

The South End insert

Fifth Estate Collective

Adamany Resigns (*John Hollings*)

“Most hated man on campus”

As striking university workers joined forces with Detroit’s labor community at the annual Labor Day Parade, WSU president David Adamany took the Board of Governors by surprise when he called an emergency meeting to give notice of his immediate resignation.

Board members speculated that the cause of Adamany’s hurried departure was due to intense public pressure and the realization that he had become “the most hated man on campus”. Betty Carlton, a WSU student, expressed anger at Adamany’s policies when she said “He’s gutted every Liberal Arts program at the University and turned it into a techno-research factory. He’s turned union against union, professor against professor and student against student.”

Opposition to the outspoken administrator recently escalated when Adamany declared campus private property and ordered striking clerical workers arrested for carrying picket signs on campus. Labor and civil rights organizations joined forces to support the workers in their two-week-old strike and to help combat Adamany’s curtailment of free speech.

Also contributing to Adamany’s dilemma was the possibility of total university closure as two other unions representing 1700 faculty, professional and administrative staff authorized a strike on the first day of classes.

The controversial president fell from public favor soon after his 1982 appointment, when his union-busting intentions became clear. In contract negotiations this year, a mere two percent increase was offered to employees, while Adamany himself took a six percent increase on his \$126,970 annual salary, making him the highest paid university president in the country. Facing union demands for substantial wage increases, Adamany declared that the University is in serious financial trouble, a fact denied by a report prepared by Financial Analyst, Dr. Richard Weber, released at a July 14 campus lecture. The information, obtained by Weber through analyzing the University Budget Reports, showed the University at a near \$20 million in surplus funds.

“The bandits call it Funds Transfers,” said Diana Walls, a UAW 2071 member. “Dollars are transferred round and round from the Current Fund, to the Plant Fund or to nine other funds in the University budget until no outsider quite knows where or how much money there really is.” Union activists charge that Adamany made “unaccounted-for transfers of funds for building improvements and construction.”

Immersed in the most bitterly heated fight with University employees in years, Adamany succumbed to the pressure. In an exclusive statement to the *South End*, Adamany said he “felt like a new man, like Scrooge on Christmas Day.”

Public Safety Fired (*Alice Hartwell*)

The University, still reeling from WSU President David Adamany's resignation over the Labor Day weekend, received another shock with the announcement that the Public Safety Department has been ordered to disband immediately by acting-WSU President Ria Frijters. The 25-officer force has patrolled the campus and surrounding neighborhood for the last 20 years, but always amidst charges of abuse of their power and general ineffectiveness.

According to Frijters, her decision was made after the actions of Public Safety officers during the second day of the strike by UAW Local 2071 representing campus clerical workers. On August 26 campus police enforced a ban by Adamany against strike activity on the campus and attacked and arrested two strikers, detaining four others for the "crime" of carrying picket signs. "This attack on peaceful picketers was something like you would expect from the South African police rather than members of a university community," said Frijters.

Frijters stated that the presence of armed, uniformed police not only conflicted with the idea of an intellectual atmosphere where free inquiry and political debate is encouraged, but also gave rise to an image portrayed by the sidewalk graffiti which has recently appeared on campus stating: "Police State U."

Frijters also charged that the university police were ineffective, repeating the 17th century advice of Machiavelli "to be loved, but failing that, be feared." "Unfortunately," said Frijters, "Public Safety is neither."

She told the *South End* she feared that even though her order to disband the department was effective immediately, renegade elements of Public Safety might continue patrolling the campus either out of shock or habit. She warned, "These officers are no longer employees of the University, they no longer have the force of law behind them, so if they attempt to assert any authority, faculty and students are free to completely ignore their orders."

Reaction among students and residents of the surrounding Cass Corridor neighborhood was universally favorable to the elimination of the department. In the words of one W. Hancock resident, "They [the police] would be a bad joke if it was not for the fact that they hand out parking tickets at three in the morning and carry guns."

