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THE POLITE REBELLION:
SUNY BROCKPORT AND THE VIETNAM ERA

by

John N. Butz

*In America we have therapeutics for this cancer [of imperial aggression]. It is the therapeutic of **Protest**, which is applied when the . . . citizens take notice that their government [has made] a mistake. In Russia the citizens are hospitalized for exercising this therapeutic. In America it is used to heal.*

John J. McGuire

Stylus, 15 November 1968

History 390
Dr. Lynn Parsons
13 May 1991

THE POLITE REBELLION:
SUNY BROCKPORT AND THE VIETNAM ERA

The State University of New York College at Brockport entered the Vietnam era of student unrest fairly placidly. While other schools might have seen students riot over civil rights or for their own rights of free speech, the Brockport student body remained removed from outside concerns. Indeed, they were regularly chastised in the school paper, the *Stylus*, for their apathy in general.¹ Despite the Vietnam controversy being aired in the pages of the *Stylus* as early as 1965², the war would never become the major concern for the majority of the student body³ -- although the semester following the 1968 Democratic Convention to the weeks immediately after the Kent State shootings would see the rise of a very vocal minority on campus, and would culminate in the takeover of the Administration Building.⁴

The College itself was changing. When Lyndon Johnson took over the Presidency in late 1963, Brockport was still a school for training teachers; two years later the first

¹ *Stylus*, 7 Feb. 1964.

² Dennis Read, "Must We Accept War?", *Stylus* editorial 9 Apr. 1965.

³ Dr. Kempes Schnell/Dr. D. Gregory Van Dussen, interview by author, Tape recording, Brockport, New York, 28 Mar. 1991.

⁴ *ibid.*

freshman members of the new Liberal Arts curriculum began classes. With the new curriculum came new teachers, many of whom would form the core of the faculty's anti-war sentiments. Later, in 1970, one student would comment that the faculty was more against the war than the student body was!⁵

Was Brockport out of step with the rest of the nation's universities or a fairly typical example? Perhaps the first place to look for an answer to that is in the writings of the students themselves.

§§§

*We must listen to the voices of dissent because the protester may have something to say worth listening to. If we dismiss dissent as coming from "rebels without a cause," we will soon find ourselves becoming leaders without an effect.*⁶

Richard Nixon - 1968

John J. McGuire, a former Marine and decorated Vietnam vet⁷, came to the Brockport campus in the fall of 1968 and quickly became a leading voice in the campus anti-war movement. McGuire's trenchant commentary fills the pages of the *Stylus* as letter writer, columnist and eventually editor. Not afraid to shake up his readers, McGuire wrote an opinion piece saluting the African-American athletes, Tommy Smith and John Carlos, who raised the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics⁸, another against the establishment of the

⁵ Rochester Times-Union, "Area Colleges Absentees Seek Support," 6 May 1970, p. 1.

⁶ Quoted in *Time*, 18 May 1970, 10.

⁷ John J. McGuire, interview by author, Taped telephone conversation, Brockport, New York, 8 April 1991.

⁸ J. J. McGuire, "An Opinion On Sports," *Stylus* 25 October 1968.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps program on the Brockport campus (the précis of which was that the atmosphere of freedom needed to encourage learning is directly opposed to the rigid dogma demanded by the military)⁹, and an editorial eulogy for Ho Chi Minh which ended with the provocative but accurate statement: "The Vietnamese lost a courageous leader with the death of Ho Chi Minh."¹⁰

In the election season of 1968, McGuire went after George Wallace in an article titled "U. S. S. White Hope."¹¹ In it he wrote "[a]t the . . . American Legion Convention held . . . in New Orleans, Wallace received even a more tumultuous reception than Hitler in Germany . . . These are the same people who sissed, hollered and booed at people who wore signs saying Wallace was anti-Jew, anti-Negro, anti-Catholic and anti-human."¹² Nor was Richard Nixon spared the McGuire once-over: "Aside from a new make-up man, he has the best experts in advertising running his campaign, . . . proving that Nixon is the 'Valley of the Dolls' of the political world."¹³ "How did Mr. Nixon win the Presidency? He won by protecting himself from two people . . . himself [and] . . . Spiro Agnew."¹⁴

⁹ J. J. McGuire, "ROTC Anyone?," *Stylus*, 17 January 1969, 4.

¹⁰ *Idem*, "Ho Chi Minh," *Stylus*, 10 September 1969, 2.

