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WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28 • AFL-CIO

Toxics and Occupational and Public Health

- Several SftP activists found their way into long time involvement in occupational health and safety, or environmental protection. For some these issues defined careers. The panel will address, among other questions:
- Did the SftP approach distinguish how we addressed the scientific and political issues differently than more mainstream public health professionals and activists?
- How did the SftP approach lead us into connection with these issues (as opposed to other issues)?
- Did our SftP involvement help us get through student and early working pressures?

Panelists

- **Frank Bove.** Board Member, Environmental Community Action (ECO-Action), a grassroots environmental organization in Georgia. “Environmental epidemiology for the people: Working with communities on toxic chemicals and the precautionary principle”
- **Scott Schneider.** Laborers’ Health and Safety Fund of North America. “Working for workers: Doing Science for the People in the union movement”
- **David Kotelchuck.** Professional Staff Congress-City College of New York and Hunter. “An Odyssey from High-Energy Physics to Occupational Health and Safety, with Inspiration from SftP”
- **Frank Mirer.** Former United Automobile Workers and Hunter. “Doing Well by Being Left: Occupational Health in Service of the Union Movement”

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the elements of the “movement” viewpoint is the 70’s
- Discuss what’s different now
- Discuss how a movement person who is in science should plan their career
- Define the key elements for issues that movement people work on

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Memory Lane

300 Stage Sit-In at Mallinckrodt Hall To Halt Dow Chemical Recruitment

Glimp Warns 'Severance' Is Possible For Leaders

By W. BRUCE SPRINGER, October 26, 1967



About 300 Harvard and Radcliffe anti-war demonstrators sat-in yesterday in Mallinckrodt Laboratory, imprisoning a job recruiter from the Dow Chemical Corporation in a conference room for seven hours and halting his interviews.

Shortly after the demonstration ended at 7p.m. Dean Glimp said that the sit-in was a serious violation of University regulations and could result in severance of connection for some of the students involved.

The students were protesting Dow's role in the war in Vietnam. Dow is the principal supplier of napalm for the United States military.

Between 350 and 400 students--by Glimp's count--voluntarily turned in their bursar's cards to the University officials. The demonstrators surrendered the cards because they wanted to take the responsibility and suffer the punishment for the sit-in collectively. It is understood, however, that some bursar's cards belonged to students who did not sit-in but merely wanted to give tangible support to the demonstration.

[Immediately after the sit-in, the demonstrators met for two hours and formulated a number of demands which the Administration must meet by next Monday, they say, if it wishes to avoid further protests.]

Glimp said that turning in a bursar's card in support of the protest and actually

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"...the University decided, on Tuesday, to put 74 of last week's demonstrators on probation, and to admonish 171 others..."



The Harvard Crimson

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Tech Resistance Gives Sanctuary to Soldier

NO WRITER ATTRIBUTED | October 30, 1968

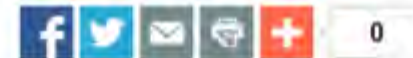
Nearly 400 students from M.I.T. and B.U. occupied a room in the M.I.T. student center at noon yesterday and established a sanctuary for an AWOL soldier.

Led by the M.I.T. branch of the Resistance, the students held a meeting late yesterday afternoon and resolved not to leave the hall until federal agents came to take the soldier away.

The soldier, Jack M. O'Connor, claims to have been AWOL from Fort Eustis, Va., since September 14. He also swore not to leave the hall until federal agents came.

Administration Neutral

The M.I.T. administration, according to an assistant dean, has taken a position of "complete neutrality" on the sanctuary. Richard A. Sorenson, assistant to the Dean of



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Joshua Lederberg

Spreading Research Strikes Score on the Wrong Target

"RESEARCH STRIKE at MIT on March 4" headlined a news story of a spontaneous movement that has gained astonishing momentum among scientists and graduate students on American campuses.

The tone of the first rumors and reports was upsetting, not only to me but also to some of the acknowledged sponsors of the MIT event, according to a letter published in Science magazine. Profs. Boris Magasanik (biology), John Ross (chemistry) and Victor Weisskopf (physics) wrote that they had no strike in mind in the sense of an action against their employer, MIT, but rather "to halt their research activities for . . . a public discussion of problems and dangers related to the present role of science and technology in the life of our Nation . . . a gesture meant to underline the importance of the problems involved."

