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"The University in American Power"

Louis Kampf

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Louis Kampf, "The University in American Power"
Portland State University
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HOST: ...From MIT, he is about to become, very soon, the president of the Modern Language Association; he is the past chairman of the English department at MIT; he is a founder of RESIST, which is a fundraising organization for the left in America [laughter] ...not the only one on a national level; he's the founder of the New University Conference. I don't know what else to say about him, except that he has a lot to say and he's been going to classes, he is going to speak to the English department this afternoon about literature and revolution, or something in that general area; and he's going to talk today about the university and the American power, or power in the university... or the university in American power. So I present Mr. Louis Kampf.

LOUIS KAMPF: [clearing throat] Pardon me for sitting down, though I don't know if I should ask for your pardon, I've got a sore back and it hurts to stand. I keep on being amazed that people keep on coming to lectures and so on. After spending one's day at several boring classes and so on, to yet take more verbal punishment is a fairly amazing phenomenon. [laughter in background] Anyway, I deeply regret that the armed forces chose not to show up this morning, I understand that Portland State was offering its halls in the spirit of academic freedom, to the [...] of Army and Navy recruiters, and next week I understand the Mafia is coming. [laughter] Okay, the topic I'm supposed to talk about is the university in American power. [quietly, aside] Are you from the police? [laughter] That's what I figured. Do you want a smile?

ATTENDEE: He's from the student smut sheet.

KAMPF: Well, what's one more picture or less in my file? One day I realized... it dawned on me yesterday that five of the Chicago 8 who were sentenced were sentenced for crossing state

lines with the intent of starting riots. Now, you see, obviously, since I crossed state lines to get into Oregon, it's a physical necessity, and anything I say here might obviously be interpreted as being the intent to start a riot, so that picture becomes one piece of evidence, you see, to prove that I was here. My presence will have been proved by the fact that that tree is standing over there, and that's no joke.

Okay, the topic I'm supposed to talk about is the university in American power, and it's a very ambiguous subject, and it all depends on the point of view you take. [aside] Oh, thank you. Could you send a copy to my mother? [laughter] If you had asked me, I would have taken my clothes off, and then you really would have had a shot. [resuming] The matter depends on the attitudes you take towards the idea of American power. I mean, some people think that America, being the greatest superpower in the world by far, is a groovy thing, you know, that's good, helps keep the dinks in their proper place and it's good for us. And of course, in rather more elaborate and elegant language that has been... it's an opinion that's been expressed by numerous American presidents, business leaders, and what have you. I think one of the most famous and interesting statements was by John Quincy Adams after he stopped being president and was in the House of Representatives in the 1860s, when he made a speech about the fact that "these Chinese are terrible. What's more, they're godless, terribly godless people, because they won't allow American businessmen into the country. And this is against the god-given spirit of free enterprise." I'm not making this up. I'm approximately, almost literally quoting John Quincy Adams.

And, of course, we've changed our tune now and then. Sometimes it's been, you know, that we bomb Vietnam or Laos into smithereens to fight godless atheists and communism, and other times it's to bring the advantages of the American consumer market to the savages. But, anyway, if that's your attitude of course, the existence of American power, the existence of hydrogen bombs, MIRVs, poison gas, the stuff they're gonna transport along here very soon, I understand, that's all right on and a very good thing to exist. As for me, I think American power is a menace. It's not only a menace to people like the Vietnamese and the Africans, and the Laotians—if you looked at your paper this morning, the biggest B-52 raid in the five years that we've been bombing Laos took place this morning; the amount of tonnage we've dropped on Laos in those five years now exceeds the amount of tonnage we dropped on Korea in the entire Korean war, and is slowly but surely approaching the total amount of tonnage we dropped on Europe during World War II—that strikes me as being a little bit menacing, especially if I try to put myself into the position of a Laotian or a Vietnamese peasant, trying to scrape a living out of this piece of soil.

Okay, the question, then, is how are universities and colleges tied into this? And they're tied into it in many ways, only a few of which I'll be able to touch on. I think a previous speaker in this series that I'm speaking in, Gabriel Kolko, has written rather elaborately on these things, if you're really interested in some of the details, you ought to go and dig up some of his writings in the library, and check up his sources and all the rest of it to see whether the man is telling it like it is. But let me just give a few examples of sort of notorious horror stories, which some of you might have heard of, but I realize some of them are like two or three years old, and so they've been thrown into the ash can of history, and people, to a large degree—especially the ones that are just coming into college—really don't know what's been going on on American campuses over the past twenty years as far as the tie-ins to the exercise of American power.

Let me begin, obviously enough, with the place I happen to work at: MIT, or occasionally called Potomac on the Charles, the Pentagon on the Charles. MIT, to give you one little thing, and to get away from the obvious horrors, such as the fact that the tracking system for MIRV, the multi-headed nuclear weapon, is being designed at MIT. Get away from obvious things like this, MIT has something called the Center for International Studies. The Center for International Studies, to me, as three years ago the *Boston Globe* revealed, had been started and financed by the CIA. Its director, a man by the name of Max Millikan, who died of a heart attack a couple of months ago, had been Director of Intelligence for the CIA up until the time he came to MIT to direct the Center for International Studies. The interesting thing about this is—one of the interesting things—is that there was a great deal of breast-beating in the Center for International Studies, lots of *mea culpas* were guilty, and it was publicly announced “No more CIA money!” Lo and behold, a year and a half later the *New York Times* ran a big front-page story which revealed that five foundations had been acting as what is called “conduits” for CIA money. In other words, the Center for International Studies was taking funds from things like the RAB foundation, which is a charitable foundation, supposedly dedicated to helping poor children, widows, and such, and suddenly it turned out that this money was from the CIA. Of course, naturally, none of the members of the CIS knew about this, obviously. The center had to drop this particular source of funding, and ever since then the Ford Foundation has picked up that funding, and well, there's a very thin line between the Ford Foundation and the CIA, of course. Many of the same people seem to work interchangeably between the two outfits; they do.

