

1968

That was then, this is now...

Older, grayer, and wiser, student leaders of the late 1960s still assert their individuality and remember a special time.

By Dana L. Cooke

Twenty years later, the media and historians and various sentimentalists have turned their attentions to 1968, searching for an understanding of that year as distinct in its setting. "Like a knife blade, the year severed past from future," said *Time* magazine.

In truth, no one year is distinct in its era. The events of 1968 were born in the policies of a previous president, the upheavals of numerous Old South cities, and the Beat voice of the preceding decade. Their influence carried over to later politics and lifestyles.

But we don't question the wisdom of those who single out 1968, for even as an arbitrarily bounded set of 366 days, 1968 is remarkable. Many of the most extraordinary events and voices of our lives are contained between those January firsts. Grouped that way, and held up under the same light, they tell us something about anyone who lived then. They are of 1968,

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but they represent the heart of an entire generation—the college-aged Baby Boomers of 1966-72.

So gladly we climb aboard the bandwagon. In the following pages, we look back at the year that was 1968 at Syracuse University, and we check in with just a few of the students who were most visible and vocal then.

We learn that, despite common observations to the contrary, the spirit of 1968 was not passing. All with whom we spoke contradicted the idea that the social awareness of the late sixties was the pass-

ing fancy of an over-privileged, brassy elite. Each remembers his or her feelings of 20 years ago with clarity, and stands by them today, if with adult moderation.

The period still stirs up disagreement. Those who had protested recounted for us their distaste for the government's policies then and their fear that they might be made to participate. Those who stood by the government retain an embarrassment over their colleagues' behavior. Many of the far-flung proclamations of the day proved naive, but the underlying emotions were more than mere post-adolescent

Tim Leary, Dick Nixon, anti-this and pro-that. Sixty-eight at Syracuse was national tragedies and local shenanigans . . .

Jan. 11
Fraternizing. Though an on-site inspection has uncovered a discernible "odor of beer" (and two women in violation of visitation rules), fraternity Kappa Sigma is cleared of alcohol-policy charges.



whimsy. They survive still.

Students of the era describe a strong connection to their college years, which guides them. At least one predicted a reemergence of his generation when members of the group soon reach power-wielding positions in their institutions (particularly in government). Then, he predicted, the vigor of 1968 will prove more than a fleeting zeitgeist.

The Iconoclast

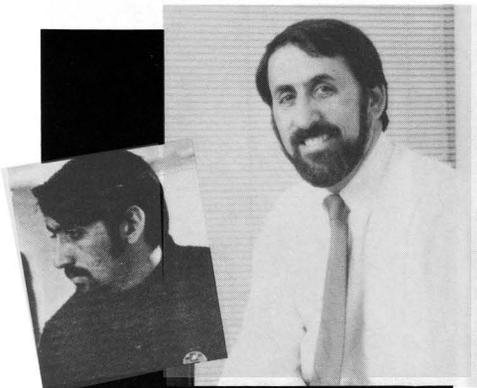
If all the Syracuse students who protested or peace-marched in the late 1960s, David Ifshin '70 was the most visible. He is well remembered, 20 years later.

Ifshin was an English major in 1968, with latent organizational tendencies but little in the way of revolutionary leanings. He had been the first student representative to the English Faculty Council, and later SU's representative to the National Student Association (NSA). But then he went to Chicago and the 1968 Democratic Convention. It changed his life.

"I walked down the street believing full well—having agonized over it, having all kinds of friends caught up in it, having a draft card in my pocket. I peacefully walked down the street and got assaulted by the police force, and beat up like some sort of vermin because I had the audacity to oppose the policy of the United States." Ifshin returned to campus, began talking about the issues, became an advocate for the New Left. He married campus concerns with national concerns.

At the suggestion of friends, he ran for Student Government (SG) president in the spring of 1969 on an independent ticket. To his great surprise, he won, and found himself student leader during one of the strangest years in the life of Syracuse.

In the fall of 1969, he toured the fresh-



David Ifshin

"I peacefully walked down the street and got assaulted by the police force because I had the audacity to oppose the policy of the United States."

man dorms recruiting students for the Vietnam War Moratorium. "A lot of kids came to campus looking for the sixties," he remembers. "All of sudden, this guy shows up with a beard and says he's student body president, and get ready for a wild year."

There were a series of protests and actions through that academic year, culminating in the student strike of May 1970. As much as any one individual, Ifshin led the strike. To observers, David Ifshin emerged as the typical campus yippie.