¹¹ *Idem*, "U. S. S. Great White Hope," *Stylus*, 1 November 1968, 3.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Idem*, "Why I Am Voting For Richard M. Nixon," *Stylus*, 18 October 1968, 3.

¹⁴ *Idem*, "We Change With Dick," *Stylus*, 22 November 1968, 3.

Greg Van Dussen, a philosophy major who worked with the campus Protestant ministries, represented another branch of the peace movement. Unlike McGuire, Van Dussen was what would now be called a traditionally aged student, and his *Stylus* articles and letters glow with the idealistic fervor of an intelligent post-adolescent trying to cope with a the discovery that the world is not a perfect place. However, Van Dussen recognized that protest had to have a focus to be effective:

We have . . . seen this . . . generation torn by factional disputes, riddled by foreign ideologies, [and] frightened into the arms of exotic religions . . . the result has too often been laughable, or violent, or sad or disruptive instead of . . . constructive. . . . To be committed when we . . . understand the nature and implications of our committment[sic] is a . . . good thing. But to lash out with great force and little brain . . . is to 15 make ourselves . . . great fools.

Van Dussen was also instrumental in keeping the male student body aware of the options open to them vis-à-vis the draft. In several articles Van Dussen explained the difficulties in obtaining C. O. status, how to 'use' Canada by going there before getting a draft notice, or even using enlistment to give one some choice of service. While his referring to the draft as totalitarian probably did not sit well with many, he and the Brockport Draft Counseling Service provided a useful (and peaceful) anti-war service to those who required it.¹⁶

¹⁵ Greg Van Dussen, "Self Righteousness and [the] Student Activist," *Stylus*, 26 March 1969, 4.

¹⁶ Idem, "Brockport Graduates and the Draft," *Stylus*, 3 September 1969, 11.

If the anti-Vietnam people were the more obvious voices on campus, there were nonetheless a small number of pro-government students. The Brockport campus was not a hotbed of student confrontations says Todd Palmerton, because "the student body was either totally apathetic towards it, or they were caught up in . . . the anti-war protest."¹⁷ Palmerton, a history major, also concedes "My side of it seemed to be extremely small, I think that maybe that's part of the reason why it was comparatively non-confrontational."¹⁸ In response to an article by an iconoclastic student gadfly, Palmerton wrote "I would like [him] to explain to me why the Viet Nam War cannot be won. . . . He also seems to think we are the only country in the entire world killing people . . . apparently the 13,000 American [casualties] don't count."¹⁹ During a "March for America" held in Brockport 12 May 1970, after the Kent State deaths and the take-over of the Brockport College's Administration Building, Palmerton addressed the crowd from the steps of the post office: "As a student at Brockport, I'm completely opposed to what happened at Brockport and in the country. I support President Nixon. . . . There are those who say 'Give peace a chance,' I say give Nixon a chance."²⁰

¹⁷ Todd Palmerton, interview by author, Tape recording, Brockport, New York, 5 April, 1991.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Todd Palmerton, letter to the editor, *Stylus*, 20 October 1967, 4.

²⁰ Lou Chibbaro and Brian Knapp, "Town Holds 'March for America'", *Stylus*, 13 May 1970, 1; *Rochester Times-Union*, "Marchers Back Asia Policy," 13 May 1970, sec. B, p. 1.

Palmerton felt that the President knew more about the situation than the average person and deserved the space to do his job. That faith in the system would become a casualty of later events -- and not only for Palmerton -- but in 1970 he was not alone in that faith.²¹ Todd Palmerton at least backed his ideas with some serious thinking; others who took the conservative stand did so out of pure emotion or naive jingoism.

Madelyn Crawford wrote to the *Stylus*, "I love those guys over there . . . every step you take in a demonstration is another bullet in your buddies[sic] gut."²² S. Alan Sell, responding to the same gadfly as Palmerton (above), wrote:

For those of us more atuned[sic] to reality, we already know who's going to win the American War. At the end of 1967 the National Liberation Front will be missing over 50,000 of its comrades . . . North Viet Nam won't have a bridge, road or factory remaining. Already the United States Navy so controls the skies of North Viet Nam that even the birds are walking. . . . America is determined to crush a movement that threatens her way of democra-²³cy and freedom. . . . [She] has no dishonor.

John McGuire tells of being called a traitor by other vets and non-military students for his peace activism and Todd Palmerton indicates that he took some heat for being pro-administration: obviously, the Brockport student body could no more make up its mind on Vietnam than could the

²¹ Palmerton interview, *ibid.*

²² Madelyn Crawford, letter to the editor, *Stylus*, 3 November 1967, 2.