Campus political activists and unionists have no fond memories of the Public Safety Department from the origins of the force in the turbulent '60's through to the present UAW campus strike. Al Day, a WSU student during the anti-Vietnam war era, told the *South End* that the campus police were always on hand to protect the CIA or military recruiters and to stop anti-war demonstrations. "It always seemed that they enjoyed knocking demonstrators around," he said.

The vicious attack on picketing union Local 2071 members on August 26 on Ferry Mall, reinforced Day's notion for many unionists in attendance, WSU Chemistry Professor Anton Johnstone, said, "Those guys [Public Safety] had a gleam in their eye as they dragged a picketer down by his hair and handcuffed him. They have no place on campus."

Prof. Karen Eliot of the History Dept. said that the way the campus police acted toward the striking workers "should come as no surprise." "The role of the police in state society is to protect the institutions of power and never to be on the side of those who want reform or change. This is particularly true in labor battles where police throughout the world are the first line of defense against workers who are doing no more than asking for a few dollars more a week."

"If people ever start demanding fundamental alterations in the way power dominates," Elliot continued, "the police are the ones called upon by the ruling sectors to attack blacks demonstrating against apartheid in South Africa or to staff the death squads in Central America and the Philippines. The WSU cops certainly haven't done anything that dramatic here, but only because the threat to power hasn't warranted it yet."

Reactions from members of the Public Safety Department to their dismissal were mixed with many feeling that Adamany had made their position on the campus untenable as it was. WSU Sgt. G.M. Cool said that the ex-WSU President had made fools of him and his men by ordering them to keep union pickets off campus during the current strike and then let them be humiliated when more than a hundred strikers grabbed the forbidden signs and marched through the campus in violation of the presidential edict. Adamany was forced to reverse his order the following Monday when a throng of 400 unionists and supporters again ignored a "no-go" area and marched onto the university grounds with "Strike" signs as Public Safety officers looked on helplessly.

Also, the WSU officers complained about getting no respect or fear from students, faculty or neighborhood residents in the way in which Machiavelli had advised. One, Sgt. G. MicKinney, who had been a campus cop during the Ohio National Guard massacre of Kent State University students in 1970, said, "I'm going back to Kent; at least there they know how to deal with protesters."

Other campus officers who are concerned about the loss of their jobs felt they would have no problem getting positions with the Detroit police. According to Lt. Mary Swift, "Hell, they're losing so many cops in the city to dope and robbery charges, they'll probably hire all of us in a group."

Some WSU students and Cass Corridor residents did express a concern about reduced security in the Wayne State area when the Public Safety patrols are gone. Although considered a high crime area, one resident told the *South End*, "I guess we are going to have to take some responsibility for our own lives now. It's not like the cops were ever able to prevent crime in the first place. Instead of living like isolated individuals who depend on the armed might of the state," he continued, "it might be necessary for us to get to know our neighbors and start defending ourselves. We couldn't do worse than the cops have."

The Abolition of Work (*Bob Black*)

Workers of the world, relax

No one should ever work. Work is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost all evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. In order to stop suffering, we have to stop working.

That doesn't mean we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play. By play I mean also festivity, creativity, conviviality, and maybe even art. Play isn't passive. Although we all need a lot more time for sheer sloth and slack to offset employment-induced exhaustion, once we have recovered, nearly all of us will want to act in some way.

A life of play is totally incompatible with the reality of modern life. Curiously—or maybe not—all political ideologies believe in work. Liberals say we should end employment discrimination. I say we should end employment. Conservatives support right-to-work laws. I support the right to be lazy. Leftists favor full employment. I favor full unemployment. Ideologues will carry on endlessly about wages, hours, working conditions, exploitation, productivity, profitability. They'll gladly talk about anything but work itself despite its impact on all our lives. Unions and management agree that we ought to sell the time of our lives in exchange for survival, although they haggle over the price. Marxists think we should be bossed by bureaucrats. Libertarians think we should be bossed by businesspeople. [Web Archive note: The name Libertarian, traditionally equivalent to Anarchist, was consciously appropriated by laissez-faire capitalists in the U.S. in the 1960s.] Clearly these ideology-mongers have serious differences over how to divvy up the spoils of power. Just as clearly, none of them has any objection to power as such and all of them want to keep us working.

