



THE UNIVERSITY

**BELONGS TO
THOSE WHO
USE IT**

At one pole: the liberal slogan “defend public education” demands that we rally around a set of stratified institutions that serves the population as a means of glorified job training and ideological subordination, ejecting the overwhelming majority into the world of production. This is a struggle for conservation. At the other: self-proclaimed radicals demand that we treat the university as a mere distraction from the miseries of daily life, greenlighting it for annihilation. This second position degenerates into a curious brand of nihilism.

While clearly no free education can be achieved in an unfree society, the tarring of the university as a reading room in a prison misses the point. Certainly the university functions as a factory of sorts, reproducing the emergent managerial class, ideological and repressive functionaries, and agents of exploitation at its zenith, and training wage and service workers at its nadir. But this formulation remains incomplete. If we are to take the idea of the university as factory seriously, we must treat it dialectically, simultaneously as a force of objective immiseration and subjective potentiality.

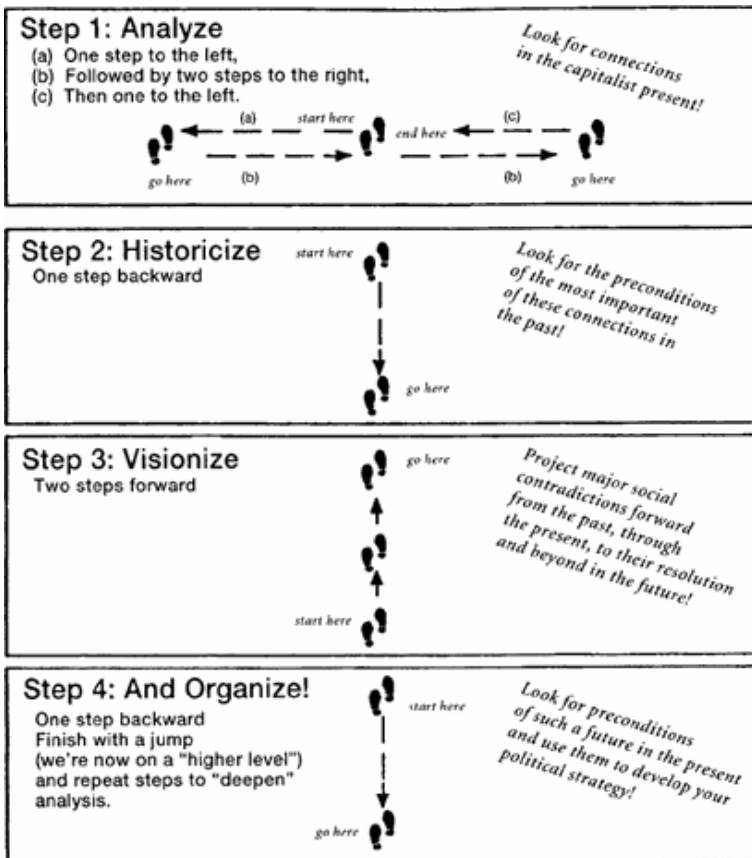


The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trade Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

The university as factory: both the objective means of reproducing the capitalist relations of production *and* precisely that institutional position from which we can initiate revolt. Far from that which must be destroyed, it is the site from which we must challenge the current function of the educational apparatus.

But how is this to be done?

If the university continues to function as an apparatus for reproducing existing productive relations, the solution lies in acquiring control of these means of ideological production. Just as the factory owner plays no productive role in the manufacturing process, so too is the administrative-managerial class in the university superfluous. Over the past decade, executive and senior managerial positions at the UC ballooned by over 120 percent and middle managers by close to 100 percent. To put this in perspective, new faculty hires over this same period increased by roughly a quarter, close to 10 percent *below the total growth rate of the university* (~35 percent).



To add insult to injury, the Regents voted *last month* to provide these executives and top-tier managers with bonuses totaling \$11.5 million. This sum is roughly identical to the amount of money it would take to keep GSIs' salaries on par with those at comparable institutions according to a recent report from the UC Office of the President's own Research VP. Instead, GSIs have just been offered an effective pay cut. When the UAW 2865 bargaining team requested a raise marginally above the inflation rate, the UCOP representatives unilaterally walked out of negotiations. Is this what the administration means when they tell us that we must all "share the pain"? This is why we will take the university. *We: students, workers, student-workers. Easy enough to formulate in abstract terms to be sure, but how is this to be done?*

While rallies do retain a certain degree of utility in mobilizing students and galvanizing the campus, they have also become a farcical reenactment of September 24. General assemblies are closer to the mark, but these too remain merely glorified means; neither rallies nor GAs on our campus are focused around a clear strategic program. *For what do we rally? For what are we organizing?*

