

Report on the Harvard Strike by John Barzman, April 23, 1969

Background

The fight against ROTC at Harvard was initiated in October 1968, by SDS mainly under the influence of PL. The case for the abolition of ROTC was not made in terms of university complicity with the war, but in terms of ROTC serving imperialism, regardless of whether the student body was for or against it. In the course of the year, SDS rejected the idea of a referendum on ROTC. In February, the faculty voted to remove academic credit from ROTC. Two months later, the administration and President Pusey had only said that the implementation of the vote was under study and being negotiated with the Pentagon.

Political Groups

1. An extremely right wing (support to Humphrey) YPSL of about 40.
2. The largest SDS chapter in the country; it varies in normal times between 150 and 300 attending business meetings.
3. About 6 PLPers and their periphery, the Worker-Student Alliance caucus whose formal membership is close to 80 now. They usually get about half the votes in SDS meetings.
4. The New Left Caucus, the other half of SDS, about 40 members. It is a very heterogeneous group; only a very small minority follow the SDS "National Collective" of "revolutionary communists." The rest is divided and centers mainly around the radical course Social Relations 149 and the publication "The Old Mole." All tendencies consider themselves Marxists and socialists.
5. The YSA has two members on campus.

The Seizure of University Hall

With the coming of good weather, the month of April is the most propitious for mass actions (exams are in May). Further more, the need to reanimate the antiwar movement, and the fact that the April 6 demonstrations had actually begun to do so was perceived by everyone. In this overripe situation, it seems that PL feared that the focus of action might shift to other issues such as the fight to guarantee that Social Relations 149 (given by radical students and instructors for credit) would be given next year.

A meeting was held on Tuesday April 8 to decide on the possibility of taking militant action for the abolition of ROTC: about 900 attended. At this meeting, a pro-PL spokesman asked that 3 demands concerning Harvard's expansion at the expense of the working people be added - this was accepted by the meeting. Four motions were made:

1. YPSL proposed that no militant action whatsoever be taken: 60 votes.
2. For a strike: 55 votes.
3. PL proposed the immediate seizure of University Hall: 140 then 160 votes.
4. New Left proposed a week-long campaign leading to the seizure at random: 180 votes.

On Wednesday April 9, the SDS exec committee met and decided it had the mandate to occupy the building at noon. Before even the beginning of the scheduled rally at noon, a Worker-Student Alliance

spokesman began haranguing the crowd of about 1,000 to enter the building. The response was extremely negative with only about 30 people inside until finally a dean got the mike and began explaining why the scholarships of previous demonstrators had been removed (that they be restored was one of the 6 demands). This reversed the situation and by 4:00 PM about 400 were inside the building and 800 outside.

Inside, a vote was taken to use "non-violent, obstructive resistance". Few realized that any kind of resistance or even escape would be impossible. The numbers remained constant until about 4:00 AM when more people left the building for the yard. The police attack was massive (about 500) swift (the five-minute warning was not respected) and brutal. A chant was started: "On strike! Shut it down!"

The Two Strikes

Student government leaders called a meeting: over 2,000 attended forming the MEM Church Group (MCG). Although the quasi-unanimity of those present disagreed with the tactic used, the dominant feeling was "Who called the cops? We had no say in that decision." The question of who runs the university was posed. The demands of the MCG were 1) a referendum on ROTC; 2) legal amnesty for students only; 3) restructuring; 4) resignation of Pusey if the demands were not met. The moderate leaders managed to pass their proposal for a restructuring of the decision-making channels for the university. The demands concerning housing and Harvard expansion were dropped because in fact they had been tacked on originally with little education around them previously.

The New Left caucus made a feeble attempt to intervene. Mike Kazin proposed that the strike call for the abolition of ROTC and total amnesty. This would have been a good basis for a united strike. Kazin was later attacked in a leaflet of the WSA for dropping the expansion demands.

The Mem Church Group rapidly split into many factions, with the main leaders impatient to have the whole thing over with as soon as possible. It is difficult to say whether the MCG could have been taken over initially because at the time of its formation most radicals were still in jail. However, this cannot excuse SDS's subsequent sectarianism toward the strikers of the MCG and in particular its left wing, the Committee for a Radical Structural Reform.