As an alternative, these students have called for a convocation on the role that scientists can play to speed the positive human uses of their efforts. The challenge can hardly be ignored; it is one of the greatest issues of our times. We hardly know where to begin, but it is certainly true that the universities have been negligent in teaching some of the simplest facts about the actual conduct of research.

We find many people who should know better, including Congressmen as well as undergraduates, talking about an annual research budget of \$17 billion as if these were funds spent in academic research at universities rather than the whole Federal investment in research and development, mostly defense development. Many students entertain the myth, therefore, that university research is mainly subsidized by the Department of Defense.

blems of war and poverty and are particularly provoked by the inertia that moves a project like the antiballistic missile, as if we lived in a dream world that could ignore the anxieties and adaptations of the Russians and the Chinese to our moves.

I CAN understand the anger that leads to protest. But I would also charge my students and colleagues that they have a precious asset more valuable than their rising voices: the skills, training and temperament to analyze difficult problems with scientific objectivity. Our scattered ideas on how to achieve world security have never reached the level of consensus easily won by good science; problems as difficult as this are postponed by prudent scientists, if they can.

Our political establishment may be incredibly obtuse about seeming common sense on some issues.



<http://josna.wordpress.com/tag/student-strike-of-1969/>

Seminars in New Course to Investigate Social Problems Created by Biologists

NO WRITER ATTRIBUTED February 6, 1970

Last year's March 4 science research stoppage is indirectly paying off at Harvard.

This Spring, students in Nat Sci 26—a new course proposed by graduate students after the stoppage—will study the political and social context of biology.

Students in the course are assigned to seminar sections, each of which will concentrate on a different topic. These include population control, air and water pollution, food and drug safety, chemical and biological warfare, drugs, malnutrition, heredity, and behavior.

Course instructors feel that Nat Sci 26—"Biology and Social Issues"—represents a profound change in the kind of subject studied at Harvard, although they do not plan to use the course as a model for new teaching methods.

"We're not trying to be revolutionary in our method," said Fotis C. Kafatos, professor of Biology and lecturer in the course along with John T. Edsall '23, professor of Biological Chemistry.

Nat Sci 26 will be similar to Soc Rel 148-149, the radical course taught last year, in the sense that its sections will be autonomous and that future activism is a desired by-product.

However, activism will not be required or given credit in Nat Sci 26, Kafatos said. He wants the course to be used for information and stimulation, but not as a "cover" for activity.

Kafatos does hope that students will later become involved in the social issues. "If one half of our students become activists on these problems I think that would be the greatest thing that could happen," he said.

More Freedom



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"A great epic poem of universal significance." —Dr. Hans Ruprecht



Students Strike Nationally Against War in Cambodia

By J. W. STILLMAN, May 4, 1970

Protests against the U. S. invasion of Cambodia grew this weekend, as editors of 15 college newspapers endorsed an editorial calling for a national student strike.

Student organizers at M. I. T., Harvard, Tufts and Boston University plan mass meetings today to vote on strike proposals, while students at Brandeis met in their dormitories last night to decide what action should be taken.

The Undergraduate Government at Boston College, which has been on strike since mid-April, endorsed the nation-wide protest.

At a press conference of the regional office of the National Strike Committee—a group formed in New Haven on Saturday to coordinate the strikes across the country—four strike demands were listed: immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia, release of all victims of political repression in the United States including the Black Panthers, the impeachment of President Nixon, and the end to war-related activities at universities.

Among the colleges whose newspapers have endorsed the strike editorial are Cornell, Rutgers, University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Dartmouth, Brown, Princeton, U. C. L. A., Berkeley, Stanford, Colgate, Sarah Lawrence, Columbia, and Harvard.

At a meeting at Stanford yesterday 800 students voted to strike until all U. S. troops are withdrawn from Southeast Asia. Students at Rutgers, Purdue and Indiana University also voted to boycott classes. Columbia University President Andrew W. Cordier announced that he will join a rally today protesting the Cambodian action.

Student activists from about 20 colleges met at the University of Pennsylvania and planned strikes for across the Middle-Atlantic area. More than 2000 Princeton University students and faculty voted to strike on Friday night and planned another mass meeting for noon today.

Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes said yesterday that he is seeking authority for National



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NERVE GAS NEXT DOOR

If you drive down Route 3 just off Route 128 in Bedford, Mass., passing some of America's most sophisticated arms factories, such as MITRE, Raytheon, and Sylvania, you can see an ugly cylindrical tank. The tank is behind The GCA corporation technology division building, on the edge of a brook with benches, trees and grass nearby. Between 1963 and 1969 this tank, called by GCA its "toxic aerosol testing facility", was used to develop methods of dispersal and detection of chemical warfare agents. The actual poison gases were used in many of the tests, including VX, the most toxic and persistent of the nerve gases. The plant is only about a mile from a local school and just over a rise from a residential district.

why nerve gas endangered the local area. However the Rte. 128 complex provides the most sophisticated weapons production, notably the ABM system, production in the country, notably the ABM system, missile guidance, anti-submarine warfare and the electronic battlefield. Not only does this development activity facilitate America's murderous imperialistic foreign policy and provide spin-offs which aid domestic repression and control but the economic penetration of the area by war industry means that the continuing economic health of the area depends on continuing war.

Alerting people to the dangers they face, both immediate and long range, will require the concerted efforts of technically trained people in universities and with industrial contacts, the progressive elements in those communities where war industry goes on, and anyone who is willing to do the really important task, face-to-face discussion with those whose lives are affected. It's hard to counteract years of lies, distortion and obfuscation, but the power of the people is greater than the technology of the man.

*Those interested in this type of project should contact :
Bill Haseltine and Frank Mirer, c/o SESPA, Box 59
Arlington Heights, Mass . 02175*

SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE

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VOL. IV no. 6



BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS
FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION · SESPA · NOV. 1972

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH: time for us to get to work

Occupational health and job safety issues have yet to become "hot" topics with the left like community health clinics, air pollution, or poisons in food, but lately there have been stirrings of interest. The topic has been discussed a bit in *Science for the People* but I think that it's important that SESPA members do more about it. This article is an attempt to recruit both organizers and technical help. The first part of the article will describe some developments which have led to an upswing in interest. There will be a description of some of the ongoing projects. Finally there will be a discussion of the significance of this type of activity for SESPA.

The potential for occupational health as a focus of political action is seen in the Black Lung Movement in Appalachia. Some 300,000 miners suffer from Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis, a disease which U.S. public health and industry authorities claimed was non-existent up until a few years ago, even though the disease had been well studied in England and elsewhere. For years there had been agitation for relief, but the successful push started in 1968, when the Black Lung Association was formed. In that year, three doctors named Rasmussen, Buff and Wells traveled through West Virginia, lecturing to miners groups, explaining the connection between coal dust and lung failure. Once the miners became conscious that disability and early death were not inevitable risks of mining, there was an upswing in rank-and-file action leading to a 23-day wildcat strike in February 1969 which completely stopped coal mining in West Virginia. This new pressure, combined with interest in the problem outside the mining region, led to state and federal legislation regarding disability benefits and safety standards. The fight still continues, as the Social Security Administration has set up medical criteria for receiving benefits which exclude the majority of the applicants for such funds. What is less familiar is the effect of the Black Lung Association on the United Mine Workers Union (UMW). The BLA is organized into local chapters which provide an arena for the development of local leadership previously excluded by the union and is a focus of insurgent efforts. Arnold Miller, currently challenging Tony Boyle for the presidency of the UMW, is president of the BLA. Joseph Yablonski, murdered for his union reform campaign, was identified with mine safety issues as well.

Another spur to interest is the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970 (Williams-Steiger Act, usually re-



fresco by Diego Rivera

ferred to as OSHA). The passage of legislation has set off a round of criteria documents (official statements about scientific issues), fights over the setting of standards, public hearings, and discussion and controversy within the circle of professional industrial health workers. Legally, and in part politically, the situation is very similar to that regarding air pollution legislation. The law could be effective if it were aggressively pushed, but inadequate staffing, lax enforcement, small fines for violations and the like have prompted criticism and investigation of the Department of Labor and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The prospect of a political contest over technical issues has led unionists to seek aid from progressive medical and scientific workers. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW, 1126 16th St., N.W., Washington, 20036) has been very important in this effort. OCAW has published a good deal of material about job hazards, including transcripts of a series of 8 all-day conferences in which union members discussed the particular conditions in their shops. So-called "public-interest" and citizens groups such as the Nader organization's Health Research Group have been enlisted.