²³ S. Alan Sell, letter to the editor, *Stylus*, 20 October 1967, 4.

country as a whole.²⁴

SSS

*The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are filled with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. And the republic is in danger from without and within. We need law and order!*²⁵

Adolph Hitler - 1932

In 1968 America's colleges and universities were in turmoil, but not nearly to the extreme that was often presented in the various media. That year, Time magazine, in conjunction with the Univac division of Sperry Rand, conducted "CHOICE 68" a nationwide poll of nearly 1.1 million students in some 1470 colleges and universities.²⁶ Both a mock Presidential election and a referendum on the Vietnam war and domestic social issues, "CHOICE 68" showed that college students were not all that far removed from their parents in their Democratic choices for President. [See Table 1] If the 1968 poll of 73,000 Long Island Democrats re Vietnam is at all representative of the 'Liberal' point of view, then college students as a whole were roughly the same or more Conservative than their elders on the questions that can be compared. [See Table 3] Polls can only indicate so much, though, and can not be read as gospel in the best of times. In an era as volatile as the late 60s, data can do a volte-face very quickly: Gallup polls in 1967 showed

²⁴ McGuire, Palmerton interviews.

²⁵ Quoted in *The Stylus*, 23 April 1969, 2.

²⁶ *Time*, 10 May 1968.

POLL RESULTS 1968

Presidential

Table 1

| | Roper Poll ²⁷ (16-20 Mar.) | CHOICE 68 ²⁸ (last wk. of Apr.) | Harris Poll ²⁹ (April) | Mervin Fields ²⁷ (Cal. Dems. only: March) |
|-------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Johnson | 36% | 7.01%(withdrew 3/31) | (withdrew 3/31) | 32% |
| McCarthy | 30% | 28% | 22% | 18% |
| Kennedy | 18% | 20.99% | 37% | 42% |
| Nixon | 73% | 19.35% | | |
| Reagan | 9% | 2.77% | | |
| Rockefeller | 5% | 11.38% | | |

Table 2

"Choice '68" on four campuses

| | Berkeley ³⁰ | Brockport ³¹ | Stanford ³⁰ | Bridgewater ³² |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Johnson | 1% | 7.14% | 1% | 4.02% |
| McCarthy | 48% | 34.02% | 56% | 18.68% |
| Kennedy | 17% | 18.04% | 13% | 14.10% |
| Nixon | 4% | 14.64% | 7% | 31.68% |
| Reagan | nil | .71% | 1% | 4.75% |
| Rockefeller | 8% | 16.61% | 11% | 12.82% |

Vietnam

Table 3

| | "CHOICE 68" | | | 73,000 Long Island ²⁷ Democrats |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| | Brockport ³¹ | Berkeley ³⁰ | National ³¹ | |
| Reduction | 47.14% | 43% | 44.99% | not asked |
| Withdrawal | 14.38% | 49% | 17.60% | 27.6% |
| Maintain | 8.13% | 3% | 7.49% | 8.9% |
| All out | 18.57% | 3% | 20.72% | 30.6% |
| Bombing pause | 33.30% | not given | 28.88% | 32.9% |

²⁷Time, 29 March 1969, 20-1.

²⁸New York Times, 3 May 1968, 27.

²⁹Time, 3 May 1968, 24-5.

³⁰W. J. Rorabaugh, Berkeley At War, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1989), 184.

³¹Stylus, 17 May 1968, 1.

³²Talon, (Bridgewater [Va.] College), 3 May 1968, 1.

35 percent of students calling themselves 'doves' and 49 percent 'hawks'; eighteen months later, by late 1969 that had changed to 69 percent and 20 percent respectively.³³

Brockport students, if "CHOICE 68" is any guide, seem to straddle the extremes; their presidential choice percentages fall between Berkeley on one hand and the church based Bridgewater College on the other. In the Vietnam referendum, Brockport students not only reflect the national student norm far more closely than do those at Berkeley, they also agree with 73,000 Long Island Democrats almost to a percentage point on the issues of maintaining the war and calling for a bombing pause. [See Tables 1-3]

Even in May of 1970, when Nixon's resumption of bombing and incursion into Cambodia would lead to massive and sometimes violent protests on many campuses, the Brockport peace activists circulated a flyer calling on protesters to leave the area if violence broke out. [See Appendix] Not even the tragedy of Kent State could totally eradicate the pacifism of the Brockport protesters. Despite a few broken windows and an arson more racially than war motivated, the Brockport Cambodia/Kent State protest was conducted with a certain politeness on both sides, a dignity, if you will, that was often missing elsewhere.³⁴

³³ David Cate, The Year of the Barricades: A Journey Through 1968, (New York : Perennial Library, 1988), 21.