Okay, of course as you all probably know the Center for International Studies, its great gift to America was Walt Whitman Rostow, who was number one man in the White House under LBJ, and to a large degree was responsible for the escalation of the war in Southeast Asia, and wrote a very big study called “The United States in the World Arena” during a stay at the Center for International Studies, which essentially became the blueprint for American foreign policy under

Kennedy and Johnson years, that whole business of starting large counterinsurgency programs both in Latin America and Southeast Asia.

There are other little benefits from the Center for International Studies, the things that are called spinoff companies, which people like my colleague, Professor Ithiel Pool start. Spinoff companies are companies that these people start as their own businesses, which get large government contracts, which people like Pool get because they are involved in the Center for International Studies and therefore have access to all kinds of classified and secret materials. And so what the government does, it farms out contracts to these small or private companies, which are multi-million dollar businesses, actually, for some of the individuals involved at the Center for International Studies.

Other examples I can think of at my own home—and pardon me for dwelling on my own domicile, if you will, difficult to get away from it for someone who works there. My colleague Walter Rosenblith, who's a Provost, for example, but on the side happens to be Vice President of the Board of Directors of Kaiser Industries. Obviously, no connection between one job and the other. In a larger sense, there is something in Cambridge, and I'm only giving you these examples because they can be multiplied at any place in the country, including in your own place, on the particular scale that Portland State happens to work on. There's something called a Cambridge Corporation. The Cambridge Corporation's board consists of the President of MIT, the President of Harvard, the President of the Cambridge Trust Company, the President of the Harvard Trust Company, and the President of the Cambridgeport Savings Bank. The big thing that the Cambridge Corporation has done in the past ten years is that it's eliminated thousands of units of low-income housing, it has eliminated most manufacturing in the city of Cambridge by buying the land that the factories happened to be built on, and replacing it with research firms, which attract, of course, high-income engineers, expensive apartment houses, fancy restaurants, and so on and so forth. In other words, what this corporation has been doing is busting up the city of Cambridge, driving the majority of its population out of the city, in order to make Cambridge good for MIT and Harvard and the kinds of industries it attracts around it. And, again, as I go walking around here, I see a lot of bulldozers and things like that, a lot of people's houses are disappearing, and you go from campus to campus all over the country and you'll see exactly the same thing. Now, that may be groovy for you and me, inside that university, that may be to our benefit; but just ask yourself sometime what it does to the people in that community, and the 55% of the kids in that community who are not going to college of any kind.

Let me move on to a place like Michigan State. Michigan State is famous; it was put on the map because Ngo Dinh Diem's secret police, which wiped out all political opposition in Vietnam—

the reason, by the way, why you don't have anything you might call a third force in Vietnam, where the only thing you have is the puppet government we set up on the one hand and the NLF on the other hand—is because the secret police that Michigan State and the CIA trained for Ngo Dinh Diem wiped out all political opposition, except the political opposition that happened to go underground. The matter is still going on. I cut this out of today's Portland paper, on page 3: in Saigon, a prominent political opponent of President Nguyen Van Thieu was convicted Wednesday of pro-communist activity, and ordered seized in the national assembly building, where he had been conducting a protest sit-in. The five-man military court took thirty minutes to reach the verdict on Tran Ngoc Chau, a member of the lower house. I'm glad to see that there is still some opposition left in the lower or upper or any house in South Vietnam, but anyway, you see the routine. Michigan State, as I said, under the direction of a man by the name of Wesley Fishel, trained that secret police. That was Michigan State's contribution to the betterment of South Vietnam and the world.

Let me go on to Stanford. Stanford has something called the Electronics Research Center, which has been doing a multi-million—by now, billion-dollar business in various weapons systems for years. Last year, about four to five hundred students busted into that building and had a sit-in, and as a result Stanford University separated that research from Stanford. The research center is still there, and professors from Stanford still do their work inside of that research center.

Let me go on to Pennsylvania University, as another example. Pennsylvania, up 'til a year and a half ago, did most of the important research on poison gas and on chemical and biological warfare in general in the United States. As a result of protests there, that lab was also separated from Pennsylvania University, but the same routine: professors at Pennsylvania are still going in there and doing their work.

Let me go on to something more recent. At Southern Illinois University, where there's a lot of noise going on—now this man Wesley Fishel that I mentioned before at Michigan State seems to have a kind of traveling troupe or something of the sort. He showed up this year at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, and started something called the Center for Vietnamese Studies. You see, what happened is these various centers for that kind of stuff have been under so much pressure at various universities in big cities and so on, that they figured if they stick it away in Carbondale, Illinois, which you know is a depressed, coal-mining area, that nobody would say anything about that, obviously, there. The Center for Vietnamese Studies does essentially the same kind of thing that let's say the Center for International Studies does at MIT—it does secret and classified, and also non-secret and non-classified research related to setting up police forces in the Third World, relating to how the government can best suppress

rebellions in Latin America, relating to how best the government can meet disorders in the urban ghettos in the United States, and so on.

