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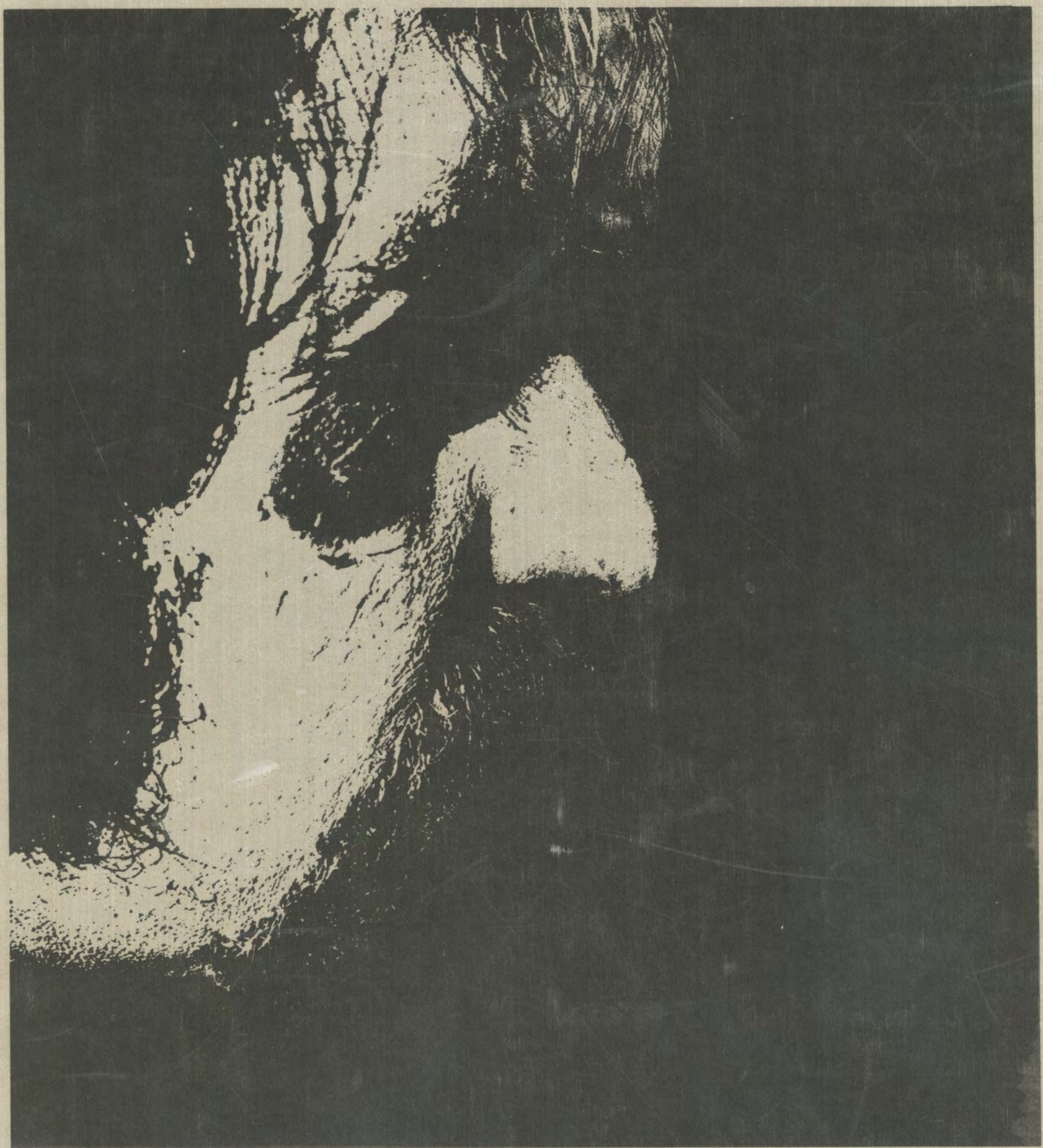
1970

### Opticon 1970

C.W. Post College

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nineteen seventy **OPTICON** / volume twelve / C. W. Post College / Greenvale, New York





ABSTRACT  
State Commission on Student Unrest

A. First of all, concerned student unrest is not *the* issue which should alarm us. What is alarming is indifference, whether manifested by students or by faculty.

