explicit link up with other parts of the working class struggle in the ghettos, the army, and the prisons. So the student strike of May 1970 signaled not only the failure of the university structure as a generator of human capital but its complete breakdown in the face of an increasingly coordinated movement. It was not a matter of some previously known weak spots; on the contrary, it was significant that the strike seemed to be everywhere:

More than half the colleges and universities in the country (1350) were ultimately touched by protest demonstrations, involving nearly 60% of the student population—some 4,350,000 people—in every kind of institution in every state of the Union. Violent demonstrations occurred on at least 73 campuses (that was only 4% of all institutions but included roughly a third of the country's largest) and at 26 schools the demonstrations were serious, prolonged, marked by brutal clashes between students and police with tear gas, broken windows, fires, clubbings, injuries, and multiple arrests. Altogether more than 1800 people were arrested between May 1 and May 15.³

The slaughter of students at Kent State and Jackson State showed to what extent the struggle had become generalized, for these schools had not been centers of struggle before. The grade structure collapsed everywhere, and it appeared that the only way that the university could continue was with the armed intervention of the state. Instead of the ultimate promise of a high niche in the job market, it was the gun held by a somewhat unreliable soldier that kept it together that spring. The slaughter continued into the summer in the various "youth ghettos" surrounding the universities, e.g., the killing of Rick Dowdell and Harry Rice in Lawrence, Kansas. By the fall many returned with a wide variety of plans for action and then. . . nothing. With the McGovern campaign of 1972 much of the movement had simply "disappeared" and the much touted "return of the 50's" was the feature everywhere. Why? In order to understand this we must see the nature of the organization of the student movement in the period of the refusal of development and then capital's response to it.

The fundamental limitation of the student movement proved to be its inability to put forward the question of *income* in its most general form; the inability to link up with the explicit wage struggle in the other parts of the circuit. True, there were many struggles that proved quite successful, e.g., the attack on grading has led to a general "grade inflation" persistent to this day, the attacks on authoritarianism and bureaucracy led to a visible lessening in the length and intensity of the working day in schools, working conditions improved, certain forms of hierarchical division abolished, etc. But these struggles dealt with the wage relation in a partial and still hidden way, and by doing so eased the way for the restructuring of the university. To see this limitation more clearly consider as a point of reference the development of SDS between the Port Huron Statement in 1962 and its final national convention in 1969. In its beginning and in its end SDS saw the status of student as politically tangential; the student was always in search of workers, either to lead or to follow. Indeed, SDS appears as a youth group for a nonexistent socialist party in its beginning. The early community organizing in Newark, the civil rights activities are all of a piece with the beginning of the Kennedy-Johnson emphasis upon human capital development. However, the early SDS activists could only see the universities as a center for the recruitment of a cadre of organizers and helpers of the "oppressed". At its end, debates devolve into the questions: who is the working class and where is its revolution? One side answered as children of Baran and Sweezy: in the third world. The other side answered: in the sphere of direct production. The logic of both sides lead past the university and out: one to the underground the other to the factory with well-known consequences. What was never seen was that the struggle against capital was right where they stood. Indeed, even during the period when the name of SDS was being used as a nickname for a student movement in its struggles on the campus, the leadership was quite hesitant to explicitly take up the demands. Thus the anti-ranking protests were begun by local elements moving independently, and were only reluctantly supported by the national SDS. But clearly it could only be by taking the effective place in the capitalist division of labor as the point of refusal that powerful struggle could be launched. And further, it could only be by taking the relation between income and work as explicit that capital's plans for restructuring could be dealt with. But what was on the agenda was not taken up, and so the movement that helped destroy the Kennedy human capital strategy could not deal with the capitalist response.