On April 10, a meeting of all supporters of the original 6 demands was attended by nearly 1200. The demand for total amnesty was added and a 15-man steering committee was elected. PL had been somewhat by-passed by the mass developments since the bust and only got 4 seats. A good section went to right-wing SDSers who wanted to develop a full-fledged critique of the University (Herb Gintis). Mike Ansara (close to the Old Mole) received three times as many votes as anyone else. Others elected were Jared Israel (PL) and Mike Kazin.

The Afro Demand

The Association of African and Afro-American Students at Harvard and Radcliffe is one of the most moderate in the Boston area. For over one year, they had been negotiating with the faculty and administration for a "meaningful Black Studies department". The result was the Roskovsky

report, the spirit of which was accepted by AAAS. The faculty however only created two new courses.

Taking advantage of the general questioning of established things, Afro decided to once again put forward its proposal and joined the strike. The essential aspects of the proposal were: 1) the original faculty shall be chosen in consultation with Afro; 2) the department shall be run by an elected committee made up of faculty (50%), Afro (25%), and student concentrators in the department (25%); 3) the courses offered and the above committee.

Clearly this raises two key issues: 1) the right of black people to control their own education and 2) student control over specific aspects of the university with a potential crippling effect on its function in the reproduction of capital (training of skilled labor, technicians, cadres for the bourgeoisie).

On Sunday April 13, at the second meeting of the strike committee (about 1200), Afro submitted its proposal. It was opposed only by PL and a few followers of the SDS line of six months ago. They argued that it was both a possible base for black capitalism and a proposal for student power. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of Afro making a total of 8 demands.

The First Stadium Meeting

A meeting of all strikers had been scheduled by the MCG for Monday April 14. The MCG leaders transformed it into a meeting of all people concerned, to be held at the stadium.

SDS decided not to present any proposal but simply to read its 8 demands. The argument was two-fold: fear of a hostile vote and denial of the meeting's legitimacy, and on the other hand, unwillingness to face the necessary problems of a united front. This continued the previous sectarianism of SDS towards the MCG and in fact, left the initiative to the more moderate and confusionist leadership. There is no evidence that it would have been impossible to take leadership of the whole stadium meeting if a principled agreement could have been worked out between Afro (which supported the 8 demands), and the Strike Committee and the CRSR (left-wing of MCGO, and presented as such to the stadium meeting.

A motion stating that "We repudiate the right of the administration to close down our university" was passed unanimously by the 6,000 present. This answered a threat by Pusey to close Harvard and is a very good example of the possibilities of defensive formulations that could have been used.

The meeting adopted the "Teaching Fellows proposal"; their demands coincided with the 8 demands on: 1) ROTC - severance of all contracts with the Pentagon; 2) legal amnesty and no suspension for the students arrested; 3) Afro studies as demanded by Afro; 4) On housing, the teaching fellows proposed a plan of the Graduate School of Design for an enlightened urbanism. This contrasted to the SDS demands which were purely negative and could be interpreted either in the sense of a revolutionary transformation of city life, or as reformist municipal socialism. PL claimed the two sets of demands were at loggerheads and excluded any agreement with the Teaching Fellows. In fact the SDS demands could have been the lowest common denominator to two conceptions of urban reform;

4) finally, the Teaching Fellows proposal called for a restructuring of the university in the form of a policy-making student-faculty senate.

The stadium was split on the question of an unlimited strike and voted instead for a three-day strike for the T.F. demands.

"Student Power" and the "Moderates"

On Tuesday April 15, the strike reached its height with only at the most 20% of students answering the call of some faculty to return to class. In the general radicalization, students began moving towards an awareness of the role of the university in the capitalist system in which ROTC and expansion are only the visible part of an iceberg of imperialist, exploitative, oppressive and alienating functions at the service of big business. In this situation attention turned to the "restructuring" proposals of the CRSR.

It would have been correct to say: The only "restructuring" needed is that of the student movement to wrest power from the corporation and those who stand behind it in society. Real "student power" is the power of the strike to achieve its concrete goals such as abolition of ROTC, and end to expansion, a black studies department.

In tactical terms, struggling and winning around the 8 demands should be viewed as a first step toward a broader challenge of the capitalist grip over the university and society. In the present period, the university is tied increasingly directly to the military and to industry because of the needs of advanced technology and sophisticated counter-insurgency. It seems obvious then that autonomy and freedom (a free university in a free society) go against the subjection to capitalist needs; this is less true for neutrality which almost excludes the red university.