The alternative to work isn't just idleness. As much as I treasure the pleasure of torpor, it's never more rewarding than when it punctuates other pleasures and pastimes. Nor am I promoting the managed, time-disciplined concept called "leisure"; far from it. Leisure is non-work for the sake of work. Leisure is the time spent recovering from work, a frenzied but hopeless attempt to forget about work.

You may be wondering if I'm joking. When I say I want to abolish work, I mean just what I say. My definition of work is forced labor. Work is production enforced by economic or political means. But not all creation is work. Work is never done for its own sake, it's done on account of some product or necessity that results.

Usually work is employment, i.e., wage-labor, which means selling yourself on the installment plan (and this is even more true in "communist" than capitalist countries, where the state is nearly the only employer and everyone is an employee). Thus 95 percent of Americans who work, work for somebody else. In the USSR or Cuba or Yugoslavia or Nicaragua or any other socialist country, the corresponding figure approaches 100 percent. Only the embattled

Third World nations—Mexico, India, Brazil, Turkey—still have significant concentrations of peasants who live under the arrangement of most laborers of the last thousand years: payment of taxes (ransom) to the state or rent to parasitic landlords in return for being otherwise left alone. Even this raw deal begins to look good to many of us in the industrial world.

But in the modern world, people don't just work, they have "jobs." One person does one task all the time. Even if the task is somewhat interesting (as increasingly many jobs aren't) its endless exclusivity drains the potential for playfulness. A job that might engage a person for a reasonably limited time is just a burden to the one who must do it for 40 hours a week with no say in how it should be done. That it is done for the profit of owners who contribute nothing to the project makes it worse. This is the real world of work.

The degradation that most workers experience on the job is the sum of assorted indignities that can be called "discipline." Discipline consists of totalitarian controls at the workplace—surveillance, rote work, imposed tempos, production quotas, punching in and out, etc. Discipline is what the factory and the office and the store share with the prison and the school and the mental hospital. It is something historically original and horrible. It was beyond the capacities of such demonic dictators of yore as Nero and Genghis Khan and Ivan the Terrible. For all their bad intentions, they just didn't have the means to control their subjects as thoroughly as modern despots do. Discipline is the distinctively diabolical modern mode of control.

Play is just the opposite of discipline. Play is always voluntary. It shows an aristocratic disdain for results. The player gets something out of playing; that's why he plays. But the core reward is the experience of the activity itself. Conversation, sex, dancing, travel—these practices are surely play.

Work makes a mockery of freedom. The official line in the U.S. and Canada is that we all have rights and live in a democracy. Those unfortunates who aren't free like us live in police states. They obey orders no matter how arbitrary. The authorities keep them under regular surveillance. State bureaucrats control even the smallest details of everyday life. Dissent and disobedience are punished. Informers report regularly to the authorities. All this is supposed to be a very bad thing.

And so it is, although it is nothing but a description of the modern workplace. The liberals and conservatives and libertarians who attack totalitarianism are all phonies and hypocrites. There is more freedom in any moderately de-Stalinized dictatorship than there is in the ordinary American workplace. You find the same sort of hierarchy and discipline in an office or factory as you do in a prison or a monastery. In fact, as the French philosopher Michel Foucault has shown, prisons and factories came in at about the same time, and their operators consciously borrowed from each other's control techniques.

A worker is a part-time slave. The boss says when to show up, when to leave, and what to do in the meantime. He tells you how much work to do and how fast. He is free to carry his control to humiliating extremes, regulating, if he so desires, the clothes you wear or how often you go to the bathroom. With a few exceptions he can fire you for any reason, or no reason. He spies on you by means of snitches and supervisors; he amasses a dossier on you. If you talk back you are accused of insubordination, just as if you were a naughty child.

