

TAKEOVER!

Students U.S.A.
mobilize for the 90's

documents from the movement

*Special thanks to Leigh Brownhill,
who designed the front cover.*

TAKEOVER!

TAKEOVER! is primary documentation of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst movement to stop military-funded death research on the campus. Most of the articles herein are first-hand accounts. The people speak for themselves.

Editors

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Amherst, Massachusetts 1989

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ISBN # 0-924120-05-3

Acknowledgements

We thank the citizens of the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts who contributed to the movement to end death research and to this book. Prominent among these are Wally Nelson, Honey Nestle, John Langford, Margaret Holt and Francis Crowe. The music of Tracy Chapman and Boogie Down Productions kept us on track. We are profoundly grateful to C.L.R. James for insisting that this work take priority in our lives, and for believing that the process of making the book is as important as the product. Thanks to Jim Murray of *Cultural Correspondence* and the *C.L.R. James Institute*, New York, for his continuing solidarity as archivist and pioneering desk top publisher.

We appreciate the courage and art of photographers Lee Rosenberg, Jason Danziger, Jason Talerman, Rob Skelton, Christina Bolton, Peter Sakura and Leigh Brownhill. Thanks to the Feminist Image Action Group, especially Marci Lew and Alice Sheats for pro-choice photographs. Clarinda Rose-Turner contributed critically to graphics, conception and editing. Thank you Joan Cavanaugh and Melanie Kaye for your powerful poetry.

We deeply appreciate the tireless work of peoples' lawyers Christobal Bonifaz and Steve Schlange. Janice Raymond of UMass and Aida Sanchez of Hampshire College provided valuable moral support. We are grateful to the many other professional people including medical doctors and media specialists who put their resources at the disposal of the movement and supported work on this book. We thank journalists Jay Allain, William Foster, Jennifer Kingson, and Beth Gately for their committed work. We thank UMass and Five College workers who supported and contributed to this effort. Especially generous were University Computer Center staff and professors, workers in UMass physical plant and the staff of printers Hamilton Newelle and Kinko's Copy Center, Amherst. Finally, we thank our lovers, connections, housemates, parents, supportive colleagues, classmates and friends for materially supporting this effort.

Takeover! 1989 Chronology

Sunday 9 April: Pro-Choice demonstration in Washington D.C. An estimated 800,000 people attend to defend abortion rights. Some 10,000 people from Western Massachusetts and the Five College area bus down to Washington D.C. This is the beginning of the Spring Offensive, the start of the uprising. Large numbers of people are mobilized against the new Bush regime in Washington and its policies on women, education, war and foreign policy. Going to the demonstration involved two to three days of travel and close interaction with dozens of co-travellers, usually on maxi-vans or mini buses. This togetherness formed the foundation of the cooperation which marked the movement against death research at UMass. It is vitally important to note that an issue concerning women and a woman-centered demonstration launched the movement. All subsequent initiatives had women at their center and the crucial organizational issues centered on gender relations.

Wednesday, 19 April: Seven students are arrested occupying Marcus Laboratory

Monday 24 April: Students occupy Memorial Hall

Tuesday 25 April: Hundreds of students gather as three police forces arrest students and one faculty member inside Memorial Hall

Wednesday 26 April: After a night in jail, those arrested are arraigned in Northampton Court where supporters are gathered. At night, students and faculty join community members at a public hearing on biological research, held by the Committee on Health of the Amherst Town Meeting in Bangs Community Center

Sunday April 30: Open May Day party all day at Terisa Turner's house, Lake Pleasant with music by Rob Skelton's band "The Free Press." An activist from the New York City squatters' movement participates and provides information about the massive student occupations in New York state against tuition hikes and the parallel movement of the homeless against the city which is destroying buildings occupied by squatters.

Tuesday 2 May: UMass Chancellor Duffey faces students and faculty for a "free for all" discussion in the Student Union Building, Cape Cod Lounge. He admits calling in State troopers, helicopters, dogs and expresses disapproval of police use of torture devices in Marcus Laboratory arrests. Duffey argues for "pluralism" but a linguistics professor insists that no agreement was ever sought from any member of the campus community for the presence of Department of Defense research. A clerical staff person at the university seeks out militants to establish alliances around an underground effort to organize a staff union.

Wednesday 3 May: Boston's black political activist Mel King addresses anti-death research rally at Student Union Building. Students leave rally, run to the Graduate Research Center and occupy a suite of offices on the second floor. At 9 p.m. a rally of support is held outside the GRC. Police keep students hungry, subject them to psychological trickery and do not allow them to sleep. One occupier, Ralph Reed reads his account of his escape from the U.S. Air Force over a loudspeaker to those outside the building in the early hours of the morning. Walkie Talkies were used to communicate with occupiers. Fax machines were at the disposal of occupiers, as were telephones including long distance facilities. However the police controlled access to the part of the building that was occupied. This occupation took space at the heart of the university's computer center on the eve of a "show and tell" extravaganza which the university was mounting for the private sector including many military contractors. The event had to be moved from the GRC to the Hotel Northampton. Media outreach begins to be effective as newspaper reporters and television crews arrive.