The increase in general interest has led to organizing activity on the left. This in turn has defined situations in which SESPA members, with some technical knowledge and contact with medical and scientific workers, can perform quite effectively. I will describe a number of pro-

Biochemists Discover Poison In Herbicide Used by U.S.

By CHARLES E. SHEPARD, April 9, 1973

Two Harvard biochemists have found that a herbicide used by American forces in Indochina included a highly toxic contaminant which could seriously threaten human life.

Matthew S. Meselson, professor of Biology, said yesterday that he and Robert W. Baughman, a graduate student in Chemistry, have discovered traces of the poison, dioxin, in fish and crustaceans caught in South Vietnamese rivers and coastal waters.

Dioxin forms during the manufacture of 2, 4, 5-T, a chemical in the military herbicide arsenal known as "agent orange." "Dioxin is 100 times more poisonous than the most powerful nerve gas," Meselson said.

The most popular of three herbicides used by the United States to defoliate forests and kill crops in Indochina, "agent orange" was used until April 1970, according to Meselson, primarily in South Vietnam and Laos, and once in Cambodia and the Demilitarized Zone.

Although some American personnel recognized the danger of the herbicide's side-product, reports "never made it up the chain of command, as far as I know," Meselson commented. But members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, recognizing the hazards, asked Meselson to study the effects of the chemical.

After collecting specimens and data in South Vietnam in the fall of 1970, a five-man team, including Meselson, Baughman and John D. Constable, assistant clinical professor of Surgery, began to study various effects of the herbicide.

They found that dioxin is especially dangerous because of its stability and cumulative toxicity, Meselson said. "As a result of these properties, the poison may pass down the food chain until eventually a human could eat an animal with a high accumulated level of dioxin," he noted.



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occupational

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Defining Our Work

Risk = Hazard + “Outrage”

- For chemicals, “hazard” defined technical account of toxic potential and toxic potency
- Other issues have technical bases
- “Outrage” is better expressed as social factors influencing hazard perception and motivation to abate the hazard

For movement people

- Who's profiting
- Who's suffering
- Technical means of correction
- Social means of correction
- Can the exposed population directly impact the exposure
- Does abatement create a positive social dynamic?

What if “Outrage” doesn’t line up with Hazard or Blames the Victim?

- **Vaccines and autism**
 - Anti pharma
- **GMO**
 - Anti agribusiness
- **Obesity “epidemic” – moral panic**
- **Name a popular risk issue where you have a hard time defining the technical basis of hazard**
- **Without technical basis, can’t fix it**



Work environment as a determinant of health:

- **1/2 of us at any time, 90% at some time**
- **36% + of waking hours**
- **>40% of air breathed and metabolism**
- **Income – stress of losing income**
- **Health insurance**
- **Retirement**
- **Highest cognitive demand**
- **Hours of work**

UAW H&S Design:

- Information to rank and file workers
- Trained H&S rep with access to “all” data
- Investigate, observe, interview
- Instruments (including photo)
- Air Sampling Technician
- Ergonomics Technician
- Local and National H&S Committee
- Complaint and Grievance Procedure
- Contract negotiations and right to strike
- **Empowerment!**



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General Motors Quick Guide to Crisis Management

April 8, 2014 | By Nicholas Freudenberg

Nearly fifty years ago, shortly after Ralph Nader's 1965 book *Unsafe at Any Speed* charged that General Motors knowingly distributed Chevrolet Corvairs despite design defects, GM CEO James Roche hired former FBI agent Vincent Gilen to investigate Nader to, in Gilen's words "determine what makes him tick," examining "his ...

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33 Leading Public Health Groups Urge FDA to Regulate Tobacco More Vigorously

April 2, 2014 | By CHW

In response to the Surgeon General's latest report on the health consequences of smoking, thirty-three leading public health and medical organizations are ...

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Corporate Accountability International says 'Tell LeBron James to Just Say No'

April 2, 2014 | By CHW

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IN THE NEWS AND ON THE WEB

April 8, 2014

[Underage Youth and Adults Differ in their Alcohol Brand Preferences](#)

A new report published online by Substance Abuse finds that youth are not merely mimicking the alcohol brand choices of adults but choose to disproportionately consume brands such as Keystone Light beer, Bacardi malt beverages, Malibu rum, Captain Mor...

Subcommittee on Workforce Protections

Hearing on
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April 27, 2006

[Opening Statement of Chairman Charlie Norwood](#)

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