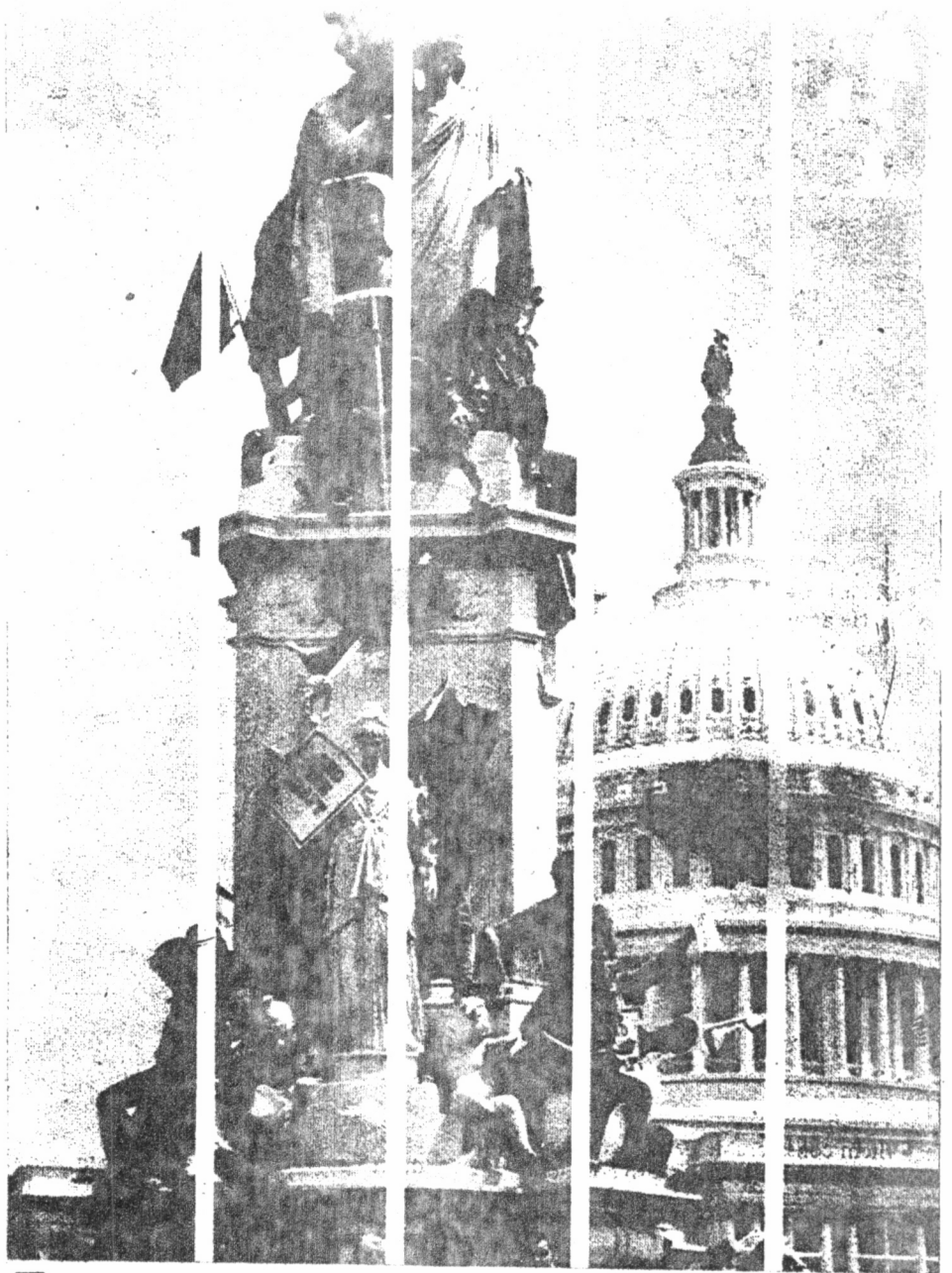


# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 11 OF 16

FOLDER 21

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE  
YOUNG M RUSSELL DEC 1971



the  
**conspiracy**  
of the  
**young**  
Paul Lauter  
Florence Howe

**Michele Russell**  
(Detroit Industrial Mission)

Tuesday, December 14, 1971

Central Methodist Church

**control**  
**conflict**  
**change**

630 West Boston  
Detroit, Michigan 48202  
(313)-869-0043

Sponsored by the Motor City Labor League and the Black Workers Congress

UP FROM COMPLICITY

A Speech by Michele Russell

Michele Russell has had a great deal of experience in the field of education and is presently with Detroit Industrial Mission.