This demeaning system rules at least half the waking hours of a majority of men and women for most of their lives. Anybody who says these people are "free" is lying or stupid. You are what you do. If you do boring, stupid, monotonous work, chances are you'll end up boring, stupid, and monotonous. Work is a much better explanation for the creeping cretinization around us than even such significant moronizing mechanisms as television and education. People who are regimented all their lives are psychologically enslaved. Their aptitude for autonomy is so atrophied that they develop an acute fear of freedom. The obedience training at their jobs carries over into the families they start, thus reproducing the system. Once you drain the vitality from people at work, they'll likely submit to hierarchy in politics, culture, and everything else. They're used to it.

We are so close to the world of work that we can't see what it does to us. We have to rely on outside observers from other times or other cultures to appreciate the extreme pathology of our present position. There was a time in our own past when the "work ethic" would have been incomprehensible. We have only to draw upon the wisdom of antiquity to put modern work in perspective. The ancients saw work for what it is, and their view prevailed until the industrial revolution, which was accompanied by the rise of Calvinism and the Protestant work ethic.

Socrates said that manual laborers make bad friends and bad citizens because they have no time to fulfill the responsibilities of friendship and citizenship. He was right. Because of work, we keep looking at our watches. The

only thing free about so-called free time is that it doesn't cost the boss anything. Free time is mostly devoted to getting ready for work, going to work, returning from work, and recovering from work. No wonder Edward G. Robinson in one of his gangster movies exclaimed, "Work is for saps!"

The Kapauku people of West Irian have a conception of balance in life, and work only every other day, the day of rest designed "to regain the lost power and health." Even the exploited peasants of the Middle Ages wrested substantial time back from their landlord's work. According to historians, a full fourth of the French peasants' calendar was devoted to Sundays and holidays. (See "Why tribal people and peasants of the Middle Ages had more free time than we do," *Utne Reader*; Sept./Oct. 1987, p. 58.)

To grasp the full enormity of our deterioration, however, consider the earliest condition of humanity, without government or property, when we wandered as hunter-gatherers. English philosopher Thomas Hobbes surmised that life then was nasty, brutish, and short. Others assume that life was a desperate, unremitting struggle for subsistence.

The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, surveying the data on 10th century hunter-gatherers, exploded these myths in an article entitled "The Original Affluent Society." (See "The Stone Age: The good old days," *Utne Reader*, May/June 1988, p. 12.) They worked a lot less than we do, and their work is now hard to distinguish from what we regard as play. Sahlins concluded that they worked an average of four hours a day, assuming they were working at all.

What I've said so far ought not to be controversial. Many workers are fed up with work. There are high and rising rates of absenteeism, turnover, employee theft and sabotage, wildcat strikes, and overall goldbricking on the job. Yet the prevalent feeling, universal among bosses and also widespread among workers themselves, is that work itself is inevitable and necessary.

I disagree. It is now possible to abolish work and replace it, insofar as it serves useful purposes, with a multitude of new kinds of activities. To abolish work requires going at it from two directions, quantitative and qualitative. On the one hand, on the quantitative side, we have to cut down massively on the amount of work being done. At present most work is useless and we should simply get rid of it. On the other hand—and I think this a revolutionary new idea—we have to take what useful work remains and transform it into a pleasing variety of game-like and craft-like pastimes, indistinguishable from other pleasurable pastimes except that they happen to yield useful end products. Creation could become recreation. And we could all stop being afraid of each other.

Only a small and diminishing fraction of work serves any useful purpose apart from the defense and reproduction of the work system.

