

*The Anti-Bureaucratic Revolt
at Berkeley:*

A Deeper Disenchantment

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It is widely believed that the civil-rights movement is the last campaign against injustice and deprivation in our society. When the anachronisms of poverty and discrimination have been eliminated, presumably we will finally fulfill the American Dream. Then, the sociologists tell us, a middle-class, affluent, and bureaucratized society will present men and women with purely personal problems of identity and alienation.

But what of a protest movement against bureaucracy and the sources of alienation? Is such a phenomenon possible? In Berkeley, California recently thousands of white, middle-class students engaged in such a protest and sustained it over a period of months, until it had grown into a full scale rebellion against the Modern University. It became front-page news all across the country and continues to puzzle many observers.

THE UNIVERSITY of California is probably the most impressive and prestigious state university in the country. It boasts a world-famous faculty that includes a half dozen Nobel Prize winners and its many departments are all considered "first rate." It is the "complete" university. There is something there for everyone: a sprawling, pleasant campus, top-notch recreational facilities (including an outdoor country-club and swimming pool nestled in the Berkeley hills), a huge library, and excellent medical facilities. A constant flow of illustrious and exciting speakers and performers appear on the campus: everyone from U Thant to the Budapest String Quartet to Joan Baez. The resident student gets all this, plus his education, for approximately one hundred dollars a semester.

The city of Berkeley itself is *the* pleasant place to live. With its coffee houses and art movies, its almost perfect climate, its proximity to such places as San Francisco, Big Sur and Yosemite, Berkeley would appear to be the "compleat" college town.

Despite all the academic glitter and the bountiful social life Berkeley offers, there is deep and bitter resentment among many students about their life at the university. It is a resentment that starts from the contradiction between the public image and reputation of the university and their actual day-to-day experiences as students. For these students recognize that all that is exciting and stimulating about Berkeley comes from the frills and extras of university life; the formal university-learning experience is generally a deadening one.

The new undergraduate learns quickly that of all the functions of the Great University his own education is perhaps the least important. He has almost no contact with the famous professors he has heard about. They, for their part, seek ways to escape the "burden" of teaching to be able to devote full time to the pursuit of their professions (which are not defined to include teaching). Graduate teaching assistants do most of whatever face-to-face teaching the undergraduate encounters. For the most part, however, the undergraduate learns that his success at school depends on his ability to master a four-year system of lectures, reading lists and examinations that have little to do with genuine learning. A student organization, SLATE, publishes a *Supplement to The General Catalogue*, every semester, which advises the undergraduate on ways to beat the "system" and get a reasonable education in spite of it. Whether the undergraduate is morally revolted by the system, or whether he shrugs it off as merely another facet of the lifemanship he must master, it is as a "system" that his education is commonly perceived and becomes a central part of the undergraduate folklore.

Many graduate students share a more special malaise. They have already made something of a commitment to academic and university life, but it is a commitment beclouded with ambiguities and doubts. The graduate students, in their closer proximity to the professors and the specialized disciplines, have also become privy to the intellectual dishonesties and political scheming that go on at the upper levels of Academia. There is a widespread sense that they are prisoners in a system of professional rewards and penalties, determined by those very professors whose manipulations they observe at first hand. It is a system they have no power to change and leaves them only the option of playing the academic game according to the rules or getting out.

This alienation in the midst of the apparent good life finds symbolic expression at a campus gathering place known as "The Terrace"—an outdoor pavillion of the Student Union cafeteria, where one can bask in sunshine most of the year and enjoy a majestic view of San Francisco Bay. Many of the more active and concerned students gather here for the usual rounds of student gossip and political banter. Their range of

political opinion and affiliation is extremely wide; they include every variety of revolutionary and reformist socialist, radicals and liberal democrats, civil-rights activists, anarchists, pacifists and even an occasional Goldwaterite. When the talk is of national and international politics the arguments are heated, but when the talk turns to what can only be described as "university politics" there is a sudden change of perspective. A common note of cynicism enters the dialogue. Common enemies are easily identifiable: they are the university bureaucracy, the graduate school system, the political schemers among the faculty. Most often and most pointedly the enemy is the president of the university, Clark Kerr.

The "Compleat" Liberal

It tells us much about the mood of these students that the man who is most clearly viewed as the enemy carries all the traditional credentials of the modern political liberal. In his speeches and writings, Clark Kerr is indeed always on the side of the angels: for academic freedom, for free speech, for freedom of inquiry. He has received the highest award of the American Association of University Professors for his efforts on behalf of academic freedom. Yet if Kerr is a bona-fide card-carrying liberal he also typifies much of what the students consider the failure of American liberalism during the Cold War era. Official establishment liberalism offers nothing to these students because it has lost its passion and crusading spirit. It has become manipulative, crafty and cautious. In domestic and international politics it has become identified with *realpolitik* and opportunism.