The subject of her speech was THE CONSPIRACY OF THE YOUNG, by Paul Lauter and Florence Howe, (World Publishing Company, 1971).

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The speech was delivered to attending members of Control, Conflict and Change, on Tuesday, December 14, 1971, at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Mich.

Up From Complicity was the fourth presentation of the second year program of Control, Conflict and Change, a contemporary education program sponsored by the Motor City Labor League and the Black Workers Congress.

For further information:

Control, Conflict and Change  
630 W. Boston  
Detroit, Michigan  
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## UP FROM COMPLICITY

a discussion by  
Michele Russell

Conspiracy of the Young is a book about education, about history, and about what people learn in trying to affect history when they feel they are outside of it. It's also about a particular mass of people: white, American, middle-class youth, familiar to us. People who can be described as some of the most coddled, well-fed, innocent, confused, misinformed, self-centered, indulgent, arrogant, naive, well-meaning, culturally and politically deprived and underprivileged group in recent history. If it sounds like I'm swearing at you, I'm really not. That was an objective description. Conspiracy of the Young is about how white, American, middle-class youth articulated their concerns. I don't mean articulation in the way the media usually describes it, or the way our teachers use the term when they're marking us excellent or underprivileged. I don't mean it simply in the sense of being able to regurgitate in well-rounded phrases and pear-shaped tones what people have fed into our brains. I'm talking about articulation as first, the expression of a personal consciousness of reality, a personal awareness of what is going on in the world and your place in that. Secondly, I'm referring to being able to bring that consciousness to bear in some kind of focussed social force, acting on the basis of what you understand. Conspiracy of the Young is also about the growing discrepancy between what this mass of people (including all of you) were taught about the world and what they learned in the world. Conspiracy of the Young describes a period of time, a decade, an experience that all of us lived through. In that way it makes this discussion probably one of the easiest and at the same time one of the most difficult for us to participate in and evaluate rationally. But we'll do our best.

My recollection of the sixties is that when it started, white middle-class youth didn't have many clues as to how to understand themselves, their country, the period of history they were experiencing, or what in fact a period of history was. They had a few memorized phrases from the American Revolutionary War, and also the anti-Communist -set of the Cold War. They had some lines of Beat poetry from Allan Ginsberg and others about how the best minds of the previous generation had been driven to various forms of insanity; and they were also being taught in school via Thomas Jefferson about how it was in many ways the responsibility of each generation to start from scratch. Remember that? Every 20 years we burn everything that has gone before. We start constructing reality as though there were no history, as though we were completely capable of starting an entire process from the beginning. We inherit only a moral responsibility to build our consciousness with the tools of present lived experience. Well, they tried it. But when white youth began in earnest to examine their lives, they came up empty. Mainly, they just knew they felt alienated, disaffected, disoriented and angry. It's not surprising. If they lived in any of the major cities of the US, their neighborhoods were physically falling apart, life was literally a constant fight, all the work they got was rotten, the best they could do was just hang. If they lived in the suburbs (the breeding ground for most of the white New



Left's constituency) they were engulfed in settings which were designed deliberately to create a social reality insulated and separate from the forces that were shaping history inside and outside the US. The symbolic structures that gave their communities character were concrete shopping centers, drive-ins, and freeways. People lived boxed in, privatized lives, as far away as they could get from each other and the work they had to do in order to survive economically. The only collective behavior which their communities were structured to encourage was consumption. Their primary means of enjoying themselves was acquiring technological gadgets. They judged their ability to "keep pace with the times" in terms of how well they kept on top of the infinite number of crap products capitalism manufactured for the stupification, diversion, and mystification of its citizenry. Oblivion seemed to be the only form of available relief. And that was only temporary. Parents, trying to slow down, drank and popped tranquilizers. Their children, trying to speed up, got into car clubs, bikes, ups, and rock and roll. And no matter how fast or slow they went, something was always missing.