Okay, enough horror stories. As I said, I could multiply them, but I think I'd like to go on to something—a few things—that cut a little bit deeper, and are more important and more widespread, and they really show the pattern in operation. Last year, when a group of Harvard students occupied the Administration Building at Harvard, they found some letters. Some of them are very interesting. Amongst them was this one, dated April 25, 1957. It was a letter written by McGeorge Bundy, who was then Dean of Harvard, and later on became Kennedy's and Johnson's number one man in the White House responsible for foreign policy. Here's the letter: "Dear Bob," and the letter is addressed to Robert Bowie, who was then Undersecretary of State, and now is—this was in the Eisenhower years, he was Undersecretary of State, in 1957—now he's the chairman for the Center for Development Aid at Harvard. The Center for Development Aid at Harvard does mostly work for large corporations to show how countries in the Third World can be "developed." They've done a lot of work in Ghana, and Pakistan, and I'm sure you're all aware how massive and monumental the development has been in those countries [laughter]... it's been so massive that you can pick up the people starving from starvation, quite literally, on the streets as you walk down them, especially in Pakistan, of course.

Okay: "I taught with Henry Kissinger earlier this week," you all know Henry Kissinger, I trust, "and suggested to him that he should get in touch with you to talk some more. I think he is much interested in our idea," our idea being McGeorge Bundy's idea, remember he's the Dean at Harvard, an academic institution, a university, and Robert Bowie, who was Undersecretary of State, "but he also has a very attractive offer from the people at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, and there is some doubt in my mind as to what he will do." If you don't know it, the Council on Foreign Relations is the outfit that puts out something called *Foreign Affairs*, and spends most of its time organizing conferences for academics, in order to work up ideas for the State Department. "Much will depend on what you can tell him of the picture of the operation as you see it." That really sounds intriguing, doesn't it? "The picture of the operation," "our idea," you know, you really think something heavy is going to come up now. "I found them just a little uncertain, also, as to whether he wanted to come back to a department which had not been unanimously friendly about him a year ago, but I tried to cheer him up on that point." [pauses, audience laughs] "It is clear that the government department as a whole," this is the government department at Harvard, "is enthusiastic about his return. "The vote was unanimous, and I hope he will not be too troubled by any past feelings. I have recently read his excellent leading article in *Foreign Affairs* for this year, and I am confident that he is the man

we want. What I offered him was a three- or four-year appointment as lecturer, with a starting salary of about \$8,500.”

Now, \$8,500 was more in 1957 than it is now, but, dig it: Henry Kissinger had been an assistant professor at Harvard in the Government department. He’d gotten canned because people didn’t like his personality and his German accent; I guess he reminded them too much of Doctor Strangelove. Not that most of the Government department at Harvard isn’t composed of Doctor Strangeloves, there’s Sam Huntington works there, and Sam Huntington is famous for saying that the bombing of the Vietnamese countryside is a very good thing because it aids urbanization... [laughter] namely for [...] it’s an article he wrote in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal just referred to. You see, if people come from the countryside because it’s being bombed, to the city, you’re urbanizing Vietnam, because everybody knows no country can modernize until it’s urbanized. So what better way to help urbanization and modernization than to bomb the shit out of the countryside? [laughter] And this is a serious argument being seriously made by people not just like Huntington, but lots of people. I guess, you know, you can look through rosy-colored glasses at anything, especially if you don’t happen to be the person that’s being bombed, if you’re the person not even that’s dropping the bombs yourself, because doing that you might get shot at, but if you’re back in an office at Harvard or MIT or where-have-you around the State Department making up a plan for it.

But okay, you see what’s involved is Kissinger, after having gotten fired at Harvard, quickly getting McGeorge Bundy calling up Bowie at the State Department or Dean [...] and saying “Get this guy a job.” Then after him being there for a few years, you know, people... Bowie and McGeorge Bundy together at this point deciding it would be a good thing for Kissinger’s training and his future career to come back to Harvard for a while. And what, in fact, Bundy did—it’s one of these open secrets in Cambridge—was that he went to various people in the Harvard Government department who didn’t want Kissinger there, and told them that if they didn’t vote for him, they shouldn’t expect any future government research contracts. And there’s nothing like that to change somebody’s free and independent vote. Okay, then it goes on to say, “If, by any chance, we should not get Kissinger, there is one other man whose qualifications might be well-considered.” So on and so forth, and it winds up by saying, “But, of course, we will hope to get Henry first, and if that should not work, it will be time enough to consider alternatives. I quite understand that this letter will arrive while you are in the turmoil of preparation for the NATO meeting, so I do not expect an answer at an early date.” But again, you know, that whole picture fascinates me, of the business of appointing someone from the State Department back at your school, being if not quite as important as the organizing of a NATO conference, nearly as important, important enough to write a man a letter. Okay, I think you can draw your own conclusions from all that.

But look, I think there are things that are even more important than this kind of stuff, something that affects all kinds of colleges and universities, not just elite ones like Harvard or MIT or Johns Hopkins or the University of Chicago or Berkeley. It's a fact that to a large degree what most campuses, especially state campuses, do, is that they hunt up large research contracts or small research contracts or medium research contracts from local industry, from the state government, and various other institutions, in order, essentially, to institute training programs for those particular institutions; whether they are in terms of training welfare workers, or teachers, or accountants, or engineers, or special schools, like Lowell Tech, for example, which was in Lowell Massachusetts, which was created 60 years ago precisely to feed specialized people to the textile industry in that area of Massachusetts. And I think in order to understand this, what we really have to do—how this happened and what it's about—is look at the roots of some of this stuff: where did it come from, how did it originate?