The Afro demand opens the way for demands such as: expansion of Social Relations 149 (which teaches how to fight imperialism, racism, etc.) into a full department, for student control over admissions (which would end Harvard's role as a unifying ground for the ruling class), for the use of university facilities to help the larger community (including by demonstrations)...The concept of the "red university" was rediscovered at the School of Design on the following poster: SHUT IT DOWN, TURN IT AROUND.

This seems a fruitful direction in which to orient propaganda. However, there is a need for greater clarification of specific demands and for discussion of concrete experiences. For the strike the correct road was to fight around the 8 demands determined by the initial course of the struggle, while at the same time pointing to their implications in terms of university complicity with the war and with the system.

The restructuring demands were reformist in that they had no content and did not correspond to any need felt at the time. However, PL's role, by opposing a revolutionary perspective for "student power", and by limiting all discussion to a narrow view of the 8 demands, left the initiative to the reformist "restructuring" proposals of the CRSR and weakened the case for Afro's demands, which incorporated concepts of student control.

The Strike Committee

After the collapse of the MCG, the SDS Strike Committee became the only really organized group. There was nonetheless considerable support

for the CRSR (which was equally building the strike with all its power) and Afro was participating somewhat separately. Although the 8 demands could have been a minimal base of agreement, PL opposed any concerted action with the CRSR and Afro. The independent SDSers running the Steering Committee constantly maintained an ambiguity about the Strike Committee, now calling it SDS, now calling it "supporters of the 8 demands." They probably hoped to make quick gains for SDS in that way. In fact, it only made it a little more difficult for the masses of students radicalizing around the 8 demands to find a formation corresponding to their present consciousness.

At its height the strike was very well organized with many new ideas: posters (after those from Paris) every day, guerilla theater, political brigades meeting twice a day and infiltrating lunch and dinner at cafeterias, etc.

The faculty's role, although somewhat moved by the events, was to let things cool down a little and then make apparent concessions hoping to break the back of the strike. Only the teaching fellows joined the strike and that in small numbers.

On amnesty, the faculty voted to set up an elected committee (Fainsod Committee) of 9 professors and four students as a jury to decide on punishment, thus assuming the dirty work of the administration. The strike committee correctly boycotted these elections, in part successfully.

A contradictory motion was passed by the faculty calling for the continuation of ROTC as an extra-curricular activity. As a normal extra-curricular activity, ROTC could not function as an effective program; but the administration implied it would be more like the department of Athletics.

On housing, a director of expansion was to be nominated.

These moves successfully confused the student body. By the time the second stadium meeting was due, the faculty, administration, and student government leaders had launched an hysterical campaign for a return to classes, pouring out thousands of leaflets, brochures and glossy pamphlets for free.

Afro, the CRSR, and the Strike Committee all announced their intention to continue the strike until the demands were met. The mood was against striking and the appeals of the faculty for trust carried the day. The strike was suspended for seven days.

The Ebb

On Friday, April 18, the ebb was already visible. Most students thought the demands had been granted or were going to be shortly. Consequently the role of radicals should have been to explain very precisely that they had not been won, and to warn that the administration would take advantage of any lack of vigilance to circumvent its promises. The 8 demands had essentially been adopted at the first stadium meeting and the Strike Committee in a sense had the mandate to enforce them. When evidence that they were not being implemented

appeared clearly was the time to take militant action.

On Sunday, April 21, PL put forward a motion, "Fight to Win," calling for a militant action in the form of a picket around University Hall to forcefully prevent the deans from passing through. Among other mechanical misconceptions, it stated "We must raise the level of the struggle every day." The New Left caucus proposed a mill-in to draw attention to the fact that the struggle was still going on. Neither really offered a campaign of explanation.

The mill-in on Monday, April 22, was successful but had little impact on campus. On Tuesday, the faculty voted for the Afro-American Studies as demanded by Afro. This was a victory won both as a result of the past struggles of the blacks, of the militant struggle at Harvard, and the fear of another SF State situation. However, it further removed any desire to continue the struggle on the other demands.

Nonetheless, on Tuesday night, PL again circulated a proposal to seize and hold University Hall the following day and attacked the granting of the Afro demand as a defeat for the movement. Facts are a stubborn thing, and at 10 p.m. Jared Israel had to withdraw the motion. A great deal of unclarity remained around the slogan "Fight to Win." It was interpreted by many, following PL, as meaning that one should impose by force the just demands on the corporation with consent of the student body or without it. It correctly asserts that no concessions will be made without struggling for them. However, the fight is a political fight: "Politically Fight to Win." To win against the corporation one must have the masses of students; a militant action without their support is meaningless and even dangerous. Mobile tactics are not a substitute for mass action either, but a form of mass action. The first task then is to convince the masses of students that they are being cheated.