1970-1975: Fiscal Crisis & The Ladder

The capitalist response to the refusal of development of human capital was not a change in tactics but a major strategic shift from concerns of "growth and unemployment" to the imperative of reestablishing control of the working class through a more direct imposition of work. The Nixon administration clearly recognized one fundamental flaw in the previous investment policy: making a too gross correlation between overall investment and output, by the reliance upon a university structure that could not mediate student struggle. Echoes of this shift were found in the writings of a number of economists that argued that the earlier statistical work of Denison was radically off, and that "education and R&D" could not account for a large percentage of GNP; while the recession of 1970 began to indicate that the new college graduates were themselves structurally unemployed! The scene had shifted with the bodies of the dead students just beginning to decompose.

But with the end of the route of development a new strategy had to be devised. Its first step was the "fiscal" crisis of the universities. The inability to balance the books does not indicate bad arithmetic but inability to deal with the class struggle. The financially endangered universities of 1970 and 1971 were the weak links in the previous development strategy. Nobody tried to hide this obvious fact. For example, in Earl F. Cheit's *The New Depression in Higher Education*, the political and the economic became identified. In 1971 he studied 41 colleges and universities and grouped them into those that "were not in financial trouble" those that "were headed for trouble" and those, woe betide them that "were in financial trouble". Consider the qualities, in rank order, that characterize those institutions not in financial trouble:

1. Less affected by campus disorders
2. Good fit between aspiration and program
3. High community regard for them
4. Smaller student aid expenditures
5. Program defined, growth controlled
6. Lower average faculty compensation
7. Efficiency

The message is clear; those who will survive are those who do not collapse against student attack: quick to call in the police, tight control over the faculty, resistant to wage demands everywhere. Balance the budget of struggle or else. This, of course, was just a slightly later verification of what was being said by state and federal politicians: "cut appropriations until those kids want to go to school" (as the Chairman of the Michigan State House Appropriations Committee said in the whirlwind of '70). The first must was to clean house and administer the appropriate self-critique to the "gutless administrators" described in detail in the *Campus Disorders Report*. Undoubtedly the vengeance was sweet; it was obvious enough anyway. But surely things could not be left like that, for it was not just a matter of getting rid of a few weak willed presidents and some campus activists and then return to business as usual. What had to be reintroduced was a wholly new relation between state investment, university structure and labor market with a wider restructuring of capital in the crisis, for the previous relation just could not guarantee control over the reproduction of labor power.

"Fiscal" crisis is not only punitive, like bankruptcy, but also a reshaping activity, where the immediacy of monetary power seems to have the efficacy of a natural force. In this fiscal panic there was a marked shift from state investment coming in the nature of block grants to university building or student aid offices to demanding more "accountability" from individual universities as to their allocation of state funds while putting more restrictions on the use of student aid. At the same time planning decisions

were taken out of the hands of individual universities as is befitting a period of massive restructuring. After the "campus disorders", writes Frank Newton for H.E.W.

The trend toward regulation has been amplified by a general tendency to view agencies of government as having the prime if not sole responsibility for the enforcement of accountability throughout society. There are however two very different strategies for achieving accountability. Strengthening the tendencies toward central control aimed at rationalizing and ordering the system represents one strategy. Strengthening the incentives for self-regulation by making better information available, by increasing the choices available to students among institutions to respond to these choices is another. In part, the determination of these agencies to exercise power more directly stems from their frustration with the intractability of the problems of higher education and the difficulty of generating responsiveness to public needs on the part of colleges and universities.

In other words, the old university structure had to go and in its place multi-campus control boards must do the large scale planning but at the same time a fine-grained control of students must be instituted without reliance on grading, "upholding the standards", etc. These are Mr. Newton's two strategies mixing a fascism for administrators with a socialism for students, the faculty getting a social democratic productivity deal.