Because we all know about the mythology of how the university originated. You know, we all have this idea of the renaissance man—and maybe woman, you know, except as we know women are mostly in college to be trained to be secretaries, which is the kind of job they can usually get—but anyway, we have this idea of the renaissance man who goes away to something like the Neoplatonic Academy in Florence, in which you sit around and you talk about pure ideas and the abstract realm and read the classics and spend a lot of years educating yourself and rapping about ideas, and so on and so forth, and you do all this simply because the Medici brothers happened to have liked that kind of thing and think it would be groovy to have it around the court in Florence.

Okay, and we somehow have this picture—I think a lot of us, as we grow up—that once we get out of that damn jail we call high school, that then we come to the university. You know, you all remember the picture of the graduate arriving on that scene, Plato on the left and Bertrand Russell on the right, abstract apology before you, history behind you, and all the muses and what-have-you are the center of pure learning that we come into to make ourselves better-rounded individuals, to be creative. And you've all heard the speech from the freshman dean or whatever have you.

The reality of the origins of the American university, of course, isn't anything like it. The early American colleges were established primarily to train clergymen. That was their origin: you went to Harvard, for example, or to William and Mary College in Virginia, to be a clergyman, to be a minister. At Harvard it was a congregational minister, I forgot what it was at William and Mary, probably Anglican I would suppose.

Okay, in the nineteenth century, the universities and the state campuses that started popping up all over the place became, primarily, places to kind of go to for two or four years to kind of stay out of the way, if you didn't have the talent to either step into your father's profession right then and there, or if you didn't have the talent to immediately go into business. If you were "talented," you obviously didn't go to any college in the nineteenth century; not at all, unless you were training yourself to become a clergyman. Now, things started changing, of course, with the Industrial Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution really develops in two stages—roughly, naturally. The first Industrial Revolution really transformed the function of universities, and it certainly has transformed the function of secondary schooling, and to a large degree created free high schools. And what happened with the Industrial Revolution is that, of course, people needed to have a much higher degree of training. Lots of people—masses of people—who had been farmers before, needed to be trained in certain skills. Not only did they need to be trained in these skills, they needed to have good habits developed, and that's really why you got free secondary and primary education. Because, think of it: What has to be done to you before you accept the business, in the nineteenth century, let's say, of showing up at a factory at 7:00 in the morning and leaving at 7:00 in the evening, of carrying on that routine; of doing it faithfully and not messing it up; of feeling a guilty conscience if somehow you turn a button to the left that's supposed to be turned to the right; and what have you? The kind of training that has to go into people for them to be able to accept this, rather than just simply smashing the machines, as in fact lots of workers did in England in the earlier nineteenth century, for example. One of the reasons, by the way, why child labor developed in England; people discovered that it was much easier to train a six-year-old and make them docile than a sixteen- or an eighteen- or a twenty-year-old, who might not be used to that kind of crap.

Okay, what happens, then, with the schools and the colleges is that, essentially, they take the place of the family in training people and giving them good habits and civilising them, as you might call it. Things changed somewhat with the coming of the second Industrial Revolution later on in the nineteenth century, towards the end of it. And if you sort of have to define the second Industrial Revolution or separate it from the first Industrial Revolution in one phrase, what defines it is... [aside to somebody] ...it's not morning, it's afternoon [laughing] ...is that the first Industrial Revolution made jobs, it created labor. What happened was that people got driven off the farms in England by things like the [...], and that created what was jokingly called "a free labor pool," which, then, industry could draw on. What the second Industrial Revolution did is really instead of making jobs, it cut away jobs, it destroyed them; it was essentially labor-saving rather than labor-creating. And the reason for this, and the technology that developed for this is debated by different economists. It strikes me that the most reasonable explanation for this is that in Western Europe, essentially, the free labor pools disappeared. They didn't exist anymore, and as a result what you started getting was very militant unions, which started

doing things like overthrowing governments. And the best way, it has always been known, to keep people who are on jobs from being militant is to threaten them with the loss of that job. And what better thing to do than to eliminate the job altogether by the development of technology?

Now, when you develop this large technology, this very expensive technology, which produces things in masses, in great amounts, what you need is a large amount of capital investment; you have to start producing capital goods, which you can't just toss away at the end of the year, obviously. It has to last a little bit longer than that, and once you toss it away, of course, you have to have the financing for supplanting that. Modern industries have this marvelous device for this, namely, they don't pay taxes, you see. What you can do is, you can take off on your taxes because the machines are wearing down. Human beings, unfortunately, can't do this, you can't take off taxes for the human machine wearing down, unless you happen to go blind. If you're blind, then you get a special exemption on your taxes, that's if you can have a job in order to make money in order to pay taxes, which isn't so easy.