Then finally, in 1960, a new national leader arrived on the scene who spoke directly to youth. He articulated their despair, aired their malaise, legitimated their existence as a group in society, and urged them to direct their energies towards exploring new frontiers with the words, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." John F. Kennedy who, in Norman Mailer's phrase, became the superman of the supermarket, arrived, marketing imperialism in a new package.

White youth didn't realize what was going on at that particular time, not the constituency that was to be put in motion in the 60's. They'd been socialized to hear that call and to respond to it favorably, eagerly, out of desperation. Because from the time they were born they were educated to serve. And by the time they left high school, as Paul Lauter and Florence Howe mention in one of the chapters in Conspiracy of the Young, they could say proudly, "I'm only a body doing a job."

If that sounds harsh, we should try to remember what life was like then and, for that matter, what it's still like. I remember going to school in the 50's and the early 60's. Rows of seats bolted to the floor: they were always hard, they were always made out of iron. You couldn't move around in them, you were always facing front. I remember being patrolled up and down the corridors in single-file lines. Teachers with sticks standing in front of the room to make sure you were ready; mainly, ready to wait. We were always ready for something, even though it never happened. Hands folded, eyes in front, no talking, no moving, no screaming, red light. Those were the ingredients of the whole environment, the behavior that we were being socialized to accept and reproduce in order to pass, in order to get to the next stage where our domination would continue. And we were also socialized not to cheat, which really meant not to share. If you knew the answer, you'd better not tell anyone else about it, because that meant you would both flunk. Materially, we were being conditioned to grow up and to come to consciousness of ourselves in a society, in an environment which was really like a bomb shelter. That wasn't any accident, either. Remember, there was a Cold War. In many cases schools were built to serve as bomb shelters. In the cities they were fire traps; in the suburbs they were bomb shelters. So, we were

being trained to live crises and at the same time to be mentally immune to the actual changes going on in the world. And we went through it all with contradictory expectations. Our teachers had contradictory expectations of us. The educational line that we were taught to tread was carefully plotted to encourage on the one hand competition and individualism in behavior, and on the other hand, uncritical acceptance, conformity, and rote-memorization in thought. And we went through it all in the national interest, in self-defense. In 1957 and 1958, during the period when the Soviet Union first successfully challenged the American nation's own technologically-based definition of what it meant to be first by launching Sputnik, our immediate response as a nation was to introduce very elaborate forms of tracking in the schools. For the first time in the development of the American nation, national defense required mass mobilization of trained minds as well as bodies. For the first time, white American middle-class youth were introduced to the semblance of a cultural experience that Black people have been going through physically and culturally for several hundred years. With tracking and with the whole system of mobilization of a national resource, which was youth, which was talent, which was knowledge, for the end of national military self-defense, the colonial aspect of capitalist rule intensified and affected whites as well as non-white peoples.

One of the things that happened just materially was that the school districts were changed. When people were moving from grammar school to high school, or from grammar school to junior high to high school, they usually wound up leaving the community that they were in before 1957. They wound up having their choices of where they would go to school restricted, who they would associate with once they got in school restricted and the subjects they would take, the occupations they were training themselves for restricted. And to make sure that students' choices of career coincided with the agenda of continued American imperial hegemony in the world, certain occupations were made draft-deferrable. You had the choice of staying in school to acquire the skills to develop the technological capacity of the US Government to wage a war against Viet Nam, or of being drafted as cannon fodder for that war. A choice between criminality and victimization. Call it channeling or a subtle form of colonization, the process involves recruitment, involves relocation, involves isolation, reorientation and control of specified groups of people. It involves us in powerless participation in and reproduction of our oppression.