Thursday 4 May: A huge crowd of people are standing outside the GRC occupation. With several hundred people present, police arrive with buses at noon and cordon off the area and made arrests. Ordinary bus drivers refuse to drive the PVRTA buses on behalf of the police. Then the "GRC riot" takes place as hundreds of students and police precede the buses over the mile-long route to the football stadium. Police try to prevent students from blocking buses and much brutality is perpetrated. Students break off and occupy the antechamber to Chancellor Duffey's office in Whitmore Administration Building. Power is fundamentally challenged, and the restraint and inhibition felt by some students dissolves. Duffey is in Washington D.C. and the

panicking administration officials declare a "state of emergency." Thursday night was busy with team of artists silk screening the uprising's T-shirt (a fist and UMASS IS REVOLTING) in the Student Union Craft Center, photographers printing in four labs and a non-violence workshop underway in the SUB Commuter Area Lounge. Plans are being made for other occupations, and townspeople are coming forward to take over buildings. Potential occupiers scout facilities and calculate logistics. Workers from the bus company outline the feasibility of a transport strike.

Saturday 6 May: At two informal house parties it becomes apparent that a serious split in the movement is developing. One liberal element is alarmed at the administration's tactic of encouraging right wing students to attack occupiers. The administration locked up a science library distant from but in the same building as the GRC occupation. Some science students, keen to study for exams in the library were angered, but were encouraged by the authorities to direct their anger against militant students. On the other hand, radical students wanted to organize more occupations and were aware of the huge boost to the popularity of the movement caused by the police melee and bus chase after the GRC arrests. A real movement involving many sections of the community was now in an early stage of coalescence.

Sunday 7 May: Some students began a hunger strike with the demand that all disciplinary action against students be dropped.

Monday 8 May: Six members of the community and two students occupy the lobby area outside Chancellor Duffley's office in Whitmore. Among the townspeople are a member of the Grey Panthers (who fight for the rights of old people) a Wendell village member of the Board of Health, several mothers and people active in the nonviolent, civil disobedience arena in the cause of peace. At the same time, in Whitmore, students are required to be at the Dean of Students' office for disciplinary pre-hearings. A radical position paper is distributed, urging more occupations and pointing out the futility of negotiations, given past evidence of the willingness of the administration to ignore such initiatives. A controversy among activists emerges over who should control the planned teach-in: students or faculty?

Tuesday 9 May: A faculty-controlled teach in is held in Mahar Auditorium, UMass. It's terrain of concentration is DOD-funded research: pro or con? It does not deal with ways of stopping such funding and substituting life-supporting research. But while the teach-in is happening there are arrests and another occupation. Community members are arrested at about 10:30 p.m. from Whitmore. Memorial Hall is occupied by a mass inward movement of students and others. For the first time in the takeovers, the doors are barricaded. The police are shut out. The building is controlled by the occupiers. Wally Nelson, 88 year old peace activist, visits the occupation late at night. This marks a new level of militancy. The hunger strikers are feeling the effects of not eating.

Wednesday 10 May: Large numbers of students join the Memorial II occupation. One faculty member holds his examination inside the occupation. Another holds her class there. A delegate from university physical plant workers visits and presents the occupiers with a flashlight, symbolic of workers' desire to turn on the lights in defiance of the authorities' cutting electricity to the Hall. A third world student speaks to a meeting of occupiers, offering black and third world solidarity and stating that he will return with others to join the occupation. Posters for Friday's rally against people who attack abortion clinics are being made. There is a coffee house, involving performances and singing. Funding documents from the Alumni Office upstairs are being photocopied, and computers, phones, fax machines and other technology is being put to use to contact media outside. A noon time rally is held outside Memorial Hall. No arrests take place. Late at night the police surround Memorial Hall, and put up wooden saw horse barriers. It is raining heavily and as arrests seem imminent several occupiers leave the building.

Thursday 11 May: Very early in the morning at about 4:30 police break through the barricades and windows of Memorial Hall, gain access and arrest students. The action is marked by brutality. The weather was stormy and very few representatives of the media were present. The police were trying to avoid the student resistance which led to the GRC riots. Students were taken to a National Guard facility near Northampton and police obscured public direction signs and street signs to prevent supporters from finding the facility. Thursday night's rally marches around the campus, participants holding candles. The

people plant a flowering tree near the Marcus lab. The tree is named Maude.