³⁴ Taped interviews with Terry Hover, Barbara Sherwood, Dr. John Kutolowski, Dr. Calvin and Margaret Rich, and Dr. Robert Getz conducted by author on the Brockport campus between 28 March and 4 April 1991.

This is not to imply that McGuire, Van Dussen and their associates in the peace movement were saints, but they managed to hold the more radical members in check.³⁵ One of the more reassuring facets of the takeover of the Administration building, Hartwell Hall, is the spontaneity with which it happened.³⁶ Another is the seriousness with which both the protesting students and the administration took each other. Walter J. Hickel, Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, in his then almost infamous letter to the President, made a couple of telling points: "Today, our young people, . . . believe they have no opportunity to communicate with Government . . ." and "[History] . . . clearly shows that youth in its protest must be heard."³⁷ Brockport President Albert W. Brown understood this communication problem and negotiated in good faith with the student leaders in Hartwell Hall.³⁸ According to John McGuire, the takeover was a response to a visceral need to do something in the wake of the Kent State killings. More violent ideas were suggested, but the prevailing mood was still to stage a peaceful, non-violent protest -- a takeover of the Administration building to stop 'business as usual' became the popular choice.³⁹

³⁵ McGuire, Hover interviews.

³⁶ McGuire interview.

³⁷ Walter J. Hickel, Who Owns America?, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1971), 247-8.

³⁸ Dr. John Kutolowski, memorandum to Social Sciences Faculty, 7 May 1970. From the personal files of Dr. John Kutolowski.

³⁹ McGuire interview.

On the evening of Wednesday, 6 May 1970, the students took over the building. Both sides, wishing to avoid a messy confrontation, agreed to faculty and student 'marshalls' who would serve to keep order mainly by spreading oil on the troubled waters.⁴⁰ One example will serve: Dr. John Kutolowski, seeing some students playing basketball without a ball, went home and brought back a basketball to ward off any possible frustrations.⁴¹

The student demands were simple: a grading proposal which basically gave students and professors the options of using mid-term grades or Pass/Fail as final grades; that the University close for the remainder of the semester in protest to President Nixon's Indo-China policies and the events at Kent State; teach-ins to address the illegality of the U. S. presence in Indo-China, the rights of students to peacefully protest; and the reallocation of all monies being used in Indo-China to relieve the economic effect of racial injustices in the United States.⁴² [See Appendix] President Brown could do little or nothing about most of the demands, but he could deal with the issue of grades, and, although the word 'amnesty' was never put into print, he dealt with it *sub rosa*.⁴³ John McGuire remembers that the first outsider into Hartwell Hall on the afternoon

⁴⁰ McGuire, Getz interviews, *ibid*.

⁴¹ Schnell interview, *ibid*.

⁴² Student petition, 6 May 1970, from the personal files of Dr. John Kutolowski.

⁴³ Hoyer, Kutolowski interviews, *ibid*.

of Thursday, 7 May 1970, after the takeover ended was the local District Attorney, hoping to make some political hay from the 'Brockport riots.'⁴⁴ President Brown, having kept the local and State police at bay during the takeover, was not having what the District Attorney was selling either -- no protester was ever charged in the Hartwell takeover.⁴⁵ In a later summing up of the four and a half hour meeting which led to the resolution of the takeover, Dr. John Kutolowski wrote: "Though persons occasionally spoke with fervor and emotion, the meeting was courteous and orderly. Neither the students nor the administration wanted a violent confrontation, that is certain; yet neither wished to surrender completely its convictions and self-respect."⁴⁶ President Brown, writing to Brockport alumni and their parents in June, said, "While I shared the general concern of all, I felt the institution had the responsibility to assure students and faculty who wished that they would be able to complete the year's academic program."⁴⁷ He also pointed out that "the striking students and nearly everyone else on the campus spoke out most pointedly against violence and vandalism."⁴⁸

Interior Secretary Hickel, responding to the divisive-

⁴⁴ McGuire interview.

⁴⁵ Hover, Kutolowski interviews.

⁴⁶ Kutolowski, 7 May 1970 memorandum.