But anyway, these capital goods have to be produced, they have to be invested in, and the goods that these capital goods produce have to be sold, and they have to be sold over the long range. It's not like producing a few things anymore, that you can have a sales campaign in your area about, it's things that involve millions and billions of dollars. And of course, the West and the United States reached a point where they can't sell these goods anymore, where kind of, the market for various things begins to be glutted, in spite of all the advertising that you lay on people, and as a result you get a phenomenon that [...] referred to as imperialism. Early imperialism in the first stage of the Industrial Revolution that I talked about, what that was really about was, essentially, robbing the colonial countries of their raw materials and bringing them back to the mother country, whether it was England, France, Germany, the United States. What the second industrial revolution involved is still this particular kind of phenomenon, also, though, the business of—after taking the raw materials out of those countries—bringing them back to the mother country, processing them, producing the stuff, then taking the goods back to the colonial countries where you got the raw materials originally, and trying to sell it to the Natives, you see. So, as you know, in Africa there are now things like airports all over the place that are unused, countries are forcibly sold various kinds of huge planes and so on and so forth, that can't be used, and what have you. There are billions of dollars of goods rotting away in storage houses, in storage centers all over the third world, which people can't use.

The obvious solution to all this is, of course, to send hundreds of thousands of American troops into the country, and then you create a situation where, perhaps, those goods will, in fact, be used. As you probably know, in the midst of this whole war in Vietnam, the per capita income

of the population has actually gone up. What that means is that sort of like twenty to twenty five people who are doing business with the supplies for the troops and whatnot, and the huge number of construction supplies that have to come in for airports, ports, and whatnot, are making literally billions of dollars, and you know, you average that out over the five dollars or ten dollars a year income of the rest of the population, and that raises the per capita income.

Okay, how do universities relate to this? It's fairly obvious, one hardly needs to spell it out, one has to simply point at it. In order to develop this necessary technology, of course what you have to do is large-scale research. Some of the large-scale research is damned expensive, you see, very expensive for firms to set up their own labs. It's much better to kind of concentrate things at a few universities, and best of all to have the government pay for it. So that most of the research that General Motors needs, for example, you know, the basic research, the research that leads, eventually, to the fact that each year they are capable of designing a new model so that you have to toss the old model away; that's done at universities, of course. That's done by mechanical engineering departments, or civil engineering departments, and so on and so forth, and the people who pay for that are you and me. Through our taxes, we're the ones who pay for that.

Then there's the whole business of training for higher skills. The more sophisticated industry becomes, the higher level of skills that have to be developed. To the point, for instance, where salesmen, now, working in large industries, have to have engineering degrees, they have to have graduate degrees from expensive business schools, every four or five years they have to be given sabbatical leaves in order to tool up, you know, to come back to centers for continuing education, as they're called. And again, see, like in the Middle Ages for instance, if you wanted to become a cooper, let's say, what you did is you went to work as an apprentice for a cooper—a master cooper—and he probably didn't pay you very much, often they didn't pay you anything, but at least he had to feed you. You know, he had to give you a bed, he had to give you three meals a day, and he had to provide a little bit of entertainment for you in order to keep you alive. Modern industry, to a large degree, doesn't have to do this, you see. The taxpayer's dollar does it again, in the training programs that universities set up.

Now, what is also needed, along with this, is that the goods again, as I said before, that are produced have to be consumed, of course. And, in order to consume this, what you have to have is an enlarged middle class that's "cultured," you see. And what happens, invariably, to students that come to college—any college—is that their own notions of what the good life is, and what it is that they need, gets higher; "higher" with quotation marks around it. For example, you learn that when you work it's not really good enough for you to wear a work shirt—which are very nice, I like work shirts—that you buy for a couple of dollars to wear, a

blue-collar worker wears one, but, in fact, you have to wear a suit and you have to wear a tie and so on and so forth; and you have to have a decent haircut, and all the rest of it. If you climb a little bit higher, you discover, of course, that there—and I'm taking this to the grossest level, obviously—you have to have things like cocktail parties and so on and so forth; expensive dinners, if not for the boss, for your colleagues, and all the rest of it. There's a whole set of standards that change in one's life so that, for instance, the people like my mother—she would lose her self-respect totally and absolutely if, each year, she didn't have the wherewithal to buy a new piece of furniture. And, in fact, she feels absolutely desperate because I and the woman I'm married to live with furniture which we sort of put together ourselves, painted ourselves, and which we think looks rather nice and is very comfortable, and all the rest of it.

Okay, I'm not saying that we all should go back to William Morris and start making our own furniture and whatnot. The point is, ask anybody, for instance, who's gone to graduate school what happens to them between that last year in graduate school, when they finish it, and the first job they get, when they're making something like three times the amount of money they've ever made before in their lives, what certainly happens to that money. What does it go to, you know; what do you do with it? And that's, of course, very purposeful. If that didn't happen the economy obviously couldn't survive.

Okay, as I said, on its various levels—and it's really worth studying in detail, not the way I'm doing it—the university produces all this; it manufactures all this. It manufactures both research things and human beings, which also are things. You and I go to college because at the end of the four years, we think that our value becomes increased. We can sell ourselves for a higher price.