But Ifshin has a way of not fitting into those niches—of contradicting routine expectations. Originally a candidate for a military academy, Ifshin had arrived at SU and promptly joined ROTC; he dropped it because he did not find the experience particularly challenging. Later, he would lead a campus referendum on ROTC, not because he opposed the corps, but because he believed strongly in democratic solutions to such issues.

Ifshin was active also in Greek circles, despite the contrary sentiment of his anti-establishment peers; when he ran as a quasi-alternative candidate for SG president, much of his support came from Greek friends and former ROTC colleagues. And, though grimly afraid of the draft, Ifshin turned in his student deferment and requested regular conscription status, feeling that his deferment was unjust. Ifshin's moves often cut across ideological boundaries.

So it's no surprise that Ifshin is intolerant of simplistic, generalized summaries of student attitudes in 1968-70. Retrospective assessments of his generation as naive, over-privileged, or superficial he describes, in a word, as "stupid."

"There is some kind of mythology that's grown out of the media in the last 20 years, that the sixties were divided among those people who had long hair and beards and were against the war and smoked pot—sitting on campus, spitting on people in uniform—and those who were working-class people who couldn't afford college. To me, that's a completely false stereotype.

"No one knew who would be next to go [to Vietnam], so all of us were faced with that dilemma. . . . There were three choices: going into the military, going to Canada, or going to jail. I had friends who did all three. So the notion that we

Jan. 30

Losing the War. The Viet Cong launch their Tet offensive, displaying new strength and alerting many Americans that the Vietnam War is far from over.

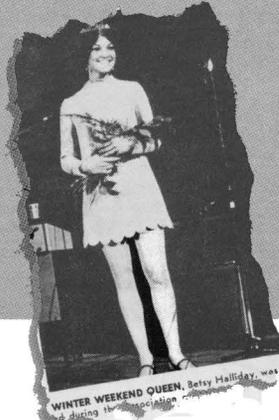


Feb. 2

Prized Poet. The *Daily Orange* announces the addition of W.D. Snodgrass, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, to the SU faculty. Snodgrass will teach literature, oral interpretation, and creative writing.

Feb. 6

Weekend Rules. The new Committee on Undergraduate Student Life decides to permit drinking at University-registered functions, including the upcoming Winter Weekend.



Feb. 6-7

Ideas for Free. The Outfit for Unorthodox Teaching sponsors an all-night Teach-Out in Hendricks Chapel, to publicize plans for a "free university"—student operated and tuition free. Organizers hope to offer "Negro History for White People," "History of Draft Resistance," and "Playing Classical Guitar," among other courses.

Give a damn.

were all insulated in the luxury of the middle class is just not true.”

Ifshin prefers personal explanations for the behavior of his generation. “Every-one of us had, in his pocket, a draft deferment. . . . I finished high school in 1966, which meant that those of my friends who were not so fortunate as to go to college either volunteered or were drafted into the military. I had a number of friends at Syracuse who, when their grade point averages fell below the minimum, were drafted right out of college.”

Today, Ifshin is a successful lawyer in Washington, D.C., with the firm Manatt, Phelps, Rothenberg, and Evans, and managing director of Cranston-Prescott Securities. He was chief counsel to Walter Mondale’s presidential campaign.

When he looks back to his turbulent college years, he remembers moves that he regrets, actions of which he is proud, statements that he’d never make again. But don’t expect him to sweep them into a tidy box and label it. He remembers too well the complexity of the times and his place in them.

“For those of us who lived through it, it’s hopelessly mired in false stereotypes,” he says. “. . . Look, we were kids, taking on gigantic swallows of the world at once. We said and did a lot of crazy and irresponsible things. I’d cringe to see myself on videotape from that period, and probably disagree with most of the things I said. . . .

“I was 19 years old then,” he concludes. “There are a lot of things you can do with your life at 19 that would be more embarrassing.”



Bettie Hubbard Thompson

“Many alumni of that time are concerned that we don’t see the same commitment on the part of students to issues.”

Minority Voice

Bettie Hubbard Thompson’s class, 1971, contained the largest number of minority students to have entered Syracuse at that point: roughly 150. And that was typical. The civil rights effort was raising the expectations of minority students across America and beginning, at least, to open doors.