But we didn't know about that. It was a sign of intelligence, it was a reward to be placed in various levels of the tracking system for us then. We were only dimly aware of the deliberate nature of what was going on. We just knew that acceleration meant we were being put through some very mean paces. We had to learn faster; we had to stay in school longer; we had to produce more. The ends to which all that energy and all that production and all that delayed gratification was being put remained obscure during this period. At the same time tracked acceleration was occurring, it seemed we were running faster to stay in the same place, because the environment in the schools didn't change any. Our teachers still trained us to be ready to wait. Probably most succinctly described in the words of Chuck Berry, our growing frustration

was voiced in songs like "Too Much Monkey-Business for Me." There's a verse in that song that goes: "The same thing every day, getting up, going to school, no use in me complaining, my objections overruled." Now, there are various ways of responding to that. The next line of the song concludes "too much monkey-business for me to be involved in." One way that the ruling class provided a context for a mass response anti-theoretical to dropping out was by John F. Kennedy saying, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

And we welcomed that, because we thought he was offering us a choice, not an echo. When Kennedy urged us to export the contradictions and the frustrations of our lives to the Other America that Michael Harrington wrote about, as well as the other Imperial America which included Latin America and parts of Africa, the terrain, the testing grounds for experiments like the Peace Corps, we snapped at the chance because we just couldn't stand our lives. Sounds pretty fucked up, actually, looking at it. But what we now call the Movement, what we call the New Left, what we call the social force that had the most to do with shaping a popular culture in the 60's arose from those ingredients.

It was able to accomplish several things, our movement. A ruler abdicated, remember? Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run again. Several strategic institutions closed down like Columbia University; many draftboard centers were destroyed, government documents copped; most of the symbols of American supremacy in the world were attacked--actually, not only rhetorically. Banks were set on fire. Bombs were thrown, and exploded--sometimes with the result that we were destroyed in the process. The whole legislative system was delegitimized, in Mississippi, in Chicago, in the nation's capitol, itself. One of the things the sixties did was to change our expectations of that system so that now we continually find out more about the intricate ways that it fucks us over, but we're not surprised that it fucks us over. Those are accomplishments. They're accomplishments that usually aren't talked about by the press.

If we depend on the media, we think about the 60's as a bunch of dirty, self-indulgent people wandering around the streets eating garbage and begging. That is not, in fact, the major thrust of our learning or of our experience, our work in the last 10 years.

There are many sophisticated ways of describing the activities of the white middle-class youth section of the Movement in that period. The title, Conspiracy of the Young, suggests two approaches. We can take the position of somebody like J. Edgar Hoover, for instance, and concentrate on the conspiracy theory, the first part of the title. We can consider the whole range of your efforts to expose the contradictions in American society as disruptive, obscene and violent, a plot by outside agitators with hundreds of thousands of duped, confused kids tagging along behind. People are serious about that. That is one way of taking the logic of our lemming-like education to its logical conclusion. Or we can go the Bruno Bettelheim/Lewis Feuer route that Florence and Paul also talk about. We can psychologize ourselves out of existence. We can talk about the social agitation of the last ten years as simply youthful exuberance: somewhat excessive, maybe psychologically suspect, a little emotionally unbalanced, but understandable. And we can be comfortable because, after all, young people grow up, right?

It becomes the responsibility of adults, in that framework of understanding the significance of the youth movement of the last ten years, to simply wait it out 'til we become just like them. Just wait. Like they'd been schooled to do. Those are two possibilities. There are other subjective responses we could have. I, myself, in moments of irresponsibility, renounce the last decade in appalled mutterings about roving gypsy bands and the waning of the Middle Ages. Actually, in a more serious vein, I have been very critical of the psychophancy, the racism, and the parasitism of white youth in the last ten years, especially when Haight-Ashbury was big, at Woodstock, and during the series of National Black Panther Party Conventions. But again, to simply level those criticisms without understanding the mentality and the contradictions that people were working through in order to create history in the 70's is a little bit irresponsible.

Paul Lauter and Florence Howe resist the temptations of paranoia, of smugness, and of bitter flippancy. They are partisans of the Movement. They arrive at a description and an analysis of the 60's taken from the members themselves with tools of understanding forged from their own education as sixties activists. The thread they find that makes sense of the Movement's development is the ethic and the ideology of service. I would like to spend some time explaining why this is important, why it isn't just a rhetorical phrase, why it isn't something we can just label people with. Why it's something that can describe an essential contradiction in our view of the world and condition our ability to understand our history and to make judgments about what we have to do next.