Now the reference to "strengthening the incentives for self-regulation" refers to a new relation between the student and the labor market; the gross manpower planning approaches of the Sixties had to be junked due to the general difficulties of accumulation brought on by an international wage struggle. A "revolution in falling expectations" had to be accomplished by capital and so no more could the federal government and the universities "reinforce widespread expectations that there is a direct relationship between the amount of education and the likelihood of upward mobility in status and income," as Mr. Newton writes. Thus all the attempts to figure on the rate-of-return per year of university (how much more money you get paid throughout your life for every year you spend in the university) are now being revised downward-or are being completely abandoned. This does not mean that universities will be done away with, however; rather the university becomes part of the labor market. The labor market has as its unit the job which has an essential prerequisite a "training ladder" or sequence that leads to it. The university becomes the base of these ladders instead of a place where a general upgrading of labor power is to be accomplished to be thrown out into a constantly shifting but upgraded labor market. Thus the most salient aspects of the "silent 70's" in the universities: the feudalization of the disciplines. In a period of uncertain levels of employment there has been a flocking of students to the areas where we get the greatest concentration of *credentials* required and are most open to a kind of apprenticeship called, ironically enough, "work-study". Discipline over students is not accomplished with the old schoolmasterish ways (grading) but through connecting in a very explicit way work in the university with waged work: the job. The "new vocationalism" is not only to be found in the community colleges but it is also in the higher levels of the system where law, medicine, psychology, business administration, become the dominate departments. The social control jobs are used as social control: control through work if there ever was any!

The problem of planning becomes (now in a very explicit sense) trainability. And the question that is asked everywhere is: how malleable are you? The task of the university is "matching trainable individuals with training ladders" says Mr. Lester C. Thurow.⁴ One can now easily see how the shift in the relationship between state investment-university structure-labor market could have defeated the student movement of the 60's. First, the State disappears from campus since it no more is a requirement in its strategy to guarantee a relationship of students with the army and the labor market. Second, the

university structure e.g., grading, becomes increasingly insignificant as a source of control. Third, the new strategy allows for experimentation in working conditions hence we get universities without walls, end of sexual restrictions, and in general increased "self-management". Fourth, while explicit university racism lessens and open admissions policies become more available income turns to be the new divider. Since the student movement did not take the question of income in its most general form - wages for school-work - capital could simultaneously accede to its partial demands while using the imposition of work to silence it. Capital takes the initiative in recognizing school as work and begins to wage it on its own terms.

1974: The Wage Struggle

In the last year there has been a beginning of a student response to the shift in strategy. These university protests have had an "economic" character since their main demands have been around the "fiscal" crisis: fight budget cuts, stop tuition increases, defend student aid, etc. These protests have not been sporadic; in the spring of 1975 there was a wave of strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations with similar demands and some coordination in the Northeast.

Not accidentally various Leftist groups have recently put out pamphlets on the universities. They spell out a political perspective tying struggle in the university with the Left's general strategy for the crisis: defend the working class against capital's crisis-induced attacks. This perspective, unlike the strategy of SIDS in the Sixties, takes the university as an important political base, consequently as something to be *defended*. In essence, the public university must be defended from fiscal attacks because the forced entrance of "working class" to "poor" students at the end of the Sixties opened up, for the first time, the possibility of having a highly educated working class. But since education leads to the ability to make more and broader connections in your social situation, education makes you more conscious. So by laying foundations for a more educated working class, the public universities can begin to spawn a more *conscious* working class, a working class that can begin to pay attention to the political task of "building socialism" instead of insisting upon economic demands. If the obstacle to revolution is the lack of working class *consciousness* then, surely, the Pegasus to overcome it is *education*.

Not only does this political perspective provide a defense of the university, it also has an analysis of the new university crisis. Quoting from the *Crisis at CUNY* pamphlet, put out by a collective of "socialist" teachers at the City University of New York, we find the following analysis:

. . . the capitalists cannot go on forever using the educational system to increase productivity and at the same time expect it to perpetuate and ratify existing social arrangements. The more people they educate, and the better they educate them, the harder it becomes to maintain the class, racial, and sexual inequalities that are the basis of capitalist society. Educated workers are often dangerous workers, because they learn more than they are supposed to . . . educated people had a tendency to begin asking sharper questions and demanding better answers. And better lives. . . Too many people are getting too much education, says the ruling class. This accounts for their drive to cut back on enrollment, their desire to institute tuition, and, in fact, the current "crisis" in higher education. The contradiction has gotten out of hand.⁵

Thus education is inherently liberating and the capitalists are in a bind for though they need it "too much education" has been the source of "dissatisfaction" in the working class. Conclusion, they are going to shut down the public universities and send the working class back to the unenlightened mire.