Forty percent of the work force are white-collar workers, most of whom hold the most tedious and idiotic jobs ever concocted. Entire industries, such as insurance, banking, and real estate, consist of nothing but useless paper-shuffling. It is no accident that the "tertiary sector" of the economy (the service sector) is growing while the "secondary sector" (industry) stagnates and the "primary sector" (agriculture) nearly disappears. Because most work today is unnecessary except to those in power because it ensures they stay in power, workers have been shifted from relatively useful to relatively useless occupations. It's a way to assure public order. That's why you can't go home just because you finish early. They want your time, enough of it to make you theirs. That's why the average workweek hasn't gone down by more than a few minutes in the last 50 years'

The second stage in abolishing work is to bring an end to production of useless goods. No more war production, nuclear power, junk food, feminine hygiene deodorant—and above all, no more auto industry to speak of. An occasional Stanley Steamer or Model T might be all right, but the autoeroticism on which such pestholes as Detroit and Los Angeles depend is out of the question. Already, without even trying, we've virtually solved the energy crisis, the environmental crisis, the ozone crisis, and assorted other social problems.

Finally, we must do away with the largest occupation—the one with the longest hours, the lowest pay, and some of the most tedious tasks around. I refer to the job of housework and child-rearing. By abolishing wage labor and achieving full unemployment, we will undermine the division of labor based on sex. The nuclear family as we know it is an inevitable adaptation to the demands imposed by modern work for wages. Like it or not, as things have operated for the last century or two, it is economically rational for the man to bring home the bacon, for the woman to provide him with a haven in a heartless world, and for the children to be marched off to schools (primarily to keep them out of Mom's hair but incidentally to acquire the habits of obedience and punctuality so necessary for workers). Bound up with this new non-nuclear family strategy comes the abolition of childhood and the closing

of the schools. There are now more full-time students than full-time workers in this country; we need children as teachers, not students. They have a lot to show us because they're better at playing than grown-ups are.

I haven't even mentioned the possibility of cutting way down on the little work that remains by automating it. All the scientists and engineers and technicians freed from bothering with war research and planned obsolescence should have a good time devising means to eliminate fatigue and tedium and danger from activities like mining. Undoubtedly they'll find other projects to amuse themselves. Perhaps they'll set up worldwide multimedia communications systems or establish space colonies.

Perhaps. I myself am no gadget freak. I wouldn't care to live in a push-button paradise. I don't want robot slaves to do everything; I want to do things myself. There is, I think, a modest place for labor-saving technology, though the historical record is not encouraging. When productive technology went from hunting and gathering to agriculture and on to industry, work increased. We should be more than skeptical about the promises of the computer mystics. They work like dogs. Chances are, if they have their way, so will the rest of us. But if they have any particular contributions that would be easily subordinated to human purposes, let's give them a hearing.

What I really want to see is work turned into play. A first step is to discard the notions of job and occupation. Even activities that have some content lose most of it by being reduced to jobs that certain people, and only those people, are forced to do to the exclusion of all else. Is it not odd that farm workers toil painfully in the fields while their air-conditioned bosses go home every weekend and putter about in their gardens? After the abolishment of work, we will witness the Golden Age of the Dilettante, which will put the Renaissance to shame. There won't be any more jobs, just things to do and people to do them.

The secret of turning work into play is to arrange useful activities to take advantage of whatever it is that various people at various times enjoy doing. To make it possible for some people to do the things they enjoy it will be necessary to eradicate the irrationalities that afflict these activities today. I, for instance, would enjoy doing some (not too much) teaching, but I don't want coerced students and I don't care to suck up to school administrators for tenure.

Second, there are some things that people like to do from time to time, but not for too long, and certainly not all the time. You might enjoy baby-sitting for a few hours in order to share the company of kids, but not as much as their parents do. The parents meanwhile profoundly appreciate the time to themselves that you free up for them, although they'd get fretful if parted from their progeny for too long. These differences among individuals are what make a life of free play possible. The same principle applies to many other areas of activity, especially the primal ones. Thus many people enjoy cooking when they can practice it seriously at their leisure, but not when they're just fueling up human bodies for work.