Thompson’s generation was, by her description, the “bridging group.” Twenty years earlier, college had been unreachable for most black students. Today, 40 years

hence, many black students pursue higher education at predominantly white universities. In between were Thompson and her colleagues, the first blacks to attend predominantly white colleges in large numbers, and thus the first to cope with the ramifications.

“One of the characteristics of that class was that not all of us came from black, middle-class families. There were a number of people in that class who came from places like Bedford-Stuyvesant and Harlem,” she recalls. “The missing component at that time was supportive services. There was no HEOP [Higher Education Opportunity Program] programming going on during that period. No one had federal legislation to support that kind of program. Schools had to do that on their own initiative, and Syracuse University, at that time, had no component like that.”

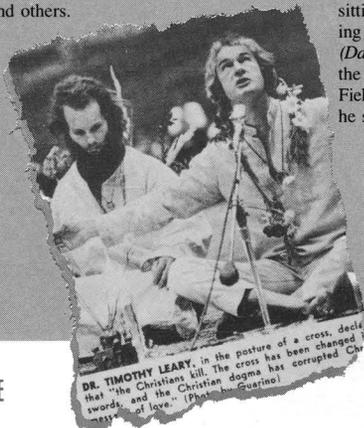
It was characteristic of the era, when conditions changed so rapidly, that reform required a team effort, and that students played a much greater role in the shaping of their own programs. For Thompson, that role was channelled through the Student Afro-American Society. SAS used its collective voice to agitate for and, in some cases, actually create the services that they felt would undergird their college experiences.

For example: By approaching corporate sponsors, minority students were able to raise seed money for a summer tutorial program, geared toward the incoming class. Other benefits of the period include Supportive Services, the development of the Afro-American Studies Department, the creation of a minority counseling office, student groups such as La Casa Latinoamericana, and increased support for Native American students. These are

Feb. 12-16

GOP Week. Syracuse University Young Republicans sponsor a “Young Republicans Week,” featuring guest appearances by U.S. Representative Barber Conable and others.

**NIXON
AGNEW**



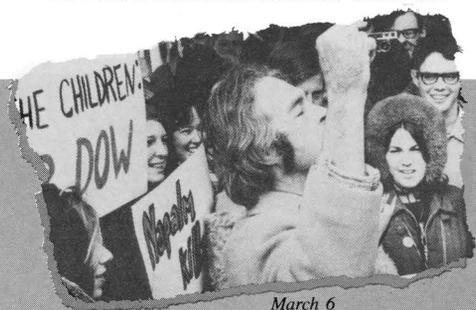
DR. TIMOTHY LEARY, in the posture of a cross, declares that “the Christians kill. The cross has been changed to swords of love.” (Photo by Guarino)

Feb. 22

Drop Out. Dr. Timothy Leary, wearing a gold embroidered tunic, sitting on a Persian rug, and “looking distinguished in spite himself” (*Daily Orange*), gives a “lecture for the cause of freedom” in Manley Field House. “Drop out or cop out,” he says.

Feb. 23

Bad Chemistry. Roughly 200 protestors camp at the Placement Center as Dow Chemical, makers of Napalm-8, recruit for new employees. Later in the day, 20 protestors enter the center and disrupt activities. Six students are later placed on probation as a result.



March 6

Talk Talk. Chancellor William Tolley is the guest at a University Union “Bull Session.” Of Leary’s appearance he says: “Any student group should be free to invite any speaker . . . no matter how far out, how offensive, it is to the establishment.”

lasting developments, she asserts.

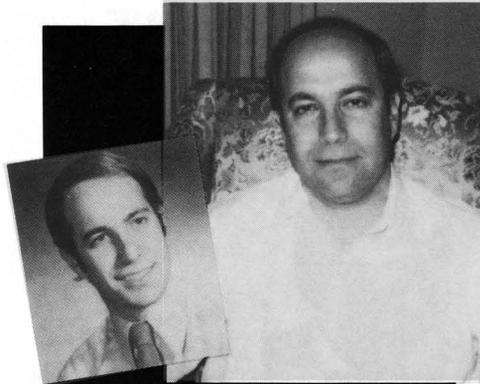
Her clearest disappointment is that, with the improvements of the past 20 years, the passion for change has been lost. Today it's harder to coalesce minority students around the issues. "The very visible barriers and clear obstructions have been eliminated, and it becomes more difficult to put your finger on institutional racism, sexism, classism, or elitism. . . .

"Many of the alumni of that time are concerned that we don't see the same level of commitment on the part of students, black or white, to some of the issues in the world right now."

