

Students Trash SUNY

Liberation News Service

1970

BUFFALO, New York (LNS) Students at the State University of New York at Buffalo pulled off a series of actions for nearly a week in support of black athletes' demands and to get police off campus in late February. They fought with police, attacked 'political targets on campus and finally shut the place down on March 2.

Black athletes had boycotted a basketball game on February 24, demanding financial security for athletes, hiring of black coaches, an investigation of the athletic department by black and third world groups and issues of their treatment at the university. The Black Student Union held a demonstration in the gym that night. The next evening they met in the student union with supporters to make further plans.

In the midst of the meeting, cops from the Buffalo Tactical Patrol Unit burst into the building from both sides and began arresting people and smashing furniture as they cleared the lounge.

Outside, the cops were met by a crowd of over a thousand angry students. Ten cops and two students were injured in the fighting.

The students then marched to the administration building and smashed windows there before moving on to the office of the campus security force. Every window in the campus cops' building was broken and some mechanically-minded demonstrators jumped the wires on two of campus cops' station wagons, and sent them crashing into the building.

The crowd moved on to the laboratories of Project Themis, a Navy research project on underwater warfare. The windows were smashed and a generator inside was blown up.

Thirty-five TPU and Campus cops in full riot gear were unable to stop the crowd at this point, nor were 100 police with tear gas guns (the demonstrators stayed upwind), and eventually the police left the campus.

On Thursday, February 26, a rally of several thousand students decided to hold a student strike. The strike was so effective that the university was officially closed on Monday with most students and faculty staying away from class. The university obtained an injunction barring demonstrations on campus.

On Thursday, March 5, students occupied and sealed off the university administration in violation of the injunction. Later, 20 students, the people who had been politically active for the longest time were suspended.

That same day, three high schools in Buffalo (two of them mostly black) went out on strike. One black high school was protesting the teachers' union rejection of the firing of a white teacher accused of being a racist, and the other was demanding a free lunch program.

The third high school, a black and white vocational school, struck in support of the SUNY Buffalo strike. The high school students marched through downtown Buffalo where they fought with police and broke several windows.

On Friday, university students once again sealed off the administration building. This time they stopped up the drains in the basement and turned on water mains. Engineers inspecting the building later said that the building would be unusable for a long time.

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