A proposal was made to serve an ultimatum on the administration asking it to clarify its stand on 1) ROTC as an extra-curricular activity; 2) the possible eviction of tenants; 3) the possible suspension of students arrested. Its intent was to put the burden of proof on the other side. PL fought this good example of defensive formulation as a "weak threat of a threat" which clouds the fact that one must fight to win. Again, this is a political fight and presentation often can be determinant in swinging public opinion. The longer the realization of this is delayed, the harder it will be to regain the strength of the strike at its height when the administration was clearly responsible for the violence.

Role of Political Groups

The YSA, with only two comrades at Harvard, was somewhat limited in its intervention. We circulated at the very beginning (April 10) a proposal to transform the meeting into an Ad Hoc Committee to Abolish ROTC; this was discussed but not acted upon. The comrades intervened in the workshops and at the mass meetings according to

the sense of the situation outlined in this report. A YSA literature table sold \$130 worth of literature in the first 6 days.

PL followed a consistently adventurist and sectarian course throughout, even excluding its programmatic sectarianism on black nationalism. The following is a condensed summary:

1. Initial seizure of **University Hall** without the preparatory steps and violence against the deans; saved only by the general over-ripeness of the situation and police raid.
2. Sectarianism toward the Memorial Church Group and its left wing split, the CRSR, excluding any concerted action.
3. Opposition to Afro demands and stifling of propaganda on that demand.
4. Limitation of discussion on student power thus leaving the initiative to the reformists.
5. Mechanical escalation of struggle after its ebb.
6. Refusal to use defensive formulations.

The New Left was in general caught between a better sense of reality and its intimidation and fear of being called sell-out by PL.

Afro was certainly not aggressive enough on soliciting support from students and publicizing their demand, relying almost entirely on the good will of the faculty. The membership appeared to be divided, and runs from King-reformists to revolutionary black nationalists.

Finally the CRSR was extremely confused on its demand for restructuring, some arguing for it in terms of bridging "the communications gap," others in terms of gaining student power.

Campus Unrest in the U.S., a Case Study

REPORT ON THE HARVARD STRIKE

By Fred Halstead

This spring has seen the most extensive wave of student demonstrations, occupations of campus buildings, and other forms of struggle in colleges and universities in the history of the United States. This new radicalization, of course, is part of the worldwide radicalization of the young generation, especially in the advanced capitalist countries, which reached its peak to date in the May-June 1968 upheaval in France.

American developments, while part of this general phenomenon, have their own logic and dynamic, flowing from the specific conditions in this country: a growing mass resistance to the criminal war in Vietnam and the heightening tempo of the black liberation struggle, yet with the absence of any large working-class party, relative prosperity among the white sector of the population, and the isolation of the students from both the actual working class and from the historical traditions of the revolutionary workers movement.

The April 1969 strike at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is typical of the current series of campus strikes and occupations. The events at Harvard are of special interest because of the role of Harvard as the most exclusive of all American institutions of higher learning, where the cream of the youth of the bourgeoisie itself acquires the training to assume command of the government and financial empire of American imperialism.

The April struggle dated from an incident in December 1968 when a meeting of professors of the faculty of arts and sciences was scheduled to be held in Paine Hall to discuss the future of the Reserve Officers Training Corps [ROTC] at Harvard.

Students are not allowed to attend faculty meetings, but several hundred showed up at Paine Hall before the meeting began and held a sit-in, demanding that the faculty deal with the issue on political, not technical academic grounds.

The meeting was canceled and more than 100 students were disciplined, some by having scholarships revoked, others by probation.

The issue was explained in the January 13-26, 1969, issue of Old Mole, a Boston "underground" newspaper friendly to SDS [Students for a Democratic Society], as follows:

"As a result of student protests against the Vietnam war, the presence of ROTC has become an issue on the Harvard campus this fall....In the liberal view, ROTC courses, presently offered for credit, do not measure up to Harvard's high intellectual standards. Course credit should be withdrawn, but ROTC should be allowed to remain on campus as an extra-curricular activity.