⁴⁷ Dr. Albert W. Brown, Letter to Brockport alumni and their parents, 25 June 1970.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

ness in the country would say "As hard as we try, we cannot tear the nation together."⁴⁹ President Brown and the student protest leaders were able to achieve a compromise that likely made no one completely happy, but allowed each that measure of self-respect to which Dr. Kutolowski referred. It is important to realize that the 250 - 300 students who took over Hartwell Hall were less than 5 percent of the student body -- President Brown was quite right in considering the needs of his larger constituency. Still, the two sides were able, in Lyndon Johnson's phrase, to reason together; after Kent State and Jackson State that was no mean victory.

§§§

*Students don't study anymore; they write novels or
make revolutions. But maybe it's better that way . . .*⁵⁰
Anton Chekhov - 1902

If Brockport was, as the polls indicate, an average college politically, it was also one emotionally. Marion Schrank, now Brockport's interim Vice-President for Student Affairs but in 1970 a student here, remembers the excitement in her dorm because the strikers had managed to effectively do away with final exams.⁵¹ She also provides balance with her memory of a down-state paper's article on their local college's panty raid: more than 500 male students took part -- about twice the number of the Hartwell protesters!⁵²

⁴⁹Hickel, 270.

⁵⁰Henri Troyat, *Chekhov*, (London : Hamish Hamilton, 1988), 288.

⁵¹Marion Schrank, interview by author, tape recording, Brockport, N.Y., 8 April 1991.

⁵²ibid.

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson said that as the editor of his college paper he protested "nearly everything around around me."⁵³ He had started protesting some of his college's policies and ended up protesting President Hoover.⁵⁴ He said that a student who was not concerned, who did not seek alternatives to the war in Vietnam would be "very unusual."⁵⁵

Whether the students be Victor Hugo's in *Les Misérables*, Lyndon Johnson and his confreres in the 1920s or the anti-war protesters of the 60s, they all share the common passion of youth to try and straighten up the world their elders have so thoroughly mucked up. Young men and women leave their homes for the first time and are assaulted with ideas and practices that are alien, disturbing and, often, wonderfully fascinating. In short, their university time is a crucible enabling them to test the waters of their impinging adulthood in concert with their peers.

After John McGuire left Brockport, he worked with the underprivileged, taught English in Eastern Europe and now works for a United States Congressman from Syracuse. Todd Palmerton is a high school History teacher and track coach in Batavia, New York. Greg Van Dussen is a Methodist minister and an adjunct professor at SUNY Brockport.⁵⁶ Two of

⁵³ Quoted in the *Stylus*, 8 March 1968, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ McGuire, Palmerton, Van Dussen interviews.

these men are part of the group that our parents used to warn us against -- the 'hippy, radical fringe' that many thought were destroying institutions of higher learning. The third was closer to the adult ideal of what a college student should be -- yet all three have come out of their past in remarkably close proximity. All three have been, or are currently, teachers, all three still evince a concern for the nation and its future and all three show a willingness to listen to opposing views -- a willingness that exists, I believe, in part because of their experiences at Brockport.⁵⁷ These men are representative of their peers, peers who left us a legacy of commitment, a concern for others less fortunate and for the environment, a belief that the system -- however imperfect -- does eventually work when people of good will band together for the common weal. They also left students a much greater say in their colleges and universities. Curricula, faculty evaluations and student input into campus policies all bear the imprint of the Vietnam era student leaders. Likewise, the current vogue of 'Political Correctness' owes much to the 60s students who fought for the enfranchisement, on and off campus, of those who traditionally had little or no voice in American life: women, minorities and, later, those with differing sexualities. The minority of students who protested either for or against government or college policies helped create a new norm against which future governmental involvement

⁵⁷ McGuire, Palmerton, Van Dussen interviews.

in foreign wars and in domestic rights disputes would be measured.

SUNY Brockport was not representative of the national mean of colleges and universities, no college could be -- but it was a typical representative of the passions, hopes and fears swirling around the nation's young people in the Vietnam era. For all the discomfort they may have inflicted, and for all their dreams which were never fulfilled, Brockport's committed students, of whatever political stripe, can look back with pride to a time when they were willing to stand up and be recognized for their beliefs.

APPENDIX

Administration, faculty and student writings and flyers from the beginning of May 1970 to 25 June 1970.

TO ALL PEACEFULL STUDENTS!

What do you do if you are in a demonstration and it becomes violent?
What do you do if windows are broken or the talk becomes violent?

Here's what you do - you leave! Get away from the area. Do not become involved in any violence and avoid all areas where violence MIGHT occur!!