Kerr, for all his liberal rhetoric and reputation, represents only the cold bureaucrat who could never command these students' confidence. His style and physical bearing do not help him in this respect. He looks ever so much like the officious bank president. His public appearances are carefully managed and he seems never to allow himself any spontaneous gesture or show of emotion. Even on those occasions when he is working for a liberal reform, as he did recently in getting the Board of Regents to lift its ban on Communist speakers on campus, his style tends to infuriate the students. For he does not act by moral persuasion nor out of great principle but as the behind the scenes manipulator, the committee man, the politician.

I recall a conversation with a young graduate student last September in which he mused that he could not imagine Kerr ever resigning his position over some matter of principle. It is this, he said, that symbolizes the difference between the new bureaucratic liberals and educators such as Robert Hutchins or Harold Taylor who are becoming a vanishing breed.

But more than matters of personality and style mark Kerr as an appropriate symbol for the bureaucratic "system." Kerr has also become the foremost spokesman and ideologist for the new bureaucratic style in American higher education. In his Godkin Lectures,

at Harvard in 1963, he first coined the term "multiversity" to describe the model American university of the future. This "multiversity" is no longer primarily a citadel for learning. It becomes a service center for society. The "multiversity" will increasingly service the established institutions of business, government, labor and the national defense effort. In Kerr's own words, "the university is being called upon . . . to respond to the expanding claims of national service; to merge its activity with industry as never before."

Now all of this is not so terribly new or provocative. Many educators have commented upon and lamented this trend. But it is different with Kerr: he cheerfully accepts the trend as the inexorable path of development and draws the appropriate conclusions. For if the "multiversity" is to become more and more attuned to the needs of industry and national defense, then the requirements of tough-minded bureaucracy and management must have first claims on those who lead the "multiversity." The "Managerial Revolution" has come to the campus; now the most important stratum of the university is not the faculty, nor the students, nor any single educational idea, but rather the manager and administrator. The "multiversity" is a "mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money." To guide this mechanism through its many complex functions, the university president must be guided primarily by the tools and arts of manipulation and mediation.

At the University of California Clark Kerr has indeed appeared as that model administrator-manager. As both the author of this scenario of the future and the leading player in it, Kerr has made himself the perfect target for all the resentment that the development of the "multiversity" arouses. That is why the students regard Kerr's liberalism as irrelevant. It is also why "multiversity" takes on, in conversations on the terrace, all of the emotional connotations of the term "1984."

Perhaps what has been most infuriating to the students on the terrace is the fact that all the physical evidence about them seemed to point inescapably to the power of Clark Kerr's vision of the future. The University of California was becoming more and more like the model "multiversity." Moreover, the average student, despite his private anxieties and resentments, did not appear to be in the mood for any rebellion against the role assigned to him by the "multiversity." Nor did the faculty appear terribly upset about the consequences of the "multiversity"; they seemed rather to be enjoying the increased emoluments it was bringing them in the form of grants, consultation fees, and most important of all, freedom from teaching.

During the course of the free-speech struggle last fall, the students at the terrace learned that they did have resources available to fight back against the "multiversity." They were not yet reduced altogether to private and impotent grumblings. They learned how they could stake out an area of autonomy and take some of the initiative out of the hands of the administrators and managers.

When the issue of free speech was first raised, it did not seem that all the above sentiments would be brought to bear. It was after all a move not uncharacteristic of the old-fashioned university that precipitated the free-speech struggle. At the beginning of the fall semester the administration enforced an old but never used rule which had the effect of prohibiting the use of the campus by students for soliciting of funds and recruiting for political activities. Representatives of nineteen student political organizations then formed themselves as an ad-hoc group to press for a removal of these restrictions. So far there was nothing in this that suggested the beginning of a student rebellion. Student protest is accounted for by the theorist of the "multiversity." Indeed it is one of the characteristic talents of the new administrator-manager of the "multiversity" that he is able to contain and divert student protests so that they do not interfere with the efficient functioning of the university machine.

What did give a clue that this was more than the ordinary student protest was the refusal of the students to play their roles entirely according to those "administrative rules" which keep the university bureaucracy functioning smoothly. From the beginning the students showed a unique and surprising determination to assert their autonomy. Whenever the university administration attempted to use the "normal" channels as a means of diverting them, the students were ready to take the dispute outside those channels for a more direct confrontation with the administration. A unique quality of audacity marked this protest. *Life* magazine was forced to recognize it, with a slight tinge of awe, as a "Tough Campus Revolt."

This toughness showed itself almost immediately. The students' first response to the new administrative regulations was direct and simple. They ignored them. Taking the position that the restrictions were a violation of their constitutional rights, they left it to the administration to try to enforce them. They set up their tables on the campus and continued to recruit and collect money. When the administration tried to bring disciplinary action against five of the students who had been manning the tables, six hundred students signed statements saying that they, too, had been guilty of violating the rules. When the Dean summoned the five students to his office, three hundred showed up and demanded to be seen too.