For JFK, being a member of the ruling class, service meant help. Like, domestic help...that's what it meant. What he wanted to do was to put a whole generation to work mopping up the mess that American imperialism had created in the 19th and the 20th centuries. He used the rhetoric of altruism, he used the rhetoric of messianism, he used the language of "hands-across-the-border" good-neighborism and freedom, not to mention vacations with pay. He was smart. He was careful to dress up the motivation for people going abroad--abroad to the South, abroad to Appalachia, or abroad to Africa--with the security that money was being put aside for them. Even though you were going to live like the people you worked among, after you got back to white America you had not forfeited anything. After all, your salary was being put aside and was being computed on the basis of the white American middle-class standard of living, not anybody else's. So there was a certain security in the adventure that people were being asked to participate in. There was a certain privilege, a certain luxury as well as a certain desperation that informed the choices people made to go into the world and explore new frontiers. What did they have to lose?

First of all, they did not know too much about imperialism. They did not know the mess that America had created with that policy. For them the question of going into national service was very personal, very individual, a result in part of being sated with the insipidity and regimentation of the only institutions that white American middle-class youth were forced to participate in without exception: school and the family. The questions they were asking were: How can I save myself? How can I get some relief from being put through these paces? How can I recover my humanity? How can I get out of that bombshelter existence and go out into the world and be a full human being. How can I be rejuvenated and recharged at every level: recharged morally, rejuvenated psychologically, regenerated physically. Remember, a consistent theme in all the service

programs of the 60's was getting American youth back in shape, back in physical shape. Shape up and ship out. Not one or the other--you had to do both. How can I get myself in shape to help?

Now, what happened, once people got out there, searching, once they engaged themselves in that quest for a new frontier and found themselves in the Other America, was that while they went out to discover themselves in history, they discovered us instead. They found the Third World, they found black people. And in bringing "equality" to the Third World (because that was the rubric that was the motivation, that was the altruistic myth that people owned as part of the progressive aspect of what they were doing) in bringing equality to the Other America at home and abroad, they learned first of the extent of their privilege. They learned that no matter how oppressed they felt personally, they had the material means to do something about it. Then they found that their privilege had impoverished them, had made them incompetent culturally, had made them anonymous, had made them shy and inarticulate. Obtuse; often times a fool. Thirdly, they discovered that their privilege had made them historically complicit. One of the most threatening and, at the same time; liberating lessons that white youth learned in the course of coming in contact with the colonized peoples of the world and America was that they had to deal with the history of their nation, not simply their own personal history. They had to deal with the history of their community. They had to deal with the history of the American nation for several hundred years back. And specifically, they had to learn that they were being viewed as historically complicit in the colonization and the exploitation of over three fourths of the world. They were shocked to find that they were in hostile territory. Even though JFK called the Alliance for Progress part of the good neighbor policy, the Latin American peoples did not think we were such good neighbors. White youth learned that they were in hostile territory precisely as they did their job. They were carrying out the policy of the State, carrying out the policy of the American government, carrying out the cultural values of America. They began to identify the enemy in themselves. Finally, they learned probably the most important thing in shaping their consciousness in later years. They learned that the people they had come to help could possess the resources to help them, to free them.

So they began to develop very complicated loyalties. They found that in order to recover their humanity morally, it made the most sense to devote themselves to those who were worse off materially but stronger morally. They had come to teach, stayed to learn, and wound up identifying the people whom oppression and exploitation had made strong as the source of their salvation. Physically, their rejuvenation, their regeneration, lay in interposing their bodies between the people they were trying to help and the State that they opposed, the policies that they detested and the institutional apparatus that they resisted. They made the journey consciously painfully, from serving the State to serving the people. In courtrooms, jails, alleys, churches, fields, they interposed their bodies.