At present, there are two groups of students reacting to an impotence of the academic system and its inability to speak to the serious question of the future.

1. There are those who represent the development of a genuine, radical consciousness. This is reflected by American youth who are now beginning to participate in a world-wide student revolution. Our war is simply one symptom of the disease to which they respond. They are asking—in the face of the domination of a dehumanized technology—whether there will be a future at all. In the university the question of the future relates directly to a search for individual purpose. And they ask of the institution: can it be humanized? Can administrations be meaningful while they continue to model themselves on the impersonal, objective, corporate image of technology?

We cannot afford not to listen to those who are asking genuine, radical, and uncomplicated questions.

2. The real problem now is the second group, those who have already been absorbed by the system against which they feel vaguely uneasy. They submit to a feeling of powerlessness and insignificance and they withdraw. They exhibit boredom, frustration with routine, inarticulateness and a general lack of political consciousness. Like their adult counterparts in the system, they are resigned and indifferent to the future. Sometimes they join with the adolescent rebel against authority in a kind of meaningless gang syndrome. Psychologically, this group has been victimized by over-indulgence on the

one hand and dismissal on the other.

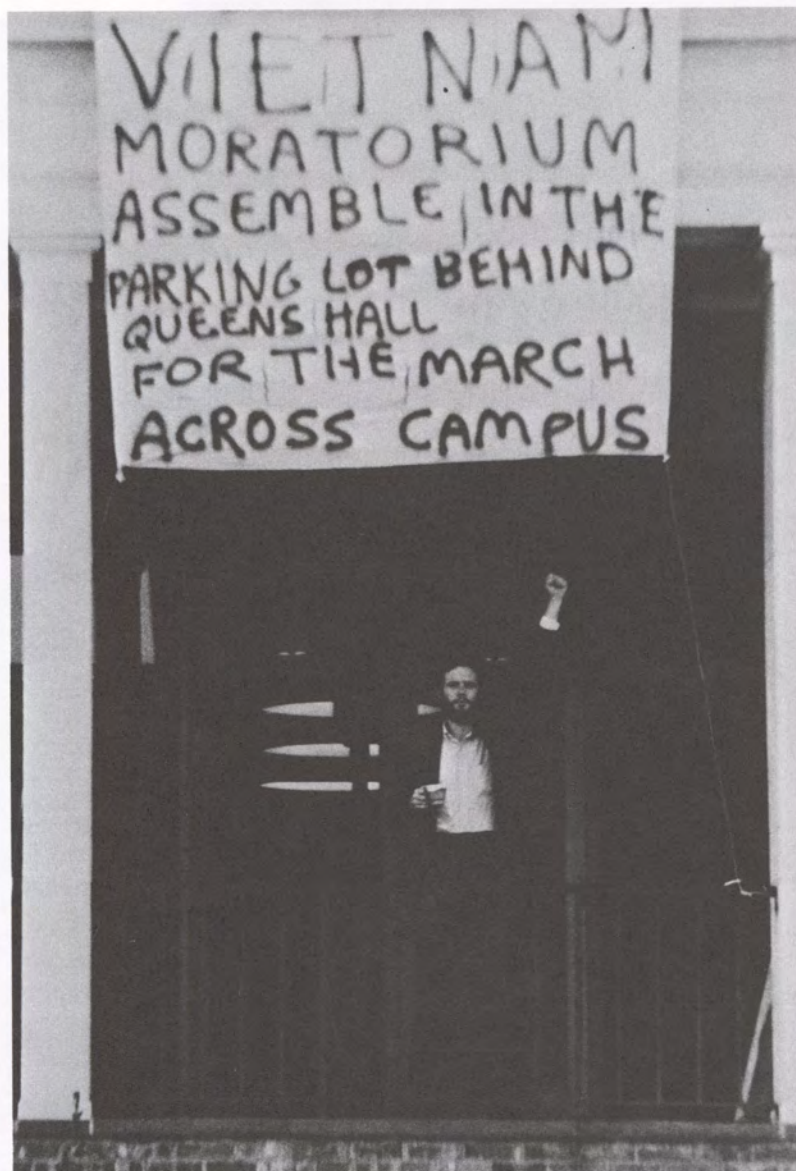
Both groups (1) and (2) resist being forced to be a cog in the machine—the first by becoming political, and the second by not growing up.