Now, let me take kind of a very brief look at some of the things that are going on in education today. Let me quote very briefly from something called the Cox Report. The Cox Report was something that was edited and largely written by Archibald Cox, who used to be Solicitor General in the Justice Department, which was number two man in the Justice Department under Kennedy, and for a while under Lyndon Johnson. And this report was put together after the riot happened at Columbia a couple of years ago, and here he's talking about the fact that maybe teachers ought to do more teaching, rather than research, and he's got this to say: "Perhaps the answer is that the universities must expand in these directions," namely teaching, and teachers being close to students and so on, "but the expansion will not be without cost, since the time, energy, and money diverted from pure research at universities will not be replaced anywhere else in society." And that's important to remember, that it's very difficult for private industry to replace what is, in fact, going on in universities. Well anyway, he goes on to say, "The diversion of academic resources would limit the seeds of progress." Notice he says

not that it would limit the profit that a lot of corporations make, which is one of the things it would do, it would limit the “seeds of progress.” Now, I just wonder what he means by progress. You see, everyone has their own notions of what progress is. Some people think developing the hydrogen bomb is progress, obviously; some people think polluting the air around one is progress; and the thing we’ve gotta ask is, actually, you know, what are these seeds of progress? And as I said, the seeds of progress as far as I see them is that at elite universities, what that means is doing research which largely serves the corporations and the Defense Department and the rest of industry. It’s producing ideologies that give this kind of stuff covers, like, you know, when students at MIT—something like 80% of them voted that they didn’t want MIRV at MIT—asked the Provost, Wiesner, who used to be kind of the science advisor, who also doesn’t like MIRV, why MIT is at MIRV, his answer was “academic freedom”; people got to be able to do the research freely that they want to do, and you can’t stop the seeds of progress. Everybody loves that phrase.

And what it finally does—elite universities do is—they produce what John Kenneth Galbraith, in his book *The New Industrial State*, called “the technostructure,” namely the various levels of management technocrats and so on. What happens at non-elite schools is that people are more and more drawn into them, people who previously would have only gone up to high school, with the myth that, somehow, this will help one to climb socially; that, you know, you’ll be able to get out of the class that you’re in and climb into a higher class. And, of course, high schools used to do this. But largely, what the non-elite schools are, in their own way, as much as elite schools, is certifying agencies. Namely, the important thing about you coming here and spending four years here, you know, after you go out in the world, isn’t the things you learn here. And you no doubt learn a lot of things here; some of them may be good. Occasionally you learn from your teachers, sometimes you learn ‘em from books, more often I suspect from your fellow students. Anyway, the important thing is that diploma you get at the end, the certifying thing. You know, it doesn’t matter whether you go to a single class in those four years, and in fact the University of Chicago, for many years, recognized this when it simply said, “it doesn’t matter how long you’re here, doesn’t matter how many classes you go to, all you gotta do is take that exam at the end of a two-year period and the end of a four-year period, and then we give you the diploma.” The British universities are even better at that. Nobody gives a damn what the hell you do at either Oxford or Cambridge, for example, or at Leeds, or any of the other of those universities in the three years you spend there. You sort of see a tutor occasionally, if you want to you can go to lectures but you don’t have to, and you write a paper or two at the end of those four years. If you wanna get an honors degree, you take an exam, you see, which, if you get a certain grade on, that means you graduate with either a first or a second or a third, as it’s called. But the important thing is that certifying piece of paper, naturally. As Ph.D.s generally call it, our union card. That’s what matters.

Okay. What not only schools have done, however, in this process, their existence has done, is that is every statistic you want to look at that's put out by the Department of Labor and the correlation between education and the place you get your degree at, and the kind of job you wind up at, is that it absolutely and totally stratifies—excuse me—is that it absolutely and totally assures social stratification. The number of people now who can climb out of the social class they're in into the top, to the top, is less now than it was sixty years ago. The number of people who can get into high management positions now, whose parents have not graduated from college, is now something like 15% less than it was sixty years ago; and these statistics are conservative. The Department of Labor people that put these statistics together obviously aren't on the side of a socialist revolution, you see; they're just sort of doing their job and trying to make sense out of the statistics they have available to them in the Department of Labor.

You see, what's happened was that the whole notion of the individual entrepreneur, for instance, who used to, you know, like Carnegie and so on, has simply died. Because the corporations, because they are run by managers, and where the managers for the large corporations come from are from the elite universities, of course. Now, who gets into the elite universities? The children of the upper middle class. Why? Because the children of the upper middle class go to the kinds of high schools where they can get high ratings, you know, which teach them how to get high ratings on their college boards and so on and so forth. And again, it's amazing what the correlation is on this kind of stuff. California has a very elaborate set of statistics. 95% of the students at Berkeley come from homes with upper... what are classified as upper middle class incomes. At a place like Fresno State, 98% of the students come from low-income families.

Okay, the reasons for that, as I said to you, really you can figure out on your own. But in other words, what the non-elite schools and the elite schools work to do is to stratify people into the class they're in. And in order to explain this, and in order to answer some questions about this, the thing we have to ask ourselves is who does the university serve? Who is it for? Does it serve that notion of making better men and better women, of allowing people to be creative, of allowing to develop themselves, of allowing them to pursue the kind of research they want to? It's something that's highly dubious, of course. When state legislatures and the federal government pass huge, just huge, bills for huge allotments of money, you can be generally, fairly sure that they're not doing it for you or for my benefit. Bills don't get passed that way in Congress or in state legislatures. You know, there is a reason why lots of highways get built, and practically no public transportation—mass public transportation gets built—that isn't buses. And again, the reason you can figure out for yourself, I think.

Okay, the thing we have to ask ourselves, then, in who higher education is for is by asking yourself questions like: Who is weapons research for? Is weapons research really independent research? The thing you might ask yourself, for example, is: If this weapons research is so independent, and people who do it generally tell you, "I'm just a technician, I'm just doing my job," the thing you ask is, "Well, how come all the weapons research is being done for the Pentagon?" Like, for instance, what if I came around to your lab and I asked you... told you I had some friends in the NLF in Vietnam who would like to have a better hand weapon for shooting down American helicopters, or American planes that are dropping napalm on them? Would you kindly do the free and independent research to produce these things? [laughter] And you might get an answer from the person involved, and say, "Oh, I'd be glad to do this if you get me the twenty million dollars that I need to do it," and that's, of course, where the rub is.