Third, some things that are unsatisfying done alone or in unpleasant surroundings or at the orders of an overlord become enjoyable if the circumstances are changed. Activities that appeal to some people don't always appeal to all others, but everyone (at least potentially) has a variety of interests and an interest in variety. Small children, for instance, who notoriously relish wallowing in filth, could be organized in little hordes to clean toilets and empty the garbage, with medals awarded to the outstanding. Bear in mind that we don't have to take today's work just as we find it and match it up with the proper people, some of whom would have to be perverse indeed. To some extent we may want to return to handicrafts, which English designer and socialist William Morris considered a probable and desirable upshot of communist revolution. Art would be taken back from the snobs and collectors, abolished as a specialized department catering to an elite audience, and its beauty and creation restored to everyday life. After all, the museum-quality Grecian urns we write odes to were used in their own time to store olive oil.

No one can say what would result from unleashing the creative power stultified by work. Anything could happen.

Life would become a game, or rather many games, but not—as it is now—a zero/sum game. An optimal sexual encounter is the best model of productive play. Nobody keeps score, and everybody wins. The more you give, the more you get. If we play our cards right, we could all get more out of life than we put into it; but only if we play for keeps.

No one should ever work. Workers of the world...relax!

The preceding essay by Bob Black has appeared in several forms. This was taken from *The Utne Reader*, 2732 West 42nd Street, Minneapolis MN 55410, but has also recently been published in the *Industrial Worker*, newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies), 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., Suite 202, Chicago IL 60657.

Outgoing President Lashes University (*John Hollings*)

In the wake of his sudden resignation as president of Wayne State University over the Labor Day weekend, David Adamany agreed to tell the *South End* the reasons behind his decision.

Adamany said that his reasons went far beyond the immediate issue of his disastrous handling of the strikes facing the University. He cited what he called the “massive dehumanization” which distinguishes “this and every other university whether one is a student, faculty or worker.”

The ex-president went on to outline his criticisms of “a complete social system which subverts every human impulse into relations of domination and manipulation, which progressively destroys every vestige of human community and substitutes for it the wholly false community of the market.”

Coming from a self-confessed “lifelong believer” in the American system of capitalism, Adamany’s remarks appear to signify a remarkable conversion, one all the more remarkable for the obvious conviction with which he seems to have arrived at it.

The wire-rimmed glassed Adamany halted for a moment and toyed nervously with a paper clip, apparently searching for the right way to express his contention.

“You see, this university operates as an apparently neutral training ground with no other goal than the gathering and transmission of knowledge. But beneath this seemingly innocuous exchange in the ‘marketplace of ideas’ a whole set of mysterious things is going on. It turns out, in fact, that the university’s most important product is social passivity.”

Adamany continued, “Nothing could be more appropriate, I think, than the characterization of the university as the marketplace of ideas, and those people in the academic world who identify it as such have very often not even an inkling of how revealing the description is.

“The university buys and sells knowledge, students, instructors, everything; the exchange relation underlies its every activity. The university with its corporatized, hierarchical structure, with its immense bureaucracy, its emphasis on scheduling and quantifying, its authoritarian teacher/student relationships is the perfect training ground for the production of a workforce amply adjusted to the ‘realities’ of work, of ‘deferred gratification,’ of ‘sold’ time, and of obedience to authority.”

Adamany said that he knew all of this was hard for the average student to understand, but felt it was crucial for him to state this for the record so everyone knew fully what the university was all about.

He continued, saying, “Regardless of what skills or knowledge it may incidentally impart, the university’s real function is the socialization of individuals into unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, of the natural, inevitable and unchangeable nature of the society in which they live. Never for a moment must they even begin to suspect that human society has ever operated on anything but a basis of competitiveness, distrust and individual acquisitiveness.”

“One of the most important ways I’ve detected through which the university achieves its goal of socialization is via the fragmentation of knowledge and experience. Because of the ever increasing necessity for specialization under advanced capitalism, it becomes impossible for capital to make use of the complete human being. It must instead select his or her most usable—that is, most marketable—skill and develop that skill exclusively, to the complete detriment of all the myriad thoughts and activities which make a living human being who is capable of acting on the world,” he sighed.

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