- B. Insofar as technology is the root problem, then educational institutions which have striven traditionally to be liberal, objective, now become impersonal corporations. Obviously, factory institutions are in need of reform. A major problem is the remoteness of institutional authority—which reflects the impersonality and, hence, destructiveness of technology. Some administrators recognize this, but they are stagnated by the business process, by overplanning, by the tedious delays involved in trying to legitimize reforms. Thus, the process of reform becomes a reflection of the disease itself. More effort is expended in trying to appease public constituencies and corporate establishments than in speaking to vital questions. This is the failure of liberal objectivity. The attempt to be always “correct” only feeds the growing frustration of those who feel that they cannot choose their own future. To choose one’s future involves meaningful risk.

C. Conclusions.

The establishment doesn’t inspire a sense of purpose because it reflects the neutrality of science and technology, which brackets out the human question. Like the scientific establishment it begins to consider itself self-justifying—the government is no longer asking seriously why it exists. Along with this there is a rapid decrease in support of the humanizing disciplines as it lends vast amounts of aid to all research which may be technologically significant—most especially to that which can lead to the destruction of mankind.

D. T. Murphy



## Power In The American University

Few people in 1960 had ever thought of the American university as being a laboratory which lent itself to the study of power. The 1950's had been turbulent in their own way but the campuses across the nation had been calm and orderly places where the participants in university life liked to think of themselves as being sheltered from the outside world. The question of who possessed power in the university was not asked very frequently and the answer was probably considered of little importance to most.

The 1960's changed all of that. For some years it had been an accepted fact that the board of trustees, the administration, and the faculty shared in the decisions which affected university life. In exactly what proportions they shared had not been measured and certainly the decision making process had some mystery about it, at least for the outside world.