If you believe in peace, you cannot be violent. If you stay at a violent demonstration or where violence is being preached, you are guilty of giving the violent person comfort and shelter in numbers.

Go home if this happens. Let the violent stand alone. Let those who want violence be easily seen.

Remember - you too can be an "innocent bystander". Don't do it!!!
It's what they want. They feel safe among you.

It's up to you. If you don't want violence - Don't cry after it starts.
Leave before!!!

We ask for the complete acceptance of the grading proposal relayed to Dr. Brown via phone/May 6, 1970.

1. A professor may give a letter grade on a student's performance to date.
 2. A professor may give a grade of pass or fail on a student's performance to date.
 3. ~~A student may receive credit for the grade of pass in all subjects this semester, including courses required for distribution and majors.~~
 4. A student may receive credit for the grade of pass in more than one course this semester.
2. Acting in unison with other college campuses throughout the nation we are asking for the complete shut down of the normal academic operation of the University. We do this with the firm commitment that no longer can the University retain a neutral position when the National Guard blatantly murders students, as at Kent State University.

Also when all recent events in Indo China indicate an escalation of the war by our government, we the University can not in good conscience continue our current activities when the situation in Indo China makes it no longer possible for us to do this. Instead of normal academic operations we propose a ~~redirection~~ redirecting of learning on this campus toward dialogue on the campus in the form of teach-ins discussing the following problems.

- a. Indo China: illegal ^{presence} ~~presence~~ in Indo China
 - b. Rights of students in the nation to peaceably petition their grievances; eg. Kent State University
 - c. TOTAL reallocation of monies used in Indo China toward the economic problems of racial injustices of black and minority groups in this country.
3. Action on the statement issued by this leadership committee pertaining to the May 6 burning of the BSLF Black Cultural Center.
- a. Full investigation into causes and people responsible for the damage caused.
 - b. Proper and sufficient action taken against the violators.
 - c. Complete rebuilding, repair and replacement of that building so that the new facilities are as adequate or preferably of a higher quality than the original house.
4. Acceptance and implemented action of the BSLF demands of Nov. 19, 1969.

Lewis Walter Stewart
Lewis Walter Stewart, BSG President elect

Garry Austin
Garry Austin, BSG Vice-President elect

Merald J. Cozzolino
Merald J. Cozzolino, BSG Treasurer

John J. McGuire
John J. McGuire, editor-in-chief, STYLUS

WE, THE STUDENTS AT BROCKPORT STATE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR CONCERNS:

We are striking, not against the University, but against the Policy of our government which is resulting in a RE-ESCALATION of the war in Vietnam by the invasion of Cambodia.

We think this is wrong because:

- 1.) The procedure being used by our President is destroying the whole democratic system which specifically says that our Senators and Representatives are the ones who can or cannot declare a war. We are afraid of this one-man policy making.
- 2.) We believe that the continuing escalation of the war is reaching an economically impossible stage. The money of the lower and middle class people of this country is being drained away by continued increasing inflation which makes all raises meaningless, all taxes impossible, and all savings out of reach.
- 3.) We believe that the hope of returning American boys home is becoming less and less a reality and that the escalation of the war will lead to more and more tragedy in American homes. We believe the path we are trodding will inevitably destroy us by destroying the sacredness of human life.

WE ARE PREPARED TO USE ALL NON-VIOLENT MEANS POSSIBLE TO PROTEST THIS ESCALATION OF THE WAR.

JOIN US by tearing off the bottom of this page and mailing it to your Representatives TODAY.

Dear Representatives Horton and Conable:

I am afraid of what the escalation of the Vietnamese war into Cambodia is doing to our country. Please do all that you can do to stop it.

A Concerned Voter

Representatives
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Name _____

Address _____

WHY ARE WE IN HART ELL?

We are protesting President Nixon's illegal action in invading Cambodia.

We are protesting the killing of our brothers and sisters at Kent State.

We are supporting colleges and universities all over the country in protesting against business as usual. We now must direct our attention instead to the crises in our nation.

BUT the Brockport faculty did not support the strike. Instead they left it up to the "discretion" of the individual professor as to whether to hold classes and finals for students who "wanted" them. There was little choice indeed. The power of the grade forced the students to break the strike.

WE ARE PITTING OUR NON-VIOLENT FORCE AGAINST THIS FACULTY COERCION. WE ARE DEMANDING AN END TO "BUSINESS AS USUAL" AND THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE COERCION OF THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH WE LIVE.