"In the radical view, ROTC is bad because it provides leadership for an Army engaged in the suppression of just popular movements at home and abroad. Hence ROTC should be abolished."

The same issue of Old Mole reprints excerpts from a letter from the Department of the Army, U.S. Army ROTC Instructors Group, Harvard, to the members of the Faculty Committee on Educational Policy. Appealing to the committee to fully support ROTC, the letter said:

"Today reliance upon colleges and universities for officers is greater than ever. For example, the 1968 graduating classes [throughout the country] contained over 11,000 newly commissioned officers who, as they enter the ranks of the active Army, will fill 85% of the required annual input needed to provide the junior leaders for today's troop units...The Armed Forces simply cannot function...without an officer corps comprised largely of college graduates...Who is prepared to trust their sons -- let alone the nation's destiny -- to the leadership of high-school boys and college drop-outs?"

The letter describes as "disturbing" the fact that "there are brilliant young Harvard men with God-given leadership abilities who seem content to waste two years of their life by allowing themselves to be drafted to serve as a private..."

"About 45% of all Army officers currently on active duty are ROTC graduates; 65% of our First Lieutenants and 85% of our Second Lieutenants come from the ROTC program..."

"ROTC is under attack at Harvard now because a small group of student extremists -- a tiny minority of the student body -- have played upon the inherent anti-war sentiment shared by a majority of peace-loving, traditionally isolationist Americans. The Vietnam war, grievous to virtually all of us, is the immediate source of their blanket denunciation of everything related to the military...."

This admission of the power of antiwar sentiment is extremely interesting.

The letter continued: "More important than any point thus far made is the role of Harvard University in setting a pattern of ROTC policy for the entire academic community... 'As Harvard goes, so goes the Army ROTC program' might produce a disaster of real proportions if the ROTC concept is weakened and degraded nationwide."

Under pressure of the agitation against ROTC the faculty of arts and sciences on February 4 voted to remove academic credit from ROTC courses and faculty rank from ROTC instructors, but ROTC was to remain on campus under this recommendation.

The crisis of April 1969 began with a meeting of the Harvard-Radcliffe SDS chapter on Tuesday, April 8, to discuss "militant action" against ROTC. The meeting, attended by several hundred persons, adopted three demands on ROTC:

(1) Abolish ROTC immediately by breaking all existing contracts with the Department of the Army.

(2) Replace all ROTC scholarships with university scholarships.

(3) Restore scholarships withdrawn from students who took part in previous ROTC demonstrations (at Paine Hall).

In addition, three demands on the issue of "Harvard Expansion" were adopted. This refers to plans by several universities in the area to greatly expand facilities with the aim of turning Cambridge into a community largely devoted to military and big-business research, displacing many residents. A campaign to expose this and its effect on rents had been launched by the Cambridge Peace and Freedom party. This issue appears to have been initiated entirely by the student radicals as part of the SDS concept of "community organizing," though residents suffering from evictions and rent pressure are not unsympathetic. This issue has been pressed with special vigor by the Progressive Labor party (Maoist) caucus within SDS.

For PL, this issue serves as a substitute for demands for black control of the black community (including black studies departments), which PL opposes as "nationalist" and "dividing the working class."

The three antiexpansion demands were:

(1) A rollback on rents for Harvard-owned apartment buildings to the level of January 1, 1968.

(2) No evictions at one apartment building which is scheduled to be replaced by a political science library.

(3) No evictions of the 182 families in buildings to be torn down for medical school expansion. That made six demands in all.

No demand for a black studies department was included at this meeting, though the black students had been negotiating unsuccessfully with the administration on this question for some time.

On the question of the action to be taken, the April 8 SDS meeting voted approximately as follows: not to occupy a building immediately, but to take steps of an educational and agitational character leading up to an occupation within a week. The vote on this was close, with about 150 for immediate occupation and 170 for the motion that passed.

The next morning the SDS executive council met and "interpreted" the vote as an authorization to proceed with an occupation at noon the same day, when a rally was scheduled. Some 1,000 attended the noon rally, and Norm Daniels, a member of the PL caucus, called for students to occupy University Hall, the main administration building. At this point most of those present were opposed to this and only about thirty entered the hall. As the rally continued, however, and speeches by several faculty members angered students, more entered the hall.

By 4 p.m., when the administration issued an ultimatum that all those inside were subject to arrest for trespassing, there were nearly 400 students occupying the building with some 800 outside, most of whom were sympathizers.

