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**HARMLESS OR HOSTILE? :
THE SDS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
IN THE SPRING OF 1970**

In the spring of 1970, student protest was at an all-time high across the nation. Protests against the Vietnam War became more urgent and excited, in some cases, more violent. When four students were shot and killed at a large student protest on the Kent State, Ohio campus, students' anger and campus unrest across the nation exploded. Slightly ahead of its time, however, the University of Oregon campus experienced major episodes of student unrest in the month preceding Kent State. On April 15th, 1970, the ROTC facilities on the University of Oregon campus were bombed, and no one was found responsible. Shortly thereafter, a large group of University students participated in an overnight "sit-in" at Johnson Hall--an event that ended with numerous arrests and the violent involvement of the National Guard. Both of these events were the culmination of a series of student protests against the ROTC established on the University of Oregon campus.

The rather loosely organized (and increasingly weakening) Oregon chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) reportedly influenced a number of student protest situations leading up to these events, but were the ROTC bombing on April 15th, or the riots following the Johnson Hall sit-in on April 23rd, 1970, inevitable occurrences independent of the SDS' contributions? The true identity and campus role of the University of Oregon chapter of the SDS in 1969-1970 is difficult to define; reports of who the SDS was at that time varies within the individual accounts by the administration,

The Oregon Daily Emerald, *The Augur* (a Eugene underground newspaper), the general student population, and the SDS members themselves. It is clear to a certain extent, that the local SDS mirrored the national chapter, but it also mirrored the general sentiment of the national youth movement at large. The SDS undoubtedly had some impact on the events in the spring of 1970 at the University of Oregon . . . but how, and to what extent?

A Brief History

In June 1962, in Port Huron, Michigan, the initial 60-some members of the SDS approved its founding manifesto. The SDS sought to "wrest control" of their destinies through a "participatory democracy," in which they believed individuals should take part in determining the social decisions that impact their lives, and society should be organized in order to facilitate such participation.¹ In 1962, the organization received a \$5,000 grant, with which it established the Economic and Research Action Project (ERAP). SDS members lived in and surveyed poor neighborhoods, using their findings to organize rent strikes and sit-ins that would result in building repairs, house inspections, and code enforcements. However, as the SDS gained popularity (and notoriety) throughout the rest of the sixties, the organization's approach to creating change shifted from rather quiet community projects to making national noise through dramatic protests, some of which involved violence. Beginning with a march on Washington of 25,000 participants in 1965, this new attitude manifested itself in events like the 1968 occupation and destruction of administrative offices at Columbia University, and ultimately, the split-off of a few SDS members to form the extreme and very violent group called The Weathermen (later modified to the Weather Underground) at the end of the sixties.

¹ Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society.

After its establishment in 1965 (the existent Students for Socialist Action—SSA changed its name and aligned its goals with those of the SDS), the University of Oregon chapter of SDS had its own evolution, throughout which they spent a great deal of time dealing with their own identity as a campus organization. Early in its existence, the SDS hosted meetings and parties, and created an irregular newsletter (eventually named “The Irregular”), all in an attempt to gather support for various causes, such as the Faculty Student Committee to Stop the War, the Reed SDS, striking California Farmworkers, and the Portland Committee to End the War in Vietnam.² They affiliated themselves with local demonstrations, sponsored teach-ins, etc., but were not a major force of change on campus. Their biggest success was “US Memorial Week: Feeling Caught Up in the System” in the fall of 1968, which involved a film festival, seminars, and a Grateful Dead concert at the end of the week. Besides this event, a “table-in” and a handful of protests, the SDS did not make headlines for the rest of 1968, and had noticeably lost their sense of humor since the organization's beginnings. Despite the group's weakening, the *Emerald* announced on October 8, 1969: “SDS is back,” and the group that had been “more or less dormant at the University for nearly a year,” was to march, 200 strong, to the residence of Robert D. Clark, the University President.³ Throughout the next two years, the SDS would make campus headlines here and there for various defiant—and at times, quite theatrical—acts in protest of the Vietnam War, and specifically of the ROTC on the University of Oregon campus. During the spring in 1969: “It seems like a long time ago, but where things are at now began with registration of Spring term. Several

²“S.D.S Bulletin #2.” (11/2/65) Students for a Democratic Society Folder, 1963-1969. Laura J Bock Papers, also, “Socialist Group to Join National Leftist Club.” *Oregon Daily Emerald* 6 October 1965, 1.