If you go to a police institute, like the kind of police institute at Michigan, and say, "Uh, sir, I have some friends who are in the Black community, and the cops have been beating on them, and they'd like to have certain devices, like radar devices for example, that will tell community patrols when the cops are coming in their patrol wagons into their neighborhood. Indeed, I have some Black Panthers who would like to defend themselves when they're being shot. Could you kindly do that research for me?" Even then, they might say, "I'll do the research for you if, you know, you get me that five-million-dollar contract, that two-million-dollar contract that it takes." I'm not aware that ghettos generally have that kind of money available to them to have that kind of research done for them. Well, so much for the notion of free and independent research, I think. The thing you really have to ask yourself is: Who finances the universities, and how does that relate to the function the university serves?

Now, a few weeks ago, I think you had a man here—or a couple of months ago—in this series by the name of Gabriel Kolko, who lines this up, and he's written a lot about something that he calls "the industrial-military-university complex," and I think it ought to be looked at in that order. In fact, it's really an industrial complex, generally with the military and universities being industry's very faithful servants. And, I think we really have to look at colleges and universities in terms of that particular picture, rather than the mythological picture we've all got of the universities and colleges producing more renaissance men and women who can, then, go out and think independently while they're doing the crummy jobs that they're awaiting, most of them. Or, you know, you can do a lot of free and independent thinking while you're pounding away at a typewriter. You know, the future awaiting an English major, as a matter of fact, might be to be, if you're lucky, the secretary of the chairman of the English department that you majored in, and you can think all kinds of beautiful and exotic thoughts while you're doing that particular shit job. [laughter, applause]

All right, let me finish up by asking the question: How do we fight this? How do we oppose it? What do we do about it? I don't think one simply voluntarily says to oneself, "Ooh, I hate the system, I'm gonna go out and off it!" It'd be nice if it could be that way; it can't be quite done that way, in fact. There have to be the objective conditions that allow one to work against the system as it works, against the university as it works, and make it serve the people, and make it serve ourselves, rather than the interests it serves. And I think that's happening, those objective conditions are occurring; because, in fact, economically, not only the whole system is beginning to malfunction, but that the universities and the function they serve is beginning to malfunction. The universities are turning out dysfunctional people, in fact; people who can't get jobs which are appropriate to their level of training, as it's called. 30%, by the way, of Ph.D.s in physics this year will not be able to get jobs appropriate for Ph.D.s in physics, which is a statistic you can stick under your hair and think about for a little bit.

But what's been happening in a kind of more apparent way and a more visible way is the alienation of students, and the alienation is very real. The alienation is shown, for example, in the fact that firms like First National Bank, Chase National, General Motors can't recruit the people they need on campuses anymore. I don't mean that students don't allow them to recruit, as has been happening here. I mean that they come on campus and nobody shows up to the interviews, or people show up and then don't take their jobs. And what has happened to those companies is that they've started recruiting amongst junior officers. One of the best ways to get into middle management in General Motors, for example, is probably to go to West Point or Annapolis and serve out that eight years' worth of slavery, and then get a job at General Motors in middle management, and go into 35 years of another kind of slavery, except that you have a retirement plan at the end, and is quite substantial.

Okay. People, I think, students are obviously becoming more and more aware of what's going on. They're becoming more and more aware of the fact that they are being channeled in the colleges they're in. Not all students, by any means, not even a majority, but a heck of a large number, enough to make life uncomfortable for everyone if they start throwing a monkey wrench into the system. But then more fundamentally even than this, I think we ought to look at the economic contradictions and paradoxes inside the system itself: what's happening, and the economy of the country. As I said earlier, the system constantly needs to expand. It just simply has to expand. So we measure—the official way in which we calculate the country's economic well being is the rate of expansion of the GNP, or the gross national product. That's the main indicator that's used. You would think, essentially, that the United States didn't have to expand, you know, if we redistributed the wealth and so on, there's obviously plenty there for everyone. There are billions of pounds of food rotting away in silos and what have you, and not being used. But anyway, the logic of the economic system says that it has to expand, and

that's why, of course, as I said earlier, you get things like imperialism. But what the expansion... of course, what you wind up doing is turning out more and more students. But those students turn out now, all of a sudden, after ten kind of very bearish years, to be dysfunctional, not to be very useful. There are not appropriate jobs for them.

Also, we need expansion, yet you have inflation going on. And what the inflation causes the administration to do is to cut down on the expansion in the hope that inflation will stop. Well, as you know, what's happened is we've cut down on the availability of money for this, as a result more and more people are unemployed. There's less expansion for jobs that you people need when you graduate, but lo and behold inflation hasn't stopped at all; it's worse than ever, and it keeps going up. So there seems to be something wrong, and for some reason our official economists don't know what. Okay. What happens, then, is that more and more young people are becoming dysfunctional. It's hitting, mainly now, those who are not in college. The unemployment rate amongst people [audio skips] ...people that go to non-elite colleges. First the people in community colleges, next people in places like Portland State. I think many of you who are sophomores, for example, have that awaiting you in another couple of years, and you might as well be prepared for it.