Join Us

MAY 11 P.M.

Present: Mr. Dube', presiding; Balling, Bemis, Bobear, Burelbach, Burke, Conrad, Davis, Derby, Getz, Hellmann, E. Hetler, Hewitt, Kutolowski, Powell, Rock, Sanbonmatsu, Simmons, Sisson, Swartcut.

Meeting called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Mr. Balling moved, seconded by Mrs. Powell, that the meeting shall be an executive meeting - restricted to faculty members only.

Dr. Rock called the question. Motion defeated. Yes-2, No-13, Abs.-0.

Chairman Dube' distributed a proposal by the Brockport Student Government as follows:

For the attention of the Chairman of the Faculty Senate.

Mr. Chairman:

We the members of the Brockport Student Government are participating in a student strike to close down this institution until Sunday, May 10, 1970, in protest of the President's illegitimate armed aggression in Cambodia. We feel that an end must come to the illegitimate war being waged in Southeast Asia. We feel that we must begin to reunite this nation.

Moreover, it seems only right that if our brothers and sisters in other colleges around the nation are moving in strike, we, too, should join others in an effort to present a united front of students. We take this action in the hope of making our feelings known to the government. Let it also be known that this is not a strike against the university but a protest against the unconstitutional use of powers by the President.

Whereas we feel that this nation must guarantee to its people the inherent right to dissent. Whereas our fellow students at Kent State University in Ohio who exerted their rights are now dead. Resolved, we are requesting the support of the faculty and administration for our cause and, in so doing, we ask that students of this college not be penalized for not taking final exams.

The time to act is now, and we hope that you will be with us and support this resolution as it stands.

Respectfully submitted,

Brockport Student Government

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
BROCKPORT, NEW YORK

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE

4:00 P.M.

MAY 5, 1970

Moved by Dr. Rock, Seconded by Dr. Burelbach

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FACULTY SENATE express its support of the Student Strike to the extent that this is a non-violent demonstration; and that each individual professor has as his right to do as he wishes as to the Final Examinations and the participation in holding of classes; and furthermore, any student missing Final Examinations or classes as a matter of conscience, be given the opportunity by all professors to make up said missed work and that the student in no way shall be penalized in his academic performance due to peaceful participation in this effort. This is to become effective immediately and will be in effect until Sunday, May 10, 1970.

PASSED 18-Yes, 1-No, 1-Abstention.

This is to be communicated to the College Community by Wednesday, May 6, 1970.

Approved.

Signed _____

Albert W. Brown
President

5/5/70

Mr. Balling moved for adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Eliese Hetler
Faculty Senate Secretary

Of Bridges

Well, it's over now. Or else it's just beginning. Brockport has come of age, broken windows, burning building, student takeover and all. Tempers flared, fear crept beneath dormitory doors, confusion and rumor ranged over the campus hand-in-hand, new approaches to rhetoric and dialogue got a major airing.

We must have learned from this. Not all there is to learn. But something. Certainly something. We were reminded that everything is not always what it appears to be -- precisely what we've told our students for years. We found it deceptively difficult to reason with others and with ourselves...really reason. We, as faculty, have run the gamut from complete and utter sympathy with everything the students thought, and felt, and did -- all the way to mindless, rigid rejection of their least sensibilities. We came to honor pockets of fine leadership we may have never known existed. People's motives -- for what they did or didn't do -- turned out to be a mixed bag.

Viet Nam, Cambodia, Kent, black pride, end-of-year tension. All this was a mixed bag. What came of it on our campus strengthened some people immeasurably while it crippled others to the point of inaction. We tried to listen. We tried to learn. And we'll certainly be sorting out the strands of this encounter with ourselves for some time to come.

We, a body politic, have been reminded of our divisions, confirmed of our weaknesses, and laid out in -- not lavender -- but cliches. On the edge of violence, we came face to face with exquisite degrees of commitment and extremities of adolescence. And the process of coming of age goes on as the classroom moves out on to the sidewalk and into the street.

It's over now. Or just beginning. And, cliché or not, we'll have to start thinking about bridges.

Arnold Grade

FACULTY FORUM 15 May 1970



Office of the President

June 25, 1970

To Brockport Alumni and Parents:

Now that Brockport's 1970 Spring semester has ended, I want to take this time to communicate personally with each of you concerning events at the College during May. The campus, as you may know, did not go untouched by the unsettling developments in Southeast Asia and on campuses in this country. Because accounts of events at Brockport in the mass media were often fragmentary and difficult to follow, I thought you might appreciate a report by this office.