The answer is simple: *to return the university to those who use it.*

Student strikes are a step in the right direction, and last year's November and March strikes were valiant attempts to halt business as usual. But practically speaking, we must consider the composition of our campus. We cannot count on professors as our allies, as their interests differ structurally from ours as students and as workers. The professor wishes to preserve the public university as it exists; the student-worker strives to realize this university as it must be. Student, worker, and student-worker all share a similar position. All are the subject of austerity measures. Two hundred more workers kicked to the curb, and they call it "Operational Excellence." A 12 percent drop in Latin@ admissions, and Birgeneau applauds the "diversity" of our campus as La Raza Center and Bridges get their budgets slashed. GSIs making \$1000 less than their counterparts at comparable institutions (and many times that below the Bay Area "living wage" calculated by UCOP) are offered pay cuts in real terms as the administrative-managerial class touts the newest meaningless graduate program rankings from the National Research Council. Who has the power to stop this downward spiral of corporatization of the university?

We do. As of midnight on September 30, 12,000 GSIs on all UC campuses no longer have a contract with the university. Their union, UAW 2865, filed an unfair labor practice complaint, legally giving them the right to strike as soon as their bargaining team gives the word. If GSIs go on strike, we can effectively shut down all 10 campuses. What would it take to pull off this strike, what's the timeline, and what would it accomplish?

The UAW 2865 bureaucrats are currently floating the idea of calling for a GSI strike on November 1. It is up to us – students, workers, and student-workers – to ensure that they do so. The battle against austerity measures on this campus unites undergrads, workers, and grad students. Every

What do children learn at school? They go varying distances in their studies, but at any rate they learn to read, to write and to add – i.e. a number of techniques, and a number of other things as well, including elements (which may be rudimentary or on the contrary thoroughgoing) of 'scientific' or 'literary culture', which are directly useful in the different jobs in production (one instruction for manual workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for higher management, etc.). Thus they learn know-how.

But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. They also learn to 'speak proper French', to 'handle' the workers correctly, i.e. actually (for the future capitalists and their servants) to 'order them about' properly, i.e. (ideally) to 'speak to them' in the right way, etc.

To put this more scientifically, I shall say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'.

confrontation between those who use the university and those who wish to corporatize it concerns all of us. But only through a well-organized and orchestrated strike that can effectively shut this campus down indefinitely can we gain the upper hand.

In order to pull this off, we need to wage a struggle on two fronts. First, in order to make this successful, we must force the union to declare a strike. This means at the very least a coordinated PR campaign in tandem with mass rallies on Sproul over the weeks leading up to November 1. But this is not enough. While an officially declared GSI strike is clearly ideal, we do not need to wait for a room full of bureaucrats to tell those who it represents when they can engage in militant action. That is why a number of GSIs are currently discussing withdrawing their labor-power immediately, refusing to grade any papers or exams whatsoever until they are given a fair contract. This action will only be successful if you *organize*. (Undergrads need not be concerned about their GPA; the current proposal is to provide all students with As.) Undergrads: talk to your GSI. Grads: Talk to your fellow GSIs. Let's get a grade strike off the ground immediately!

Second, a GSI strike will be effective, but only if we – undergrads, grads, and workers – unite in solidarity. We will need a real student strike, not just another walkout or rally. Spread the word: anyone who crosses the picket line will be treated as a scab. Workers can organize sick-outs to coincide with the official GSI strike. Students can work with GSIs to create true bonds of solidarity. This strike is not about getting your GSI a living wage, but about effectively challenging the vicious attack on students and workers on this campus. Why is the UC tossing bonus money to ex-Wall Street executives posing as education specialists? Why are administrators making in excess of \$300,000 getting raises when there is apparently no money for our academic departments? Why is Bridges being defunded and yet another 200 workers fired as a billionaire Regent prepares to unveil his eponymous Poverty Center on our campus? Why are they continuing to jack up our fees, forcing us to debt-finance our supposedly “public” education when there is apparently plenty of money to go around? Why was the fee hike money pledged to private investors in non-educational campus construction projects *before* the Regents pushed through the increase last November? Why is a panel full of unelected financiers and private sector dividend mongers making decisions concerning those who use this ostensibly public university?

Fuck that.

Build for the GSI strike on November 1. Organize a student strike in coordination with the GSIs' action. Call in sick to work and urge your coworkers to do the same. Until then, let's get a wildcat GSI grade strike off the ground. In order to do any of this, we'll need mass rallies and events organized by both grads *and* undergrads. Make a flyer and spend just a few hours each week flyering at Sather.

This is not a fucking game. The university belongs to those who use it! Let's show these bureaucrats and managers that they are not welcome on our campus. This is *our* university. That's precisely why we'll shut it down until they meet our demands. We are not asking for the impossible here. All we want is a public university run by those who use it. To the administrative-managerial class: Get your filthy hands out of our institution and go back to Wall Street where you belong.

Want to build for this strike but don't know where to begin? Let's get this off the ground together.

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