³ “SDS Demonstrates Against ROTC.” *Oregon Daily Emerald* [University of Oregon, Eugene] 8 October, 1969, p. 8.

people in SDS decided to register for ROTC courses, an act of unknowing magnitude. They were refused admission. Ralph Nusbaum, one of those who attempted to register, complained to the faculty senate that in an open university with free exchange of ideas, all courses ought to be open. This prompted a resolution to challenge ROTC's status with the University."⁴ By the spring of 1970, challenging the ROTC was the SDS' main goal.

April 1970

In the months preceding the April riots, the administration documented and reported to the state a number of episodes of student unrest, many of which listed SDS members as participants. The report stated: "Animal blood thrown on ROTC registration personnel at McArthur Court. Persons unknown (3-4); A Women's Liberation group later claimed responsibility."⁵ *The Oregon Daily Emerald* reported the involved students in connection with SDS.⁶ Though a "Women's Group" was one of many different strike committees created within the SDS, it is uncertain as to whether the SDS affiliated group was responsible; as another *Emerald* article reported that an SDS "follow-up" would "show SDS 'solidarity' with the women's action."⁷ The report continued with a number of meeting disruptions, the P.E. building fire, protests against Weyerhaeuser and oil company recruiters, all of which generally describe "students," "disruptive persons," etc. as the participants, until this entry: "Forced Entry to McArthur Court Rock Concert . . . organized by SDS." The *Emerald* reported on this incident, and listed the demands made by the SDS at the concert: "1) All seats \$1.50, 2) No pigs on the premises, 3) That

⁴ "Students on Strike: Two Weeks of Action." *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] April 28 – May 2, 1970 (Vol I, no. 13.), p. 3.

⁵ "Clippings – Student Unrest Report to the State, May 1970" file, 1969-1970. Clark Presidential Archives, Univ. of Oregon Lib., Eugene, p.4.

⁶ SDS Strike Committees. "Student Strike" file, 1969-1970. Clark Presidential Archives, Univ. of Oregon Lib., Eugene.

⁷ "SDS Plans Action as 'Follow-Up'" *Oregon Daily Emerald* (University of Oregon) 8 Jan. 1970, p.2.

community persons act as ushers rather than University employees, 4) All profits above expenses go to community projects.”⁸ The April 15th riots were reported, again with unidentified participants, as was the Johnson Hall sit-in. Then, on page 10: “Class disruptions” involving a “small group of persons calling themselves ‘Radical Arts Troupe.’” The Radical Arts Troupe was another of the strike committees organized within the SDS.⁹ The report went on to document the 13th Avenue Barricades. According to Blaine Ackley, a major student player in the SDS at the time, the barricades (and subsequent closing-down of 13th Street once and for all) were the climactic end to a large SDS-organized protest at the downtown Eugene draft center.¹⁰ The *Emerald* also mentioned the SDS' participation in the barricades.¹¹

The report to the state provided a clear timeline of events leading up to the April 15th riots, with mention of participants (when known). What is most interesting, however, is to note what the report was *not* able to identify. For example, the Radical Arts Troupe was listed as an independent group, rather than as a SDS affiliation. Therefore, the SDS was undoubtedly involved in the “main” riots in April 1970. To what degree, however, is unknown, according to the report.

The *Emerald* reported on a number of unrest situations in which the SDS was involved during this time, including the Huntington Shingle Mill Pickets, arrests of SDS members at a rally to protest the arrest of the Chicago Seven (one of whom was John Froines, a University Assistant Professor of Chemistry and a prominent member of SDS),

⁸ Emerald Clipping. Student Unrest. “Mac Court Concert” file, 1969-1970, Clark Presidential Archives, Univ. of Oregon Lib., Eugene.

⁹ SDS Strike Committees.

¹⁰ Clark, Suzanne. Personal interview with Blaine Ackley, November, 2003.

¹¹ Student Unrest. “13th Ave. Barricades” file, 1969-1970. Student Unrest, Clark Presidential Archives, Univ. of Oregon Lib., Eugene.

as well as the disruption of various meetings on campus. However, for many of the episodes of unrest, the administration was unable to place responsibility. When the P.E. fire of February 16th, 1969 was declared by the local fire department to be arson, *The Augur* stated: "From our acquaintance with the local SDS chapter, it doesn't seem likely they would commit an act of this magnitude. The main emphasis of SDS here has been on education and increasing awareness rather than this kind of revolutionary warfare. To start a fire seems entirely inconsistent with their past actions and present programs. This doesn't preclude, however, individual action by some frustrated SDS members."¹² Even the radical underground was unable to identify the violent culprits.