The first occupiers ejected the university administrators from their offices. Later the students began going through the files.

Large numbers of documents -- some revealing connections between Harvard and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] -- were photocopied and removed from the building. Some of these appeared the next day in the Old Mole and in subsequent special issues of this paper. Included was correspondence between Harvard administrators and the army discussing methods for keeping ROTC on campus and for circumventing even the mild rebuke directed at ROTC by the February 4 faculty vote.

The students adopted a policy of "militant nonviolent obstruction," meaning they would barricade the doors and hold hands if police entered, but would not physically fight the cops.

About 5 a.m., Thursday, April 10 --

some sixteen hours after the sit-in began -- a mass of over 400 policemen made a swift, savage attack on the occupiers, beating both men and women, clearing the building and making more than 200 arrests. Nearly seventy-five students were injured, according to the Harvard Crimson, official campus newspaper, some of them seriously.

A special extra edition of the Crimson appeared that day containing a long article describing some of the police brutality in the raid. The cops who took part in the raid had been assembled during the night from surrounding suburban cities. The university force of fifty men was not used.

The reaction to the raid was electric, and all observers agree that it turned what began as an adventure by a relatively small number of students into a mass strike involving the majority of the student body.

One contributing factor to this was the fact that University Hall faces Harvard Yard, in full view of many student dormitories. For some reason fire alarms were turned on in these dormitories during the raid, and the occupants poured into the Yard, where they witnessed their fellows being clubbed by cops.

The cops also chased some students into dormitories and clubbed groups at random. Some people who had nothing to do with the sit-in were injured.

Shouts of "Strike!" and "On strike, shut it down!" arose spontaneously from the crowds in the Yard.

Just why the university authorities called for this raid -- when they must have known it would be an unpopular move -- is subject to some debate among strike activists. Some believe the authorities simply put into effect a previously worked out plan for such a contingency. Others believe the authorities were prodded into this precipitate move because of the damaging revelations contained in the files which were being exposed.

The official explanation issued by Harvard President Nathan M. Pusey in a press release April 11 is as follows:

"No one can tell what the consequences of their occupation of the headquarters of the central [arts and sciences] Faculty of the University would have been had it been permitted to continue, but surely it would have been virtually impossible to conduct the activity of the Faculty. Even the two-day disruption of Faculty offices has caused serious delay in administrative processes, and the occupiers had already begun to rifle and duplicate the faculty personnel

files and financial records. The alternatives were to restore the building to its rightful officers at once or to allow an entrenched effort to close down the University to drag along for an indefinite period. Neither alternative was palatable, but the one chosen seemed preferable if the freedom of the University was not to be surrendered."

Pusey told the Crimson that the decision to call in police was made at a meeting of his advisers that ended at 10 p.m. April 9. It took from 10 p.m. until dawn to assemble the large force of cops.

With news of the raid spreading and arousing indignation in wide circles, the student government leaders called a rally in the university's Memorial Church for 10 a.m., five hours after the police attack. Some 2,000 persons attended, condemned the calling of police and voted to call a three-day "educational strike" on behalf of the following demands: no police on campus again; dropping of criminal charges and no punishment of the occupiers harsher than probation; a binding student-faculty referendum on ROTC; restoration of scholarships to Paine Hall demonstrators; and restructuring of the decision-making process at Harvard.

That night an SDS meeting of 350 persons, according to the April 11 Crimson, voted to support the Memorial Church strike call, but under the six SDS demands and with a separate picket line. An SDS spokesman declared: "This is our strike. It organized spontaneously as soon as the cops came on campus."

The following night, April 11, SDS held a meeting of supporters of the six demands. This meeting, attended by more than 1,000 persons, elected a fifteen-man strike committee, all SDS members, four of them from the PL caucus. A seventh demand was added -- amnesty for all demonstrators.

On Sunday night, April 13, a meeting called by the SDS strike committee, also attended by more than 1,000 persons, added the eighth demand -- the plan of the Harvard-Radcliffe African and Afro-American Association of Students (AFRO) for a black studies department. The question was raised by AFRO leaders, who also declared AFRO's support for the SDS demands. The Maoist caucus opposed adopting the AFRO demand, as they had from the beginning. The Maoists were defeated and the motion passed overwhelmingly.

This meeting also discussed what attitude to take toward another meeting set for Monday in Harvard Stadium called by leaders of the various student government bodies. The SDS leaders decided not to introduce their demands at the stadium meeting on the grounds that that meeting would

not represent the real strike.