And that's a shame, says Thompson, because her own college experience was rich and doubly educational because of the times. Now a manager of staffing services in Cornell University's personnel division, Thompson is proud of the person that 1968-71 made her. "I got significantly more out of it. . . . I got to grow socially. I got to grow emotionally, academically. The things that I deal with now as a professional I'm able to deal with because I was in that environment at that point in time. It has made me much more able to define what my bottom line is in terms of my personal and professional growth. . . . I really had the time of my life."

Young Republican

Neil Wallace '72 arrived at SU all business. Destined to return to a family-owned steel company, he entered college planning to study hard and emerge four years later with an intensive education. Instead, he found students skipping class to engage in vigils on the Quad and demonstrations in the halls of



Neil Wallace

"The influence of those times was a moderating influence. I've always taken the position that you don't learn from people who agree with you."

the Administration Building. He considered student behavior juvenile in 1968, and remembers it that way still.

Wallace was a founder of SU's Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) chapter, a forum through which he supported conservative causes and made his amusement with the New Left well known. He became the ringleader of YAF's tit-for-tat, counter-liberal spectacle. Every time *they* demonstrated against, YAF would demon-

strate for. When *they* disrupted University business, YAF disrupted theirs.

He remembers, for example, the spring 1970 take-over of the Administration Building. "About a week later, I got a group of 40 people together . . . and we took over the student government building, which was run by the leftists. We kicked out David Ifshin, who was the president of Student Government, and we held the student government building all day.

"We made national news! . . . There had never been a building takeover to support the administration."

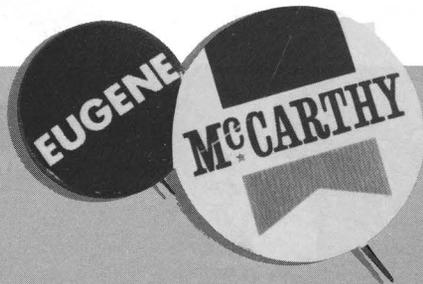
The following year, New Left students lay siege to the ROTC offices, vowing to force ROTC off campus. Wallace was outraged; ROTC is a voluntary program, he felt, supporting students who otherwise could not afford college. So the next morning YAF arrived at the ROTC offices and staged a sit-in of their own. They refused to allow anyone but ROTC staff to enter, and generally saw to it that ROTC business resumed.

"One of [the anti-ROTC protestors] came up and said to me, 'You have to let us in there. These are University offices.' I said, 'No, you don't understand. We're having a protest here today. We're protesting communist aggression in Southeast Asia, and part of that protest is not letting you in these offices. Don't you think we have the right to dissent?'"

Wallace defends those methods as necessary in a setting where the liberal perspective was almost impenetrable. Anti-government sentiment was so strong that legitimate conservative ideas were suffocated. "I saw a very one-sided presentation when I got to college: America is bad, America is wrong. America is responsible for all the ills in the world. We needed an even approach. . . . I went overboard the other way to

March 8

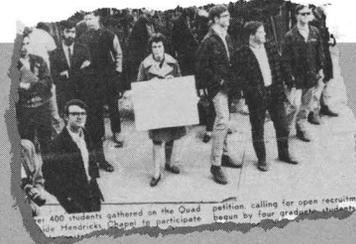
Pop Hits. The McCoys, known for the song "Hang On Sloopy," play the Women's Building to benefit a student-organized and funded scholarship.



March 12

The Candidate. Eugene McCarthy's victory in the New Hampshire Democratic primary is an invigorating campaign entree for the country's liberal youth and those of the so-called New Left.

Take-Over. At SU, approximately 100 students, demonstrating against on-campus military recruiting, lay siege to the Administration Building. That same day, plans for SU's first coed dorm are announced.



March 19

Open Market. In reaction to the Administration Building take-over, 400 students counter-protest in favor of "open recruiting"—the right of all employers, military or otherwise, to recruit on campus.

March 31

LBJ Gives Up. Immersed in the growing Vietnam controversy and facing new challenges from within the political establishment, President Lyndon Johnson announces that he will not seek reelection.



try to bring them back to reality.”