Quite disparate from the statements in *The Augur*, however, were the views of students polled on their perception of the SDS. On April 27th, 1970, the *Register-Guard* released an article on a graduate student's findings in a campus poll regarding war and protest issues. "Student attitudes toward the *militant* [italics added] Students for a Democratic Society were even more pronounced, according to the survey. Only 5 per cent agreed, for instance, that 'SDS is a non-violent organization,' while 80 per cent disagreed."¹³ The perceptions of the SDS by the general student population were quite different than those held by campus radicals. However, the *Register-Guard* and other local newspapers were considered more tied to the conservative local community, at least in their usual representation of the episodes on campus, and therefore some of the information released may have been biased. Nevertheless, this example emphasizes the fact that the SDS represented many different things to many different campus groups.

¹² "The Start of Guerilla Warfare?" *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] March 3 – March 16, 1970 (Vol. I no. 10), p. 4.

¹³ "Grad's UO Poll Reveals Views of 'Silent Majority.'" *The Eugene Register-Guard* [Eugene, Oregon] 27 April, 1970: 10A.

There was also misunderstanding between the SDS and the local community. According to an editorial in *The Augur* regarding the rally for the Chicago Seven, and the local perception of the organization, “Local people felt SDS members were not aware of Lane County problems and were playing abstract games at the University. SDS people felt local groups were apathetic about vital national politics.”¹⁴

April 15th Bombing and the Johnson Hall Sit-in

While no direct connection can be found between the SDS and the actual bombing of the ROTC on April 15th, a short *Emerald* article written a few days prior stated: “At a Wednesday meeting, the University Students for a Democratic Society outlined a plan of action for an April 15 mobilization against the war in Vietnam . . .”¹⁵ However, an organization not clearly affiliated with SDS called “New Mobe” also “had been organizing for a couple of weeks in Eugene for ‘End ROTC, April 15th.’”¹⁶ This group could be held solely responsible for the violence that took place on April 15th, but one of those arrested for inciting the riot was Ralph Nusbaum, the SDS member who had symbolically attempted to register for ROTC courses at the beginning of spring term. He was arrested among six others, one of whom was Carol Nusbaum, his wife.

The arrests made in connection with April 15th sparked another major protest and march on the city jail. However, the SDS' documented role at this protest was different than at other protests: "Members of the SDS and other community organizations attempted to restrain the crowd who were best characterized as 'hostile' spectators." ¹⁷

¹⁴ “March Reveals Sense of ‘Community.’” Editorial. *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] March 3 – March 16, 1970 (Vol. I no. 10), p. 4.

¹⁵ “SDS Plans Action for IRS Deadline.” *Oregon Daily Emerald* [University of Oregon, Eugene] 2 April, 1970, p. 3.

¹⁶ “SDS Plans Action for IRS Deadline.”

¹⁷ “Students on Strike . . .”

Though not acknowledged as responsible for the Johnson Hall sit-in in the Report to the State, Ed Dorsch wrote in the *Oregon Quarterly* that the SDS, “carefully planned the sit-in at Johnson Hall.”¹⁸ However, as mirrored in the inconsistent documentation of the SDS, and according to former SDS member Allen Cox, the sit-in “was all pretty loose . . . people would come and go.”¹⁹ As the sit-in situation escalated, Dorsch states in the *Quarterly* article, “According to Cox, once it was clear the police were on their way, the SDS leaders huddled to discuss their options. All of them decided they couldn’t afford to be arrested and took off, except for the vet wearing a ranger hat: Timothy Travis.”

Behind the Bullhorn

Timothy Travis was an active member of the SDS, and also a Vietnam veteran. He served in the Marine Corps for three years, but never actually went to the front lines, and moved to Eugene in the summer of 1969. In the summer of 1970, the Student Court found Travis guilty “of disrupting the educational process because of his participation in a guerilla theatre skit in a classroom.”²⁰ As identified by the report to the state mentioned earlier, the Radical Arts Troupe was an active committee within SDS, and attracted members with dramatic flair. SDS member Dennis Reynolds joined RAT as his first experience with the antiwar movement. Though he felt that he would help protest the war, he admitted, “some of it was just pure ego.” Despite occasional ego-based motivations, Tim Travis would argue that the radicals acted on a strong, and legitimate set of beliefs, as he did in an article in *The Augur*. In regards to negative reactions to “vandalism by the left,” Travis argued, “The point is that there are two conflicting sets of

¹⁸ Dorsch, Ed. “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay.” *Oregon Quarterly* Spring 1999: 31.