These revelations were still coming individually, however. They were very private, very partial. Protest was still in behalf of someone else in Mississippi, in Latin America. Community was found in merging with Third World struggle. Through assimilation. Only rarely did they conclude independently that they should go back and redis-



cover the history and struggle of white working-class people, the ancestors of their movement. Even draft resistance, certainly informed by self-preservation at one level, spawned a movement primarily of moral outrage. Its constituent center was the Vietnamese people. The enemy camp was still something whites had to travel to. Hostile territory was not yet, in the mid-sixties, their home, their community, as much as it was the battleground the State marked out for resistance.

Only as growing numbers of white youth began to attack the institutions like the schools and the bourgeois nuclear family that gave them their original world view, that made them incompetent to deal with the reality, the stress, the demands of people they were trying to help, only then did protest change to resistance and the war was subjectively brought home.

It began to dawn on people that their educational experience wasn't accidental, it was deliberate. In order for them to be partisan, to be full participants, to be in solidarity with the people whom they admired and not just be parasites on their misery, they had to ask themselves how all the institutions, the whole superstructure of American society was illegitimate. The reason people were poor was not because some bureaucrat did not sign the right paper and food stamps did not get to Appalachia. The reason people were poor in the South, in Mississippi, in Alabama and Georgia and in Washington DC, was not simply because there are crackers in office. It was because of the whole thrust, the political, economic and social thrust of American society. They came to understand that even their own education, as non-descript as it seemed, was institutionally racist. It even excluded the true history of white people's popular struggles.

They had to understand what that meant--in very concrete forms. They had to understand that the institutions that controlled them--the draft, the schools, the corporations, the courts and whole legal apparatus of the country--were not set up to act in their interest. They had to begin to define what self-interest meant. What it meant in other than personal terms of feeling good. What it meant to struggle in their own behalf as a group, to struggle for their own liberation. To struggle to be full human beings. Not what that meant existentially, but what it meant in an historical sense, what it meant in an institutional sense. What kind of struggle, what kind of responsibility for organizing did that entail?

One of the things that happened in the course of that re-education from experience was that people in the white movement began to appropriate, began to own for themselves, began to use the rhetoric, the slogans, the perspectives of the oppressed people who had moved them out of their immunity, shaken them out of their complacency, and thrust them into struggle. Here, for instance, are some words which we all use and which, in fact, have become the hallmarks and rallying points of the consciousness of the Left in the 60's. Freedom now. Self-determination. Liberation. Collectivity. Leadership. White people and Black people acted out of their understanding of those concepts and to the extent that their understanding reflected bourgeois socialization, still reflected notions of individualism and competition, emphasized individual salvation and performance, it caused problems.

When black people in the Movement talked of freedom now, we meant free access to the system's resources. We meant participation in the productive apparatus of the society. We meant

decolonization. When white people began to use that slogan, it meant freedom from historical guilt, it meant freedom from institutional participation because they did not want to go back to those schools and families which had fucked them over and made it very difficult for them to see how the world operated. It meant the freedom to exist individually, to set their own rules of behavior. And it meant the freedom to go back to that Jeffersonian thing: the freedom to start from scratch--to create a nation, to create a definition of self-interest, to create an identity right from scratch. A very existential kind of approach as to what freedom was.

When black people used the phrase self-determination, it meant our own control over our destiny as a people. When all you used it, it meant making personal decisions appropriate to your personal and immediate needs. We talked of liberation: it meant a struggle for power. When white people talked about liberation, it got acted out in terms of a groovy life-style. When we talked about nation-building, we were talking about social reconstruction, we were talking in terms of actually running a country, of taking command and using power publicly. Nation building for youth, white youth, meant Woodstock, meant primitive communalism with a psychic base, meant a retreat from the responsibilities of ownership, power, and the organization of an advanced industrial state. The whole notion of the liberated zone co-existing peacefully within the old society, in the belly of the beast, was not only utopian, but based on a belief in the non-antagonistic nature of the "liberated zone" vis a vis the dominant social relations of the U.S. It was a new version of that Cold War "sphere of influence" mindset.