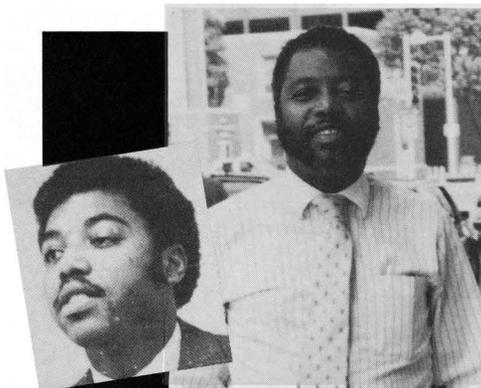
Thus, when a professor spoke of the “horrible things” Americans were doing in Vietnam, Wallace would raise his hand: “What are the North Vietnamese doing? Is that okay?” After a film about Air Force activities in Southeast Asia, the teacher condemned the bombings, then asked for class reaction. Wallace spoke. “I remember saying, ‘Gee, it makes me want to join the Air Force!’ That was the only way you could deal with those people.”

Never did Neil Wallace intend to be an extremist, but from the very start he felt that the actions of his New Left counterparts were inconsistent with their true feelings and outside of reason. He was friendly with his rivals, sympathized with their positions, and hoped to dilute their idealism. Now president of Wallace Steel in Ithaca, New York, Wallace looks back and laughs. *Everyone* took themselves too seriously (even his own methods he describes as “a bit impish”), and everyone faced a dose of reality once they emerged from college.

“Most of [the protestors] now, if you talk to them, are probably liberal to moderate, but probably have kids and recognize that things just weren’t as they seemed back then. . . .

“The influence of those times was a moderating influence,” he continues. “I’ve always taken the position that you don’t learn from people who agree with you. It didn’t have a moderating influence on me then, but I’ve come back towards the middle, just as I thought they would go towards the middle.

“As you grow older and mature,” Wallace concludes, “there are other priorities in life. I’ve just had my first baby. Life takes on a different meaning.”



Chuck Hicks

“We were a unique group of students who had a vision, trying to broaden the base of what student government was all about.”

Issue Oriented

It was the 20th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination, and Chuck Hicks ’69, Student Government president in 1968, was thinking about Syracuse.

“I was running for student body president on the evening that Dr. King was killed,” says Hicks, now a librarian in the District of Columbia library system. “We were down rehearsing our speech—our slate—and a friend came in and he said,

‘Chuck, I hate tell you this. Reverend King has been shot.’ Of course, it was just devastating. I postponed the elections.”

Chuck Hicks, the first black student elected SG president, had strong ties to the civil rights movement; his hometown, Bogalooosa, Louisiana, was a hotbed of civil rights activity and birthplace of the Deacons for Defense and Justice. But Hicks chose not to limit himself to minority issues. He entered SU interested in the breadth of student issues and served on a number of bodies, culminating with the SG presidency. When one reviews the sundry councils, committees, and congresses at SU that effected change in 1968, you’ll find Chuck Hicks’s name on nearly every roster.

He lists the issues that students cared about in 1968: on-campus drinking rights, the need for a student union, parietal hours, the environment, curriculum reform, civil rights, and, of course, the Vietnam War. In 1968, SG became a body concerned with *all* those issues. “I think we were part of a unique group of students who had a vision, trying to broaden the base of what student government was all about,” Hicks says.

If there was a link between the disparate issues, Hicks says, it was respect for student viewpoints—“the fact that you were an adult and for a long time universities tended to not treat you as an adult. You could be 18 years old and working in a gas station and be treated totally different than if you’re a student in a university.”

Today Hicks takes pride in the tangible results of student efforts. “I think today if we had not been fighting for a student



April 4 King is Dead. In Memphis, Martin Luther King is gunned down on a motel balcony.

Honoring Henry. Actor Henry Fonda makes a rare campus visit during an SU-sponsored retrospective of his films.

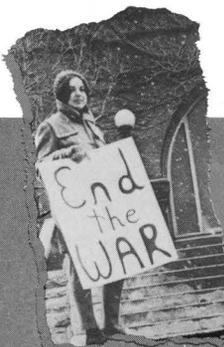
April 9 Half Mast. Classes are cancelled for the day, and Student Government (SG) elections put off a week, in order to allow observance of Martin Luther King’s funeral. Efforts to create a scholarship fund honoring King gain momentum.



April 19 The President. Running on the Greek Independent Alliance ticket, Charles Hicks is elected the new president of SG.



April 23 Uprising. At Columbia University, students hold a general strike, taking over a number of campus buildings and leaving damage worth \$300,000 (1968 dollars) in their wake.