¹⁹ “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay,” p. 31.

²⁰ “Is Campus Repression Intensifying?” *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] September 24 – October 7, 1970 (Vol. II no. 1), p. 4.

values. If the radicals considered the same things to be crimes that the government calls crime, then maybe you could call radicals irresponsible. But the facts seem to indicate quite strongly that radicals act out of a deep seated code of ethics.”²¹ Travis’ involvement in the events of April 15th got him arrested, and “immediately singled out as a leader and a troublemaker,” he was put in solitary confinement.²² “By [the government’s] analysis a group of people lost their minds a while back, then worked very hard to make a lot of other people lose their minds and then all of these psychotics marched on the ROTC building to demonstrate just how insane they were . . . Perhaps we should discard the insanity and irresponsibility thesis and seek a more penetrating explanation. That is, perhaps we should if we are really interested in the truth.”²³ Travis spoke out against the administration and government for their dismissal of the students’ protest, comparing the situation to that of the oppression of the Indians by the white man: “After a great many disappointments the Indians decided to take action. They knew that the White man would consider them wild-eyed anarchists but they really didn’t care what the White man thought.”²⁴

Travis’ flair for the dramatic earned him charges and arrests, but it also earned him lasting attention that undoubtedly made an impression on many of the students involved in the protests, SDS members or not. It was often the involvement of certain key leaders who affected the route and outcome of the protests, and these leaders were sometimes SDS members. Blaine Ackley prevented a potentially violent clash with police in the march prior to the 13th Avenue barricades by chanting in the policemen’s

²¹ Travis, Tim. “A Tightly Organized Group of Anarchists?” The Augur [Eugene, Oregon] April 28 – May 2, 1970 (Vol. I no. 13), p. 3-5.

²² “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay”

²³ “A Tightly Organized Group of Anarchists?” p. 3

²⁴ “A Tightly Organized Group of Anarchists?” p. 3

favor during their coincidental strike. The students' chant, "More pay for police!" however hollow or staged, kept the police secure and calm and allowed for the protestors to march on, unheeded. However, the youth movement created a number of leaders independent of the SDS—it may have been coincidence in that these SDS members were movement leaders at the U of O, but it also may have been a representation of the organization's ability to draw in those who sought proactive and immediate change.

The U of O chapter of SDS was in a unique position in comparison with other schools: it had a nationally recognized SDS faculty member for a mentor. John Froines, an assistant chemistry professor, eventually resigned his teaching position after the troubles he encountered after his arrest among the Chicago Seven at the 1969 Democratic Convention. During his time at the U of O, however, he was the brain behind one of two groups within SDS as they continued efforts to define themselves and their audience. According to Blaine Ackley, at a fall 1969 SDS meeting, Froines asserted his disagreement with the philosophy that Kip Morgan and the more "visceral" members were aiming to focus on. Froines wanted a more academic and rational approach to make up the organization, while Morgan utilized comic relief and drama as an attraction for new members. Ultimately, the "high theater" approach won out among the young college crowd, who were easily attracted by spectacle. Froines continued to be a presence in the organization, however, until his protested resignation after a year of unpaid leave in September, 1970.

Youth Culture

The SDS was involved in the events of April 1970, and some SDS members played leadership roles. However, there is no documentation of the SDS making or

throwing bombs (at least not until the emergence of the Weather Underground in Eugene). Even those who were leaders, like Tim Travis, did not necessarily continue their radical involvement with the movement—though they continued to oppose the war, they adopted different methods of protest. After the shock of Kent State, “things had changed,” and Travis “had adopted a pacifist ethic.” Travis admitted that this move “of course caused [him] to become completely discredited in the eyes of ‘the movement’ as it became increasingly violent.”²⁵ Though Gerald Bogen, Vice President under Robert D. Clark, spoke of the Weather Underground’s prominence in Eugene, including their role in attempted assassinations, the group’s visit to the campus in December of 1969 was not very successful. “There didn’t appear to be a great deal of support for the Weathermen. Of the hundred or so at the meeting, perhaps thirty were SDSers. Some dug it, most didn’t.”²⁶ Especially after Kent State, many members of the SDS in Eugene perceived the Weather Underground as irrational and detrimental to the movement. Those within the violent group felt quite the opposite, however, as Todd Gitlin states in The Sixties: “The militants, whether from early or late SDS, thought they were pragmatists, learning from experience that when you beat your head against a wall often enough there is something to be said for turning to dynamite.”²⁷ Many, like SDS member Dennis Reynolds, disagreed: “he remembers . . . ‘I had to stop and ‘look what’s going down’ . . . I ran away.’”²⁸

Given that violence was not a notable characteristic of the U of O SDS, how much of what happened in April 1970 was simply a product of the youth movement as a whole?