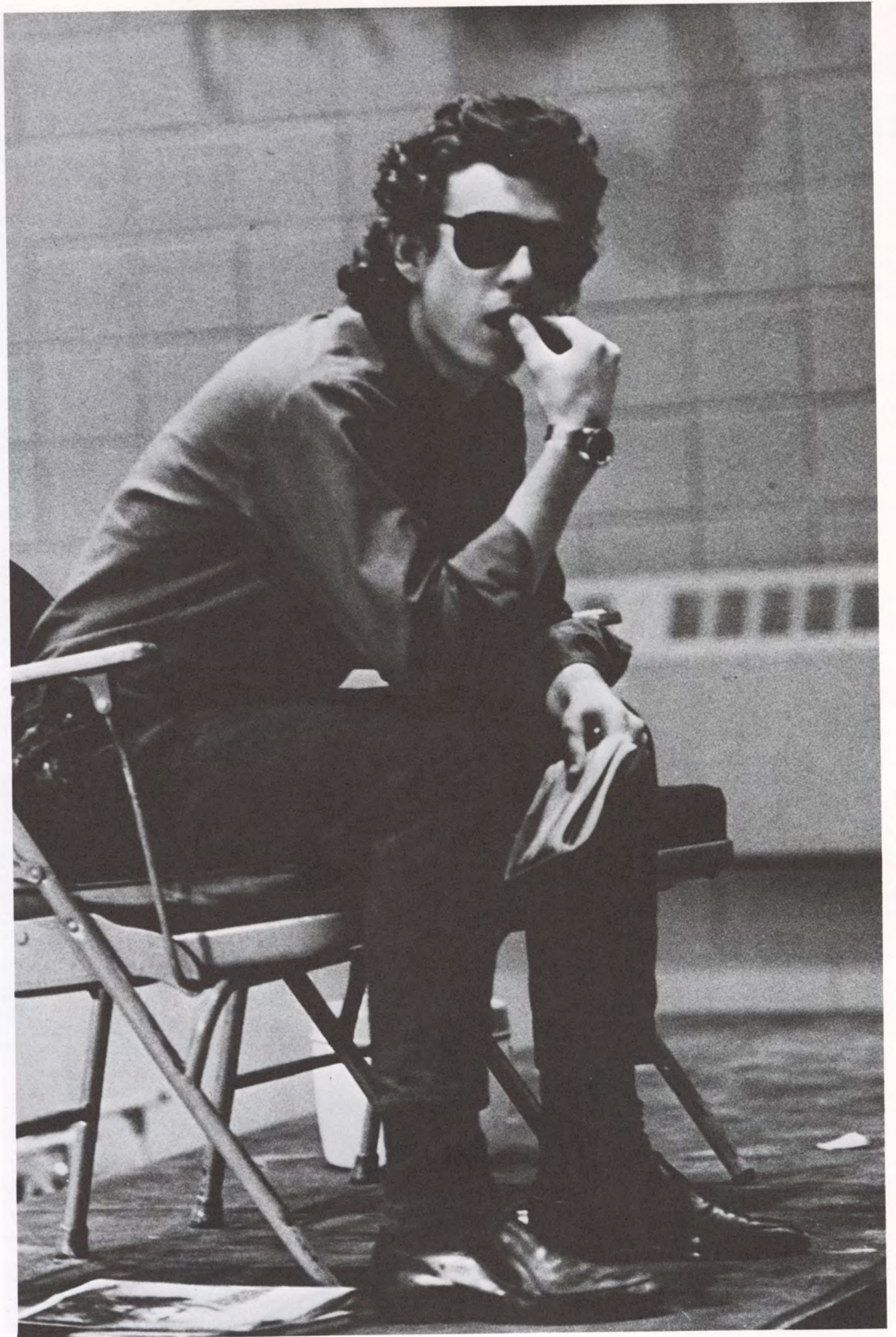
If one looked more closely the friction among the three groups was apparent. The administration and the board had once been supreme but they had grudgingly been forced to give ground before the demands of the faculty. Much of the faculty's efforts had been directed to questions such as salaries, teaching loads, and the availability of graduate assistants. Academic freedom was frequently interpreted to mean faculty freedom and at times used to mask faculty irresponsibility.