April 27 March for Peace. A large contingent of SU students travel to New York City, protesting as part of the Spring Mobilization for Peace in Vietnam.

union building you wouldn't have one on campus. I think if it had not been for students, the war in Vietnam wouldn't have ended. I think, to a degree, if it had not been for young people in civil rights, the progress would have never been moved. I think about getting rid of *in loco parentis* at Syracuse and other places. Those were realistic issues.

"I'm sure we might have reached for the sky. We didn't quite make it, but we made some changes and we made some differences. And those are what people take advantage of today, and take for granted sometimes. . . ."

But Hicks goes on to cite new issues, such as nuclear arms, about which students show concern today. "I look at Jesse Jackson and what he's doing on college campuses and the issues that he talks about. They're the real issues for students today."

Kids No More

We were all women 18-22 years old, presumably responsible, presumably smart, presumably motivated, ambitious, and interested in our future," Cindy Bailey '69 remembers, "and we couldn't decide when we would come in at night."

When Bailey entered Syracuse University in 1965, all female students were subject to specific rules governing residential life and social behavior—*in loco parentis* in action. In dorm curfews and various other rules, she saw unnecessary paternalism and, because few such rules applied to male students, a modicum of chauvinism as well. So as a member and later president of the Association of Women Students (AWS), Bailey worked to change things.

AWS was a long-established congress of



Cindy Bailey

"It was the kind of experiment that would not fail. Once you give somebody that kind of freedom you can't take it back again."

female students, with a residential emphasis; its members were the elected representatives of dorm floors and sororities. Bailey made use of that grassroots lobbying power. The *in loco parentis* revolution involved very few demonstrations or sit-ins—just a lot of consensus-building and sincere negotiation. Bailey's efforts became a model of not only gender equity, but also the democratization for which the sixties are famous.

Through AWS, Bailey communicated

growing discontent on the part of female students, then argued convincingly that individual dorms and sororities could and *should* be autonomous, each with the right to set its own policies. From there, certain "experimental" curfewless sororities were born, and the experiment quickly became the norm. Within a few short years, *in loco parentis* was history.

"It was a lot of diplomacy in terms of working with the administration," Bailey says. "We approached it through experimental living situations. Everybody became part of the experiment. It was relatively clever. It was the kind of experiment that would not fail. Once you give somebody that kind of freedom you can't take it back again.

"We did achieve our basic goal which was to try to build in [self-governance]," Bailey remembers. "And we believed in this. This wasn't just lip service. We really did believe in building these autonomous units of self-governing operation, rather than have the University come down with all these rules and arbitrary regulations."

Bailey is a vice president in Chase Manhattan Bank's international banking division today, and certainly doesn't look at herself as a sixties radical, despite the influence she had. The common thread of sixties student life, she feels, wasn't extreme behavior, but principled behavior.

"I think that there was much more concern with the idea of democracy and choice—that voices be heard—and not that anybody was going to blow up the administration building. . . . There was a lot of really clear thinking going on.

"There was very much a morality—it was a new morality—but there was a morality underpinning our actions," she concludes. ". . . I look back with a lot of pride."

May 9

Major Donor. The University announces Ernest S. Bird's gift of \$3 million to fund the new library building.



June 2

The Way It Was. Newsman Walter Cronkite serves as guest speaker for Commencement '68. Students head home for the summer.

June 6

Death of a Dream. Following a Los Angeles campaign appearance, Democratic candidate Robert Kennedy is assassinated.

Aug. 20

In Czech. Russian tanks roll through Czechoslovakian streets, provoking fears of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

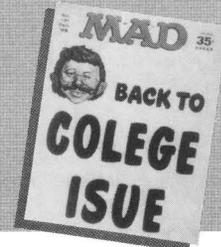


Aug. 26-29

Storm in the Windy City. Members of the Chicago police force fight protesting students—more than a few from Syracuse—in the streets, while at the nearby Democratic convention Hubert Humphrey is made a presidential candidate.

Sept. 13

Back to School. With fall classes underway, the *Daily Orange* reports that "Peace Activists Mobilize for Fall of Discontent." Groups such as People for Freedom and Peace and Students for a Democratic Society hope to broaden their base.