²⁵ A Spring of Outrage & Dismay, p. 34

²⁶ “Weathermen Attempt to Woo Local SDS.” The Augur [Eugene, Oregon] December 9 – January 5, 1969 (Vol. I no. 5), p. 3.

²⁷ Gitlin, Todd. The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage. New York: Bantam Books, 1987. p. 380

²⁸ A Spring of Outrage & Dismay, p. 34

As Gitlin states, “In the spreading cross-hatch where the student movement and the counterculture intersected, a *youth* identity said, in effect: To be young and American is to have been betrayed; to be alive is to be enraged.”²⁹ It became part of a college students’ *culture* to “be enraged.” Campuses across the nation were experiencing this rage, and though SDS was involved in many of the episodes of unrest nationally (simply because of the following they had accumulated throughout the sixties), many violent episodes various different groups, if not simply the general student populace. Gitlin paradoxically refers to the almost *fated* reaction of youth to the national complicity that had taken hold, but also makes reference to violence’s ability to sweep spectators in: “The enormity of what was happening in the world, even packaged in media images, swept us into a kind of voyeuristic complicity . . . Why not seize upon violence, why not will what had first been experienced as a terrible destiny?”³⁰

Not everyone within the U of O student population agreed with the dramatic and violent tactics being embraced by certain students. Various polls and signed petitions during the 1969-1970 school year from a large portion of students represented a “silent majority” of those who disagreed with the war, but also disagreed with the violent tactics being used. Even the editors of *The Augur* were critical of the violence, asserting, “We’ve lived here too long in relative peace and lack of paranoia to have it spoiled by adventuristic, stupid people who are creating situations that are impossible to handle,” and requesting that people “be restrained from useless provocation.”³¹ Even if the youth movement encouraged extreme actions, it was not a notion that swept the U of O campus,

²⁹ *The Sixties* p. 285-6.

³⁰ *The Sixties*, p. 317

³¹ “Provocateurs Rot Demonstrations.” *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] April 28 – May 2, 1970 (Vol. I, no. 13), p. 2.

and in its rejection of the Weather Underground, SDS members were among those students who generally kept their heads about them and sought more thoughtful means to challenge the status quo.

Keeping History

Certainly because of its methods (or lack thereof) of documentation, who exactly the SDS was is represented mainly by current perspectives of past members, or documented events within local newspapers. This greatly hinders the development of a clear picture of the organization. Blaine Ackley mentioned the lack of respect for *The Oregon Daily Emerald* as a trustworthy source (a sentiment unfortunately shared by many today, as well, even since its separation from the University), as it was a voice for the administration. Therefore, SDS often put out flyers as a means of getting the word out for recruitment, events, etc. As earlier mentioned, the organization put out “The Irregular,” though it is difficult to find copies still around today. However, these facts to some extent represent the SDS’ motivations to keep the group content-oriented rather than focusing on public relations. Their voices were better heard through the RAT and various protests, than through biased newspapers. As Allen Cox, a student who sat in at Johnson Hall and volunteered his poster design skills to the SDS states, they “weren’t too interested in having anybody do funky rock-and-roll posters announcing the takeover. What they really wanted were bodies.”³²

Besides SDS’ lack of documentation, the administration’s incomplete documentation does not contribute to a better understanding of the organization. When the administration does mention the SDS, there is a sense that the organization was considered harmless and ineffective. In the report to the state of the McArthur Court

³² “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay,” p. 31.

protest, the administration states, “they were organized by SDS, if one is to accept the claims of SDS.” In a recent interview with Gerald Bogen, he referred to the SDS as “lightweights.” These instances raise a question as to whether the administration was right in their perception of the group, or whether they were not aware of the SDS’ quiet, but legitimate power within the student population. The administration’s statements, however, do support the fact that the SDS was not a publicly violent group, suggesting that the SDS alone did not instigate the major events in April 1970.