When we talked about collectivity, what we meant was unified action based on a clear understanding of the significance of shared historical experiences. When white youth talked about collectivity, it meant intense, small groups, at large in society, self-reliant and self-involved. It meant, above all, a very unanchored and insular approach to liberation. When we talked about leadership, we talked about the struggle to overthrow bourgeois ideology. We were talking about the active example of an oppressed people collectively battling the power structure from a consciousness of their position in society. We were thinking about mass activities which articulated the objective class and race realities of America. For instance, when we talked about women's liberation, black people, and leadership in the women's movement, we talked about NWRO because the membership of that organization by virtue of the demands they raise and by their class and national composition are in the objective leadership in the struggle for women's rights. They represent a significant social force as a result of their understanding of the interests that are suppressing them in this society and only secondarily as a result of their gender. Leadership to many people in the white movement still meant either purity or celebrity and got acted out in tripping and symbolic politics. It meant participatory democracy for the masses and celebrity as the leader.

That range of words and the discrepancies in the ethical and cultural assumptions, the conceptual framework, the qualitatively different experience people brought to bear on understanding what those words meant, and putting those concepts into practice resulted in a lot of distrust, confusion, and bitterness between the black movement that has been developing for several hundred years in America and self-conscious white Youth Movement that was started from scratch in the 60's. The terrain on which those discrepancies and contradictions got worked out most extensively was the campus.

One of the arenas of struggle that Florence Howe and Paul Lauter describe in some detail is the whole free university movement, the free school movement. They talk about the way that it surfaced in San Francisco State and they judge it from the standpoint of the lessons that they and others learned from participating in freedom schools in the South. One of the clear lessons that emerges from their description is that freedom, the alternative to the kind of regimentation in education that I talked about earlier, meant personalist self-assertion for the majority of white youth. When they came back from abroad, when they came back from the South, they needed a rest. Many of them went back to school to rest, to get their bearings. They went back to institutions dedicated to tracking and channelling and they tried to free-float. It didn't work. Once again, they were forced into confrontations. Liberating those institutions meant concentrating on group process and self-involvement. It meant creating free spaces within those institutions to do their own thing. Only accidentally did it bring people into objective alliance with the survival agendas of working class people who surrounded but were excluded from those institutions. And at the point, let's say, of a San Francisco State, when there were two constituencies participating in a school in motion at the same time--Black and Puerto Rican students and white students--both frustrated, both disaffected, both angry, both willing by any means necessary to trash the institution they were part of, qualitatively different strategies for change emerged.

The political legitimacy of the Third World forces at San Francisco State depended on their ability to reject their status and identity as "students" and their commitment to reintegrate themselves with the very people in their neighborhoods who were barred from benefiting in any way from the resources the college commanded. To them, it was not simply a question of whether they could imagine any demands to place on the structure of a school which would bring immediate psychological satisfaction or which the school could not accept or co-opt. To them, the question was what demands, what specific strategies, what tactics can we utilize, what resources can we expropriate from the schools that will serve an independent agenda that is getting formed out in the community? For whites, without that sense of community, without that sense of independent agenda, without that sense that it was alright for the institutions that had oppressed them to grant them some space, the primary preoccupation and focus of activity became purity, became process. On one hand, people decided that simply to participate in an institution meant to compromise yourself. You know, if I am a revolutionary, I am going to be self-sufficient enough so that I don't have to participate in any of the institutions in society. I can drop out of all of them. And so that happened a lot. The other response, coming from the same kind of social and political orientation, the same kind of individualist preoccupation, was that the institution doesn't affect me. To the extent that I can make my own separate peace within that institution, that's cool. I can have courses of karate, I can have courses on Zen, I can have courses on astrology because I am exploring another new frontier. At this point, since they'd already been out to the rest of the world, the new frontier became their mind. And to the extent that I can explore my mind, to the extent that I can explore my subjective consciousness, that's the extent to which I'm going to be free. We know that that didn't work. Because here we are and police cars are still running up and down the streets and the level of oppression has risen and the level of our resistance



has risen. So there is something wrong with that whole orientation and the whole understanding of what those words meant.