Black Power

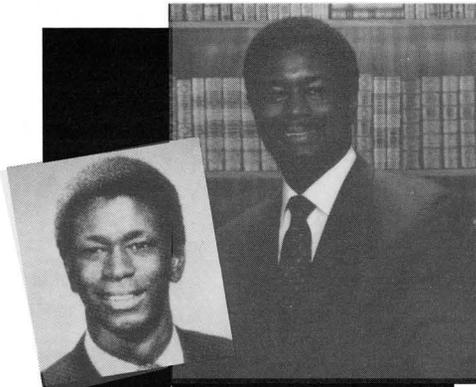
Edward Brown '69 entered SU a Negro, and left an Afro-American. When he remembers college, he remembers Stokely Carmichael, James Meredith, and his own efforts, by way of the Student Afro-American Society (SAS), to alter racial perceptions.

Brown came to SU with a strong interest in political science. He was Kimmel Hall's dormitory rep, a member of Student Government, an ROTC student (in the days when ROTC was a substitute for gym), and a Young Democrat. But things happened to turn his attention to a very specific issue: black culture.

In the summer of 1966, after Brown's freshman year, civil rights leader James Meredith was shot during a march that was then continued by others. "There was a change in the cry from 'Freedom Now' to 'Black Power.' Relatively overnight the country was introduced to Stokely Carmichael, a young person, 26 year old. By the time I came back to school in September 1966, it was a slightly different world from when I had entered a year ago." Brown became one of the founding members of SAS that academic year.

In the spring—April 1967—George Wallace came to campus. At the time, Wallace was a strict segregationist, and SAS saw his appearance as a call to action. Black students staged a protest, in which students posed as Ku Klux Klan members, dragging a black student with them straight up to the stage. "Hey George," they called out, "Look, we got one." Cameras turned toward the black students, who exited en masse.

According to Brown, though people may find those theatrics severe, they must



Edward Brown

"I was a very proud Negro from Harlem, beginning to change my definition of myself to black and Afro-American."

appreciate the mood of black students in 1967, who were amid a profound redefinition of themselves. Later that year, Stokely Carmichael appeared on campus, and students, black and white, packed Hendricks Chapel. "Here was this person, 26 years old, who was going around at that time leading this cultural revolution. Me, for example—I was a very proud Negro from Harlem, beginning to change my definition of myself to black and Afro-American. This whole process was

going on across the country; there was a metamorphosis."

One of the most substantial results of that metamorphosis on campus, says Brown, was the Afro-American Studies Program. Brown headed the SAS committee that proposed creation of that program and then helped develop a curriculum.

"The idea as I saw it was not for [Afro-American Studies] to be a subject that someone would major in, in and of itself. . . . The whole idea was for the program to be able to complement whatever a person was majoring in and enable that person to be able to better bring his skills and talents to the black community once he left."

Brown had planned to return to teach English in Harlem. In fact, he was unable to find that job, but became a relocation social worker. Today, he works in the New York State Health Commission as a program manager, responsible for health practitioner placement throughout the state. As a civil servant, Brown feels connected to 1965-1969. When he talks about it he grows nostalgic.

"I wouldn't exchange with any other generation of students," he says. ". . . There's a special romanticism which still remains in some of us. For some of us, those days are the most exciting of our lives, days we'll be telling our children and grandchildren about."

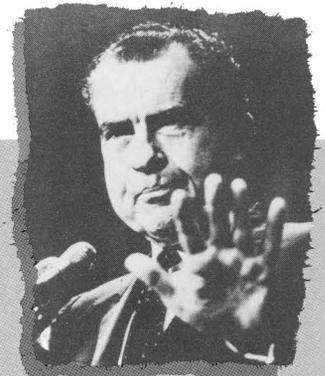


Oct. 6
Sounds of Silence. Simon and Garfunkel play the Onondaga County War Memorial. Tickets are \$5, \$4, and \$3.

Oct. 7
Veep. Edwin Muskie, vice presidential candidate under Humphrey, speaks on the steps of Hendricks Chapel. Judy Mage, a v.p. candidate on Eldridge Cleaver's Peace & Freedom Ticket, heckles and challenges Muskie to a spontaneous debate, which he declines.



Oct. 19
Return Engagement. Dow Chemical recruiters visit campus again. Students plan a "freak-out," to include the symbolic destruction of a Vietnamese village at Hendricks Chapel.



Oct. 29
Nixon in Syracuse. SU students interrupt the Republican candidate's speech at the War Memorial with an impromptu version of "The Sounds of Silence." Nixon is gracious, thanks the students, and continues his talk.