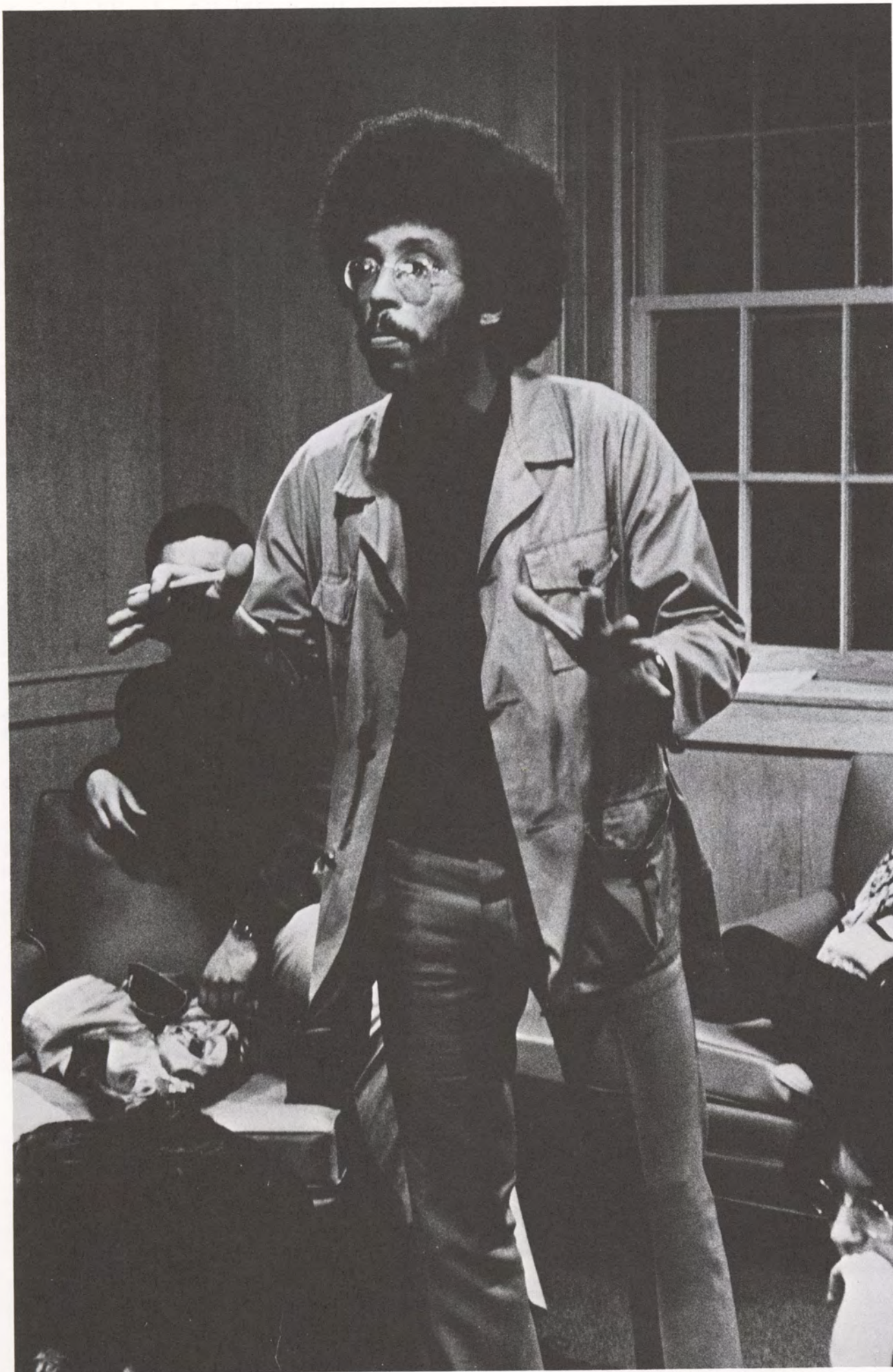
It was equally clear that boards of trustees were often no more than rubber stamps used by the administration. Part of their difficulty was that they did not or could not devote sufficient time to university problems. They were much more concerned with the day-to-day operation of their own businesses or professions. Some failed to pay much attention because they viewed