Now, although we've gone through a huge amount of material, capsulized a lot of experience in a sketchy way, and left out a lot, I think we are left with some indications of the lessons that need to be learned and the gaps that need to be closed so that we can actually begin to implement the revolutionary meaning of those words that we have tried to live by in the 60's.

We have to begin to talk about the consciousness that needs to inform white activity if the white movement is to take the step from service to solidarity and become a partner in--not a friend of, a servant to, or a parasite on--the revolutionary struggle to take State power in America. We need to begin to talk about a new self-definition based on history and not based on morality; based on experience of a common struggle and common survival, not based on sympathy. On a concrete, scientific, objective understanding of our own position in society, not on the basis of sentiment, not on the basis of frustration, not on the basis of desperation.

Now, when we look at what's left, and what has recently come into being for us to work with in this next period, in this decade, in the seventies, what do we find? We find some remnants of the past ten years. We find some things we can use and some things we can't use. We find some adjuncts to our struggle and we find a new energy source as well.

The historically bankrupt remnants of the movement of the 60's are those people who capitulated to subjectivism and the media's definition of them: the freak drop-out community, educational reformers, all those people who have been incapable of imagining alternatives that were not sanctioned by bourgeois society. Then we have those people who have been through school and have some professional skills: the people that Paul and Florence talk about at the end of Conspiracy of the Young, the people who have organized themselves into groups like the Medical Committee for Human Rights, Committee of Concerned Volunteers, the Labor Defense Coalition. They are people with specific skills who see as a result of an agenda that has been formed by social forces in fundamental antagonism to capitalism, how those skills can be of use at particular points in time. Their help and continued survival, their integration into the movement is very important. And we have a new source of energy, I think, in this period (or, at least a resurgent one), which does not have to deal as directly with all those terribly distorted cultural myths from the 1950's that most of us have had to work through. Part of what the movement in the last ten years has done is create a culture of resistance that people do not have to consciously work to integrate themselves into, but which is naturally a part of their lives. And a new energy source, represented here at CCC, represented in working-class communities in most parts of the country, is the self-conscious working class youth movement that has been brought into motion often by the ferment of the 60's. Its members are moving off an appreciation of their systematic oppression, off an appreciation of how the plight that their parents are in and the plight that they are in arise from the same condition, arise from the same causes, arise from the same institutional and governmental arrangements. Also the parents of the people who participated in the 60's youth movement who have been educated in part by their children's resistance to

the values that they themselves had been complicit in perpetuating have also become an energy source. Some of the organizers from the 60's New Left, who have united with these last groups, members of the left like Carl Braden, people who have been struggling consistently for forty years from a very fundamental understanding of the class nature of the exploitative system we are trying to overthrow--not overcome, but overthrow; there's a difference-- All these people, self-consciously aware of each other, self-consciously aware of the connections between their circumstances, and self-consciously aware of the organization that is necessary to provide a qualitative change in their lives as a group of people, not as individuals, will be the energy source of the present period.

Paul and Florence end their book by saying that time, history, and even numbers tell us that the future is on the side of the Vietnamese, the Blacks, women, and the young. But spontaneity and informalism aren't enough. They won't do the job. And they create a lot of confusion. Assimilation by whites into the black experience or visa versa won't do the job. It will only result in self-rejection and alienation.

We have to know how to tell the time, how to tell what time it is in history, scientifically, objectively, and organize to seize the time as well as simply participate in it. We must remember that revolutions take time. In order for the organization of the revolution to be sustained even when its momentum is temporarily lost, we must organize ourselves to think strategically. We can't continue to simply interpose our bodies. Moral outrage is necessary but not sufficient. We must set ourselves short-term and long-range objectives based on the condition of American imperialism and the social forces in motion antagonistic to it. We must weld ourselves into one of those forces. We must understand that making a revolution entails seizing state power and that, if the transfer of power is to revolutionize the productive and social relations of society, it must be led and controlled by forces who are proletarian in outlook. While personal transformation is a necessary part of revolutionary struggle, the most politically useful form of self-transformation comes through equipping oneself to engage the State in battle, and win. And at that point, we can take strength from the knowledge that we've only just begun. That is what it will mean politically to conspire to keep the struggle young.