Another interesting point raised within the discussion of the administration’s relationship with SDS is the notion of the students’ need for oppression by the administration. The administration may have well felt that not only were the SDS not a problem, but that the riots and protests experienced on campus were expected episodes of unrest that would eventually cease to be a problem. The U of O campus had historically been a more liberal campus, causing the students to create tension in order to call attention to themselves. An article in *The Augur* titled, “Is Campus Repression Intensifying?” chronologically lists the administrations’ actions of “repression” on the student body, asserting that “in addition to posing a serious threat to civil liberties, could itself become an issue of student protest in 1970-71.”³³ Here they seem to be seeking out reasons for protest, reaffirming the notion that “To be young and American is to have been betrayed; to be alive is to be enraged.” This concept truly clouds the issue in attempting to understand the SDS’ relationship with its home university.

The Aftermath

“Student movements are chronically unstable: part of their membership rotates out every year . . . But in the sectarian fratricide and the rush to revolution, no one was

³³ “Is Campus Repression Intensifying?” _p. 4.

recruiting. The spectacle of the post-SDS factions hurling incomprehensible curses at one another was not inviting to newcomers.”³⁴ Gitlin’s observation of the student movement on the national level applied in the same way to the SDS at the University of Oregon. The organization had chronically debated over how they would define themselves, and as the movement changed with the new and more aggressive students, the organization’s identity became even more difficult to establish or define. Steven Ritchie, an SDS member at the time, reflected in Ed Dorsch’s article, “things had changed, shifted somehow. The more radical people had gone sort of underground, and the other group was not nearly as active.”³⁵ A polarization within SDS began to occur, with a split between extremist and violent groups (eg. the Weather Underground), and their calmer (perhaps tired and disillusioned) counterpart. Kent State scared a lot of students, forcing them to reevaluate their priorities within the movement. Tim Travis recalled of the fall 1970, during which the Weather Underground set off two different bombs that “A few months later, those people with whom I had so strongly clashed were dead, underground, or in jail.”³⁶ Some SDS members, like Steven Ritchie, transferred dropped out of SDS, even left the University out of sheer frustration by the violence of the Weather Underground.³⁷ Similar to what happened on the national level, the SDS’ original goals were long lost in the fray created by a “new movements” and a new SDS. Tom Hayden reflected upon this loss when he published an article regarding the unwarranted “rock star” status he and the other Chicago Seven had attained over the months they spent on trial. “The truth is that although we served an important

³⁴ The Sixties, p. 415

³⁵ “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay,” p. 34

³⁶ “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay,” p. 34

³⁷ “A Spring of Outrage & Dismay,” p. 35

revolutionary purpose for six months, we discovered a lot that was wrong about ourselves. Even though our identity was on trial, even though our habits were truly radical compared to those of bourgeois society, that hardly meant that our identity and habits were revolutionary by our own standards. In different ways we all came to sense our own limitations.”³⁸ His statement not only reflected his personal situation, but SDS and the movement’s situation as a whole. As the movement slowed and changed hands, its own limitations and lack of foresight became evident. This weakness allowed for the Weather Underground and other such groups to grab people’s waning attention, and unfortunately, things only spiraled downward to the movement’s ultimate conclusion.

The University of Oregon chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, however it ultimately defined itself, or was perceived, was a relatively active force in 1969 and 1970. These students made headlines and played leadership roles in a number of protests that dealt with Vietnam, by publicly rejecting the ROTC and criticizing corporate and community complacency to the horrors taking place on the other side of the world. U of O SDS’ members were suspended, tear gassed, arrested, published, hated, revered. The group also undoubtedly involved itself in the events specific to April, 1970, and may take credit for the sit-in at Johnson Hall. But the April 15th destruction of the ROTC building, and the April 21st sit-in most likely would have occurred even without the presence of the SDS. The youth movement was in a frenzy, and the bombs that were set off across the nation and on the U of O campus were not built by the whimsical RAT, or the intellectual and focused Froines followers, or the self-mocking editors of *The Irregular*. What happened on the U of O campus in 1970 was, in a sense, fated by a national pattern of

³⁸ Hayden, Tom. “The Limits of the Conspiracy.” *The Augur* [Eugene, Oregon] July 1970 (Vol. I no. 17), p. 5.

youthful, enraged, instinctual reactions to “The enormity of what was happening in the world,” and though SDS members may have stormed concerts, closed streets, and thrown pig’s blood, they did not throw bombs.

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