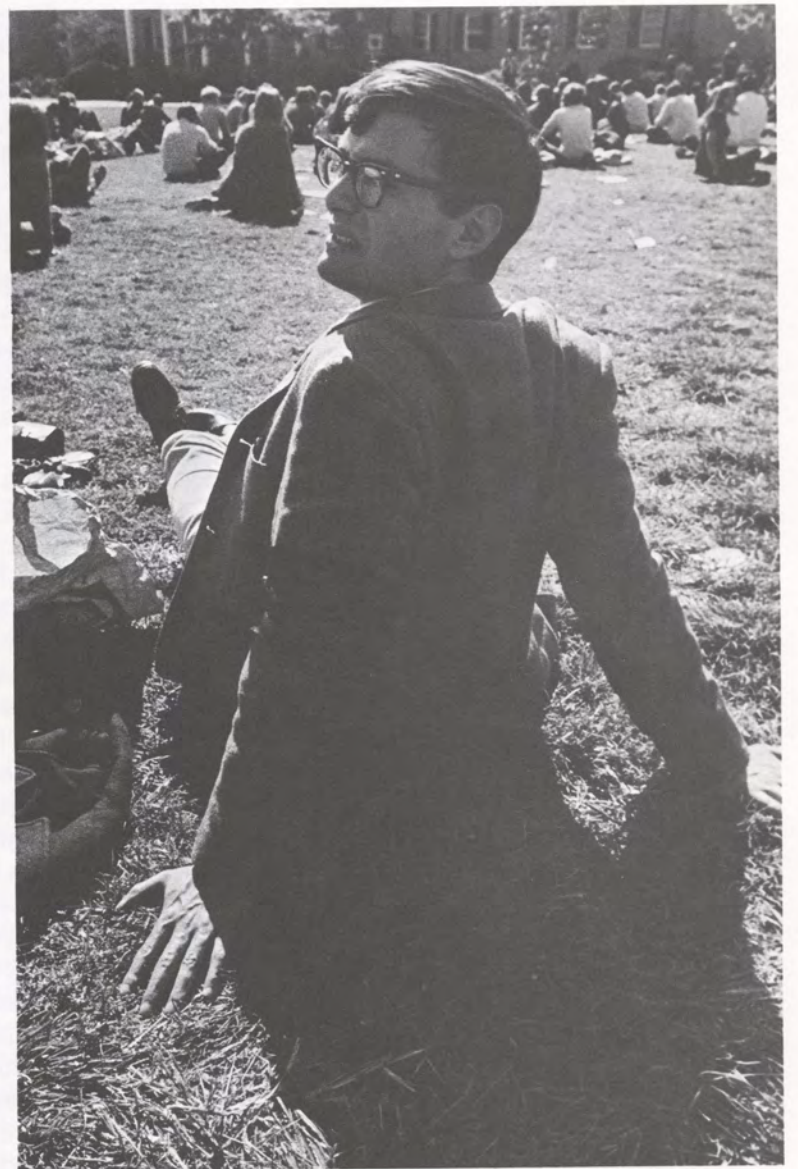














### Thoughts On The Moratoriums

Students at Post joined with their fellows across the nation twice in two months late last year to register their moral and political protest to this country's Vietnam policy. The central fact of these 15ths (of October and November) was their unifying theme: an immediate end to U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese Civil War. A policy which a year or two earlier had been radical and unheard of in "responsible" circles had become the rallying cry for a mass national movement. But the extent of the change in political consciousness of the American people was more limited than such a fact might suggest. As the October demonstration on the campus of C. W. Post Center revealed, student involvement was far from total. While virtually no classes were held and 200-500 students attended a rally on the lawn in front of Humanities Hall to hear a series of radical speakers analyze U.S. imperialist policies around the world, the vast majority of Post students treated the day as a holiday. No doubt annoyed at the inconvenience of the war and plagued by the threat of the draft, they neither understood nor cared about the political, social, and moral questions which the war raised.

The November march on Washington, in which more than 500,000 Americans participated (according to the report of the world-renowned independent French newspaper *Le Monde*), including two busloads of Post students, revealed a more general weakness of the anti-war movement,

namely the lack of mass participation by minority groups such as Blacks and Puerto Ricans as well as the very limited support given by U.S. workers. It was an enthusiastic and peaceful outing for the white, the middle class, the student, and some "intelligentsia."

The core of the weakness of the anti-war movement in America has only been suggested by the preceding remarks. It can be summed up in two points: ideological vagueness and an inadequate institutional base. Let us consider these two, the latter first.

The anti-war movement, while generally concentrated in large cities and on college campuses, is scattered as far as occupation is concerned. The only occupational concentration—the student population—tends to be short term and isolated from the power sections of the country. It is true that education is becoming increasingly central to the society in terms of both the increasing number of students now attending college and the central role that education plays in the maintenance and development of our increasingly technologically grounded economy. Thus the growing disaffection of educators and students from cultural values poses a potentially long-term revolutionary challenge to the social order. Yet the process of socio-economic assimilation operating within the present institutions of society are strong; they begin working on a student immediately after he leaves college—and even to some extent before graduation. I am referring here to two