Aside from all this being rather idealistic, it does not start at the primary point. What goes on at the university is work, namely schoolwork. It is work done to prepare to do more work. Its essence is self-discipline both in a specific and a general manner. The

specific aspect of being a student is the learning of certain technical skills that can lead to greater productivity in specific jobs that require these skills. The general aspect of being a student, however, is infinitely more important: being self-regulating, self-controlled, etc. For example, what good to capital is an engineer who speaks Chinese and can solve differential equations if he never shows up for work? What is crucial for capital is not merely your ability to be programmed but more important is your ability to be re-programmed. So job interviewers don't really care how much one knows specifically but rather all their subtlety is addressed to the question: how malleable are you in adapting to new job requirements, i.e., how well educated are you? Thus the problem of the Sixties for capital was not that "people who could read, could read Marx as well as management manuals", as our socialist friends allege. Rather, what alarmed capital was the effective refusal of schoolwork, the massive rejection of education. There was too little education, not too much. What was educational was the struggle against education!

However, what makes it easy for capital to impose and, *if stopped*, re-impose schoolwork is that it is *unwaged work*. Its unwaged character gives it an appearance of personal choice and its refusal an equally personal even "psychological" symptom. So, ironically, though students consider themselves, at times, the most advanced part of the working class they still belong to the ranks of unwaged workers. This unwaged status has profound consequences for the student movement and the class struggle at this moment. First, because they are unwaged workers students can be cheaply used as workers outside schools and universities to reduce wage levels. Second, by being unwaged Capital can restructure the schools and increase intensity and productivity requirements at little cost; thus ROTC is making a come back on the university campuses because the Armed-Forces are paying \$100 a month for trainees; and this is just a more obvious example of the possibilities of dividing the student movement for a pittance.⁶

The present political problem of the student movement is not that of a student-worker alliance and so of finding a "link" with the working class, simply because students *are* workers. Nor is it that of defending the public university *as* the place for "socialist" education and "unalienated, integrated" work, for the content of the class struggle is the struggle against work for wealth. Rather it must confront the capitalist strategy of control in the university crisis which is predicated on the wagelessness of students. Students can only attack their wageless status through a demand of *wages for schoolwork*. Such an autonomous demand directly counters capital's plans for it can halt capital's use of students against other workers and also make it difficult to divide students against each other. Capital has used wageless school work as a ladder to success, i.e., to successful exploitation, it is time we threw it away.

Footnotes

* George Caffentzis, "Throwing Away the Ladder," *Zerowork* #1, 1975.

1. This general analysis of the wageless in capitalist society and critique of the Left owes much to the Wages For Housework movement. For seminal comments on the function of schools in the reproduction of labor power see Maria Rosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, (Falling Wall Press, 1972), pp.23-25, and Selma James, *Sex, Race and Class*, (Falling Wall Press, 1975).

2. C. C. Killingsworth, "The Effects of Automation on Jobs," in B. R. Cosin, *Education: Structure and Society*, Penguin Books, 1972, p. 94.

3. Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* Random House, 1973, pp.636-637.

4. Lester C. Thurow, "Measuring the Economic Benefits of Education," in Margaret S. Gordon, *Higher Education and the Labor Market*, McGraw-Hill, 1974, p.391. This whole volume, sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, lays the

framework for much of the new capitalist planning of the university.

5. *Crisis at CUNY*, The Newt Davidson Collective, 1974.

6. Many passages in this last section on school work and the critique of the Left are taken from a pamphlet, *Wages for Students*, written and distributed by militants during student strikes in Massachusetts and New York in the spring of 1975.