

Wilson Clark, Jr.

UNC-SDS Declines

(This is Part 2 of Wilson Clark's article on the SDS. In Part 1 last week, he discussed its activities with the Speaker-Ban rules, its own newspaper, and its support for an organized strike.)

This ran against the individualistic grain of about half the chapter, according to Carr, and effectively split the group into somewhat dissident elements.

The textile strike eventually failed, and with its failure, so went SDS, at least in the sense of a tightly-knit, readily-mobilized group.

SDS, the progenitor of other movements at UNC, then began to move in this direction itself. By summer, the radicals that were left in Chapel Hill joined in the efforts of "Vietnam Summer," a nationally-organized anti-war mobilization. SDS, as an organization, had ceased to function, but its members worked intensively in the summer project. By August, project leaders had engineered a protest march (against the Vietnam war) and rally that over 150 people participated in.

By fall, SDS was again on its feet, but the "Sturm and Drang" of the former days was gone. The primary organizational efforts made by Carr, the 1967-68 chairman, were directed at getting a large local contingent to participate in the October march on the Pentagon. Approximately 80 area radicals marched, and one UNC student, Robert "Corky" Eaton, turned his draft card in to federal officials.

In activity on the local level continued until March, when Chairman Carr announced, on March 16, that SDS would picket the Dow recruiter on campus. The "picket line" turned into a sizable protest, and 15 people were arrested, most of them from UNC-SDS.

By this time, SDS was still not as strong as it had been in the 1966-67 academic year, and many of the members were involved in community-project work with the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) in Durham.

George Vlasits, a former UNC sociology graduate student and UNC-SDS member was active in SSOC, and he gave impetus to many local radicals to involve themselves in the project work. The coalition strategy, first proposed by Gary Waller the "Speaker-Ban" controversy, now hit home, as the SDS chapter itself was being de-emphasized in the overall aims of other groups... first "Vietnam summer," then SSOC. Other national radical groups were beginning to penetrate the Chapel Hill radical base, such as "The Resistance" (the largest national anti-draft group) represented by draft-opposer Eaton.

The last major radical action at UNC this year was the April 26 Protest Moratorium (on the war and the draft), which was organized, not by SDS, but the eventual creation of SDS itself — a loose coalition of radical students.


Gary Waller, the co-founder of UNC-SDS, agrees with this year's chairman, Jerry Carr: "The problem with SDS, or any similar radical group, is that it's difficult to pass on effective leadership from generation to generation."

Both Waller and Carr do not necessarily regret however, the demise of UNC-SDS. As Carr sees the three-year life-span of the group, it accomplished its major goal: "In SDS, we have been working toward the


creation of radicals. You might say that radicals are our most important product. In the last three years, SDS has created between 200-300 radicals."

Looking back on the days when SDS meant only a vague collection of initials to most people in Chapel Hill, one cannot disagree with Jerry Carr. But the question, remains, where will the radicals go from here?

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