What this is creating, I think, is kind of a massive discontent that's just beginning amongst people like professionals, amongst the upper reaches of the white collar force. It explains the existence of things like the New University Conference, which is an association of radical academics, which is something I couldn't've dreamed of in my wildest dreams five years ago. I couldn't've believed that could've existed, you see, and that is something that has happened very suddenly in the past couple of years because of this general kind of discontent; because what we're producing is a new proletariat, to a large degree; kind of a new group of people that are starting to discover that they do not control the means of production. You and I may be here to make more knowledge, but we don't control that knowledge. That knowledge isn't ours, it's controlled by other people.

Now, what's the reaction to this going to be, to close things out? I think the general reaction to this will be more and more refreshing, as is happening now. As more and more people start getting violent, as campuses blow up more and more, as there's more and more visible opposition, you're gonna get more and more trials of things like the Chicago 8, you're gonna get more and more suppression of Black militants at colleges; and you really have to understand what the difference and degree is between the repression of Black militants, especially in Black colleges, and the kind of repression of the people in the student movement, who happen to be white. Two students were killed by the state troopers in Orangeburg, South Carolina, at the Black college, in that particular place this past year, and that's what's happening to them. At a

Black college in Texas a year and a half ago, one student was killed and five were critically wounded by the police, which came around and started just randomly machine-gunning the dormitory. That's what's happening in those places. And there will be a point when this will also become the common experience for white students, I think, as it is the common experience for students in Latin America, and France, and in Italy, and as it was the experience, and is the experience for students in Czechoslovakia. That, I think, is almost certain to become part of our experience.

But I think, to a large degree, what this kind of repression will do is create a more and more revolutionary sort of force. Because a couple of years ago, when you went up to campuses and you asked student militants where they were at, what they told you is, "We want better classrooms, we want more contact with teachers, you know, we want things to be nicer at the university." Most student militants don't talk that way anymore, and they don't talk that way anymore... well actually, because of the almost stupid and gratuitous way in which repression has come down on them. Most administrations have not been very shrewd or clever in the way they've used force. Some of them have, like Wesleyan; namely, they haven't used any force at all at Wesleyan University. They've simply given the students whatever they wanted, and that was fine with those particular upper middle class students who happen to go to Wesleyan. They're not about to make a fuss anymore, as long as nobody complains if they can freely drop acid and smoke grass in their dormitories, and not only that, get six semester credits for doing that and making it into a course and calling it The Psychedelic Experience. [laughter] But that's quite literally true, and the administration was extremely shrewd in doing this, I think, even though I think they'll have their own difficulties with that particular scheme.

But what the repression in a lot of other places has done, is that it has turned students' eyes to the relation between the university and the community out there, and what they've started to understand is that the university, by its very existence, serves certain interests. And what you really have to do is fight, not just simply within the university itself, to make it a better university, but to a large degree the university or college cannot become better unless you change something very fundamental in the system; unless you make choices like Portland State: serve the people in that particular community, rather than the interests it serves at present. And I think, as I said, that's why when I go and talk to students—activists, and not even activists, people who are kind of just turned off by what they're into—what you get is generally a kind of revolutionary rap from them. I'm not sure it's very appropriate to be rapping in a revolutionary way now, but there it is, anyway, it's something that exists, it's real, and it wasn't there a couple of years ago.

Now I think, frankly, what we've got to do if we work inside of the universities, if we're students or teachers or what have you, is that we've got to begin that process of making the place a very, very different thing from what it is. And the way we do that is, I think, we've got to work in two places. We've got to work both in here and we've got to work out there, with the powers that be. Because most of the people working in this place or the place I work at or any other place, really, are fundamentally helpless. They're basically tools, as you and I to a large degree are tools. And what we have to do is make both the people at the place we're working at—students, really, are doing part of their work here, and I really can't imagine how they could go through their routine unless they see it as part of that thing that eventually will allow them to make a living or something, or maybe there're still some students left that have the terribly naive hope that maybe something very beautiful will happen to them at some point; there's still people like that left, occasionally I feel like that myself. But also, besides doing that here, I think we have to, more and more, go out there and make people understand just how the university serves, largely, to repress them; from the business of the fact that, you know, I understand around here, old people are being driven out of their homes because the university, like any other university, is expanding and needs more buildings and what have you, to the fact that the average tax-payer's dollar is going towards the advancement of the corporations and those particular interests that, finally, serve to oppress that person.

And I think when most people discover and become aware of the fact that they are paying the price for their own oppression, that they are on their way towards doing something very different and changing this damn system we live in from the bottom up, because the overthrow of that system, by whatever means possible, really—and I don't think in the end we'll be very peaceful, it's not very peaceful now, we're not living in a very peaceful country. Obviously, as some people who live in ghettos, they might tell you something about that, or occasionally go and watch Portland State's latest football game if you think we're living in a peaceful country, you know that is one particular kind of symbolization of that kind of thing. Don't worry, I too went through college on an athletic scholarship, and it took quite a while for me to understand the kind of gladiatorial function I was serving a couple of times a week during the basketball season at places like Madison Square Garden for the rest of the population: the kind of symbolic enactment of all of their violent dreams, the violent dreams they're really scared of acting out themselves.

Okay. What I'm saying, then, is we've got to change it, and we really gotta change it from the bottom up, and I hope most of you will wind up doing that, because I think that's the only way you can remain human beings rather than tools in the big machine we call our society.

[applause; program ends]