At the beginning of May, a sizeable number of our students, faculty, and administrators were disturbed by the news that U.S. Forces had entered Cambodia and bombing of North Vietnam had been resumed. On the heels of these events, the fatal shooting of four students at Kent State University added greatly to their concern.

As with most typical groups of Americans, the determination on how to react was mixed. Some students and faculty wished to continue the academic program without interruption, others wanted to involve themselves in some sort of political action, and still others believed that the seriousness of the situation made a "business as usual" policy impossible. The latter group desired a moratorium on academic activities as a gesture of concern.

While I shared the general concern of all, I felt that the institution had the responsibility to assure students and faculty who wished that they would be able to complete the year's academic program. This was also the policy of the Chancellor of the State University. This principle guided me during the events and meetings with students during the week of May 4.

On the evening of May 6, approximately 250 to 300 students peacefully occupied the foyer of Hartwell Hall as a gesture of concern over the Vietnam War, the student shootings, and the position of Blacks in America. In no way was the basic discontent directed against the College. The students asked that a moratorium on academic activities be declared. Soon after the occupation, discussion began among the student leaders, Faculty Senate, administration representatives, and myself. By 2 p.m., May 7, we had reached an agreement which met the general objectives of the visibly concerned students and the College.

The agreement consisted of three parts:

1) A moratorium on academic activities would be observed Friday and Monday, May 8 and 11. Classes originally scheduled Friday would be held the following Tuesday. It is important to remember that Monday and Tuesday, May 11 and 12, were scheduled in the regular calendar as "study days," a period with no formal classes preceding the Wednesday through Saturday examination period. By re-arranging the schedule, we were able to complete the academic year and still provide the moratorium period.

2) A series of options were adopted so that students who missed examinations and final classroom work because of a personal commitment to the moratorium could arrange a mutually acceptable final grade with their professors. A system of appeals was a part of the agreement. The carefully worked-out procedures provided for postponements of papers and examinations, or a letter grade or pass/fail mark based on the classroom work to date. These options in no way prevented students, who wished, from completing examinations and other year-end requirements on schedule.

3) The Faculty Senate agreed to meet throughout Friday and Monday with Black students to seek recommended solutions to their problems involving the College.

During the week of May 4, some property damage occurred on the campus. There was also one student who received a minor cut during a scuffle at a residence hall. The property damage consisted of broken glass panes and fire, water, and smoke damage to a State-owned house used by the Black students as a cultural center and meeting place. All these incidents are under investigation by the Monroe County District Attorney's Office. The College is cooperating in this investigation.

It should be noted that the striking students and nearly everyone else on the campus spoke out most pointedly against violence and vandalism. During the period of unrest, faculty and student "marshalls" performed extremely helpful services in calming tempers and protecting property from damage.

In view of what happened on many other campuses in the country, a great number of students, faculty and staff at Brockport are to be congratulated for the responsible, mature and thoughtful way in which they performed. Although there were brief periods of tension, we did not find it necessary to call outside law enforcement agencies for assistance. Such a difficult decision, which has often proven to be more inciteful than calming, was made unnecessary by the excellent work of the "marshalls" and the individual good judgement of people on the campus.

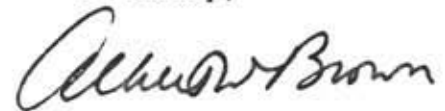
Many people have asked me whether such disturbance will continue at Brockport. I am hopeful that it will not. But disturbing developments outside the College and campus, over which we have no control, do take place. And the vibrations are often felt within the College community.

I am determined to do my best to continue an uninterrupted academic program and to provide protection for individuals and property--at the same time allowing for peaceful expression of opinions within a democrat framework.

The problems which confront us remain great, even as do the problems which confront the nation. I am, however, impressed by the high idealism and constructive determination of the large majority of our student body. Both faculty and staff members have managed in high degree that effective combination of flexibility and steadfastness which is essential in times of severe strain.

As always, we seek the understanding and support, and welcome the counsel, of those who value as we do the high purposes and traditions of the College.

Cordially,



Albert W. Brown
President

AWB:vi

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Palmerton, Todd. 5 April 1991, Brockport, N.Y.
Rich, Calvin. 2 April 1991. Brockport, N.Y.
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UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL:

Kutolowski, John. Material from personal files on Hartwell takeover.

Sherwood, Barbara. Material from personal files of 1969-70 school year.