Voice of a Generation

Since 1968, when he was elected freshman class president, Bob Tembeckjian '72 has spoken for a generation.

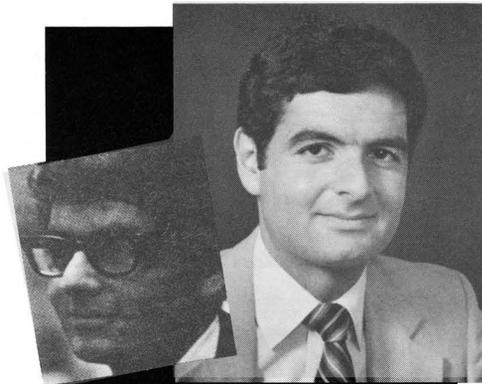
In the spring of 1970, students at dozens of American campuses went on strike. Tembeckjian was a passionate and sincere member of the Syracuse strike committee, elected to serve as the strike spokesman. Already a class leader and frequent *Daily Orange* editorialist, Tembeckjian now found himself on the steps of Hendricks Chapel, in the halls of the Administration Building, and on the phone to newspapermen, articulating the attitude of his generation. From that he emerged with a sense of his generation's collective conscience, and has it still.

For Tembeckjian, involvement in student government was synonymous with anti-war advocacy; it was an issue he cared about dearly.

"I was opposed to the war on moral grounds, and I think in this respect I speak for virtually an entire generation," he says now. "And overshadowing my opposition to the war was a sense of personal fear and dread at having to go and fight and very likely coming back if not physically then mentally scarred by it."

Student government became his route of advocacy, partly because SG was a great organizational vehicle, and partly because he saw in SG an opportunity to fight what he perceived as militarism within the University—ROTC, for example. He is largely satisfied with those efforts.

Twenty years later, Tembeckjian retains a faith in the conscience of his generation. He expects big things from them in the years ahead.



Bob Tembeckjian

"As more and more of my generation become politically empowered, there will be a subtle shift in the conventional political and social thinking."

"As people of my generation are more and more in the mainstream, the mainstream is much more tolerant than it used to be," he says. "In some ways I think that's terribly unfortunate. For example, the social capacity for tolerating recreational drug use has gone much too far. But in other ways—the expressiveness of women in the equal rights movement and blacks in the civil rights movement—the social climate has moderated, in part because my generation

is more and more in the mainstream and setting the agenda. . . .

"The expectation that I have is that as more and more of my generation become politically empowered, . . . there will be a subtle shift in the conventional political and social thinking," he says. "Where human rights, for example, tend to be an important but nevertheless secondary consideration, they would become more important as a factor in determining American government policy; equal rights and civil rights will become assumptions rather than exceptions to the government's point of view."

Tembeckjian is himself a deputy administrator in the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct, and a former candidate for Congress. He's stayed involved. "I am doing work that I find socially conscionable and politically useful and practically important, and those are outgrowths of the heavy participation that I had in my generation's conflict 20 years ago. It is very important for me to do work that is socially useful and that furthers the interests of justice.

"I think that there are those in my generation who have not been true to their youthful ideals, and then there are some who have tried to keep them and to adapt them to the changing times. They haven't given up, but they have tried to keep their ideals and their passion relevant to the times.

"I mean, I've tried to do that anyway."

Nov. 5

The Slimmest Margin. Richard Nixon barely defeats Hubert Humphrey, and prepares to become President of the United States during troubled times.



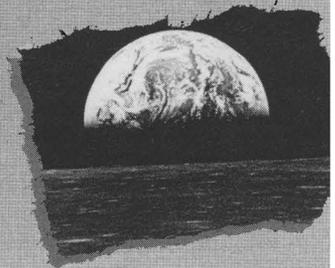
Dec. 6

Abe Finds a Home. Sculptor James Earle Fraser's cast of Abraham Lincoln is installed on the side lawn of Maxwell. On that night, Peter Paul & Mary appear at the War Memorial.



Dec. 24-25

Lunar Laps. Astronauts Borman, Lovell, and Anders circle the moon in Apollo 8, bringing home unforgettable images of a bright-blue Earthrise above the lunar horizon.



Nov. 19

Militant Mark. Mark Rudd, militant leader of the Columbia student strike, speaks in Grant Auditorium. Stating that "democratic channels of government will not change anything," Rudd advocates widespread campus take-overs.

Dec. 20

Christmas Break. Final exams wind down and Syracuse concludes 1968 intact.