Friday 12 May: Two rallies have inadvertently been scheduled at the same time on campus. Pro-choice activists are rallying against representatives of the so-called "pro-life" terrorists who bomb abortion centers. This feminist rally is at the SUB, and posters for it were being prepared in the Memorial II occupation. On the other hand, a community and anti-death research rally was scheduled for outside Whitmore. Much bad feeling was generated around the DOD off the campus movement's failure to unanimously join in the women's rally. Chancellor Duffey telephones the hunger strikers' parents and attempts to frighten them with claims that the students are under the influence of outside agitators, communists and brownshirts.

Saturday 13 May: Hunger strike ends, apparently in victory, but the administration has lied to the weakened students, who were housed in the Campus Center hotel (after churches refused to allow them to carry out their strike inside church facilities).

Sunday 13 May: The university radio station airs a live program with Prof. Robert Wolfe, Shelagh Murray and others. Wolfe calls the movement a tremendous victory. Many people feel that the DOD is unlikely to want to fund more research at UMass because the issue is so controversial and the facilities are being shut down by student takeovers. At a mass meeting of the movement in the SUB commuter area lounge, a fundamental split is evident. Many want to de-escalate and ignore women's objections to sexism. The double - scheduling of rallies the previous Friday angered feminists who expected the united movement to support their confrontation with attackers of abortion clinics. Lack of democracy is challenged. Efforts are made to break up into small groups where consensus politics are more feasible. Liberal elements are insisting that the movement be shut down, and that no more occupations be planned. It is exam week and many students are feeling the pressure of a need to complete academic assignment and study for examinations. On the other hand, the movement is growing rapidly and many feel that workers from many sectors of society, including the police and National Guard, as well as university clerical staff are ready to strike in a joint action. There is little money left for overtime pay for police. Many police refuse to be put in a situation in which they can be charged with excesses. The

popular outcry against police brutality is rising and the uprising has just hit national media.

Monday 15 May: Forum on "War is a Women's Issue" is held at the SUB with Frances Crowe of the American Friends Service Committee giving a presentation. Strong criticism of sexism in the movement is expressed. The feminist contingent is clearly divided from the "groupie" category of women who support the closet leadership which is white and male. Radical women resolve to continue autonomous initiatives and refuse to continue cooperation with the movement except on pro-feminist terms.

Wednesday 17 May: A rally is held outside the SUB with speeches and music.

Thursday 18 May: Timothy Sauvageau, hunger striker who had been held in jail for refusing to provide his name is released.

Monday 22 May: Liberal faculty hold press conference in SUB Hatch, presenting requests that the UMass administration clarify whether any DOD funded research has been declared classified and hence unpublishable.

Thursday 25 May: Meeting of activists in the anti-death research movement in SUB commuter area lounge decides to re-structure decision making process. Small groups are to be formed at meetings, and an agenda is to be discussed in these groups. Consensus or majority decisions are to be taken to plenary where majority rule by group vote will prevail. The proposal, discussed for over a month, that prior to final votes, the concerns of super-exploited groups (women, non-U.S. citizens, black and third world people, others such as gay and disabled people) be expressed; was defeated.

Sunday 28 May: A pamphlet was distributed at the graduating ceremonies or Commencement. Two activists scheduled to graduate with BAs were denied degrees because they had been arrested and were under university disciplinary proceedings. The movement awarded them honorary degrees.

Tuesday 30 May: Members of the community and students who had been arrested occupying Duffey's office were arraigned in Northampton Court on a show cause hearing. The judge found cause for trespassing charges to be pressed.

Saturday 26 August: The fall offensive begins with 100 women declaring a state of emergency in Massachusetts due to rising violence against women. They call for an end to the war against women. Nine are arrested.

Monday 28 August: The nine women are arraigned in Northampton Court. One reads a statement and supporters in the court room unfurl banners and chant as the judge declares a recess.

Note: Many events and developments are not reflected in the above chronology. The administration launched repeated actions, and Faculty Senate meetings were held. Press conferences abounded and notable media events took place. Guerrilla theater and other public displays of art, including a pro-choice photography show were mounted. Liberal faculty held several meetings, usually in the SUB Hatch at 8 a.m. Members of the movement held meetings about every three days in the SUB commuter area lounge and informal gathers were held constantly in the Radical Students' Union office, at the UMass SUB and at private homes. Hampshire College was increasingly a center of related activity and individuals in the other colleges (Smith, Amherst and Mount Holyoke) began to get involved. Thousands of phone meetings were held. This chronology has meaning only in the context of student occupations in most of the several dozen colleges of the State University of New York, and elsewhere in the U.S.A. Most important was the dominating drive of students in China's pro-democracy movement, and its growing impact at UMass and in the Five College area.

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