The Monday meeting was attended by 10,000 students. It adopted the following demands: severance of all existing contracts with ROTC; the acceptance of a plan prepared by the Harvard School of Design to counter Harvard expansion; the AFRO demand; amnesty; and structural reform including the establishment of a binding student-faculty senate. A vote for an indefinite strike resulted in a virtual tie and a vote to strike for three more days was passed.

The meeting also unanimously voted to "repudiate the right of the Harvard Corporation to close our University." This was in reply to a threat by the all-powerful corporation to shut down the campus. The students' decision to challenge the authority of that body was one of the most important general effects of the crisis.

The Harvard Corporation is the principal governing board of the university. Its actions are subject only to the review of the Board of Overseers, which is elected by mail ballot of the alumni and is dominated by big businessmen. All university property is in the name of the corporation; every faculty is subject to its authority; all changes in policy or university statutes require its consent; and all degrees and appointments are made by it.

The corporation consists of seven members, the president and six fellows. All six fellows are directors or board members of major corporations.

When a member dies or retires, his replacement is made by the other six. Insofar as the faculty makes decisions, it is at the sufferance of this tiny, self-perpetuating group of top capitalists. That is the real state of democracy at Harvard -- as it is in essence at virtually every major university in the United States.

On Tuesday, April 15, over 80 percent of the students stayed out of classes, and where classes were held, many of the teachers turned them into discussions of the strike issues. This situation prevailed until the end of the week when another mass meeting was scheduled for Friday night. During this period the campus was a beehive of radical educational activity with discussions everywhere. Not only students but faculty and nonteaching employees at the school became heavily involved.

The philosophy department gave its building to the strike and became a center of activity with mimeograph machines, meeting rooms, and hallways busy around the clock.

The graphic studies department building was devoted to turning out posters, graphic displays, red armbands, etc., for the strike. This was done by the GSD Artists' Cooperative formed a day after the police raid. This group, said the April 18 Crimson, "is part of the general humanist groundswell that rose around the taking of the building. The group is not affiliated with SDS or any other political group." This was typical of much of the strike activity.

It was the artists' cooperative that designed the red clenched fist that became the symbol of the strike and which was stenciled on anything the students brought in, including shirts (which were worn) and bedsheets (which were hung out of windows as signs).

On Thursday, April 17, the faculty of arts and sciences met to "clarify" its position on ROTC. It passed a resolution which was the product of intricate behind-the-scenes maneuvering and which left the issue still to be decided by negotiations with the army. The resolution states in part:

"That the principle governing ROTC be that it operate as other ordinary extracurricular activities...[and] that existing contracts inconsistent with this principle be terminated as soon as legally possible."

The existing contracts run for three years and the resolution does not preclude some sort of contract keeping ROTC at Harvard, though it does imply a rebuke to the ROTC program which neither the army nor the corporation finds to its liking. The faculty meeting also promised other reforms in a vague way.

On Friday, April 18, the mass stadium meeting -- again attended by 10,000 -- voted on the basis of "progress" at the faculty meeting to suspend the strike for seven days, when a strike vote by secret ballot was scheduled.

On April 22, the faculty voted to adopt, with minor amendments, the AFRO proposal for an Afro-American studies department in which students would have a voting voice in appointing faculty. This would be the first time students have ever been given a direct voice in appointing faculty at Harvard.

A few actions involving fewer than 200 students were carried out by SDS or the PL caucus during the week, but the overwhelming majority of the students returned to classes. When the strike vote was held, only 4,000 voted and of those, 70 percent voted not to continue the strike at this time.

The Harvard expansion issue remains

about where it was when the strike began except that some attention has been drawn to it. The ROTC question remains in dispute and further mass struggle on this issue is quite possible.

Three features of the Harvard strike of April 1969 stand out: one, the power black students have to wrest significant concessions for their struggle; two, the rapidity with which previously nonpolitical students became spontaneously involved in overt radical activity; and three, the tremendous force of the

antiwar issue.

The administration was forced to counter the anti-ROTC demand with the most elaborate sophistry and secret maneuvers. No one, not even the army, dared to speak for retaining ROTC on the ground that it contributes to the war in Vietnam. On the contrary, they did everything they could to claim that the war is not the issue, that the real issue is academic freedom for those who want to take ROTC, or some such specious argument.