Civil Disobedience

Finally the Dean announced that eight students had been suspended for various activities in protesting the new rules. The students again had a ready response. They set up their tables directly in front of the administration building. The administration replied by having one of those manning a table arrested and placed in a campus police car (he had gone limp and a car had to be summoned to take him away). At this point a group of students spontaneously threw themselves in front of the car and blocked its path. Soon

they were joined by hundreds of others and within an hour the police car was surrounded by a solid phalanx of one thousand bodies.

This spontaneous demonstration developed rapidly into a massive sit-in and rally around the police car that lasted thirty-two hours. As it grew and grew, student speakers mounted the embattled police car, using it as a podium from which to address the throng and state the demands the administration must meet to end the demonstration. At the end of the second day, five hundred helmeted police stood by with their night sticks, ready to wade in and disperse the students. Serious violence was averted only at the last minute as a settlement was reached between the student leaders and Clark Kerr. The crowd heard and approved the terms of the agreement and then dispersed voluntarily. Audacity had won the students a number of points. The suspensions of the eight leaders would be reviewed by a faculty committee, the university agreed not to press charges against the arrested student, and the rules on political activity would be submitted to a study committee on which students would be represented.

Much was learned during this first skirmish with the administration: the students realized that audacity and directness could move the bureaucracy where normal channels failed. Now the students turned to organizing themselves more effectively. The ad-hoc group of the political organizations was turned officially into the Free Speech Movement, and an executive committee of fifty and a steering committee of twelve were set up. Intensive organizing among the student body was conducted to gather more support, and new groups were urged to send representatives to the movement (or F.S.M., as it was now generally called). An F.S.M. Newsletter was published and leaflets by the score were put out to explain F.S.M.'s position and the latest developments to the student body. A massive and well documented report was put together by graduate students, tracing the history of past administration attempts to limit student political rights.

After six weeks of student petitions, testimony at committees, and more rallies and demonstrations, the administration bent a little more. The eight suspended students were reinstated and the ban on soliciting and recruiting for political action was lifted. One major point remained at issue, however. The university now reserved the right to discipline individuals and organizations for advocacy on the campus of illegal acts off the campus (presumably such acts as civil-rights sit-ins). This was an extremely important point, for the students were generally of the opinion that the original restrictions had been imposed as a result of pressures from local business interests, particularly William Knowland's *Oakland Tribune*, which were anxious to see the Berkeley campus cut off as a source for militant civil-rights activities.

At this point, however, the F.S.M. was split on tactics for the first time. Many were for resuming the dramatic direct-action methods used earlier in the term. Others felt that the issues were not clear-cut enough to demand

such a course. As the F.S.M. floundered, the administration gave it back its *raison d'être*. The administration now decided that it was going to bring disciplinary action against four of the student leaders for their actions during the demonstrations around the police car some two months before. This was seen by the students as nothing less than an attempt to break the movement by cutting off its head.

Thus on December 2nd, over one thousand students marched into the administration building, taking over all four of its floors. They announced that they were prepared to sit there until the administration had called off its action against their leaders. In the meantime, the powerful organization of graduate students, which had been formed during the free-speech struggle, announced its intention to call a university-wide strike in a few days in support of the F.S.M. demands.

It is significant that the next act in the steadily escalating crisis came not from any campus official, but from the Governor of the State, Pat Brown. He ordered the arrests of the students. This was done not because any clear breach of the peace had occurred (the students were orderly and disciplined and were not blocking any of the building's entrances or pathways), but essentially as a result of the incessant pressures of the press and elements in the community who saw in the student rebellion a threat to their own well-being. The next morning, with hundreds of state troopers surrounding the administration building and refusing even to allow any faculty members inside to observe the arrests, Clark Kerr held a press conference to support the Governor's action for the maintenance of Law and Order. The "multiversity" as a service center for society had now been confirmed in a rather ironic and twisted way—the administrator had become spokesman and messenger for the police power of the state.

Mario Savio

On leading the students into the administration building the day before, Mario Savio, the leader of F.S.M., had uttered the classic words of the movement:

There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part; you can't even tacitly take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free the machine will be prevented from working at all.

This was a sentiment that now seemed to be shared by a majority of the student body, to whom the operation of the machine was now revealed as extremely odious. No longer was it merely a question of certain administrative rules that were at issue, but the whole stumbling and faceless bureaucracy that had stood by as political pressures forced a virtual police occupation of the campus.

So the students did indeed bring the machine to a grinding halt. A strike plan went into effect immedi-

ately and scores of picket lines were thrown around the classroom buildings. Many faculty members now supported the strike. A philosophy professor announced to the students gathered at a rally that he was calling off all his classes, as he could not in conscience conduct classes while the campus was under police occupation.

Most of the education that took place in the next few days came outside the classrooms, in the innumerable knots and crowds of students and faculty that sprang up everywhere on the campus. They argued and discussed the nature of democracy, the rule of law, and civil disobedience. The F.S.M. organized classes off the campus at their "Free University of California." It was truly an amazing scene. Nothing less than a revolution, though a gentle one, seemed to be taking place.

In the meantime, the administration was acting characteristically. President Kerr announced that he was going off to Chicago on business—but then stayed on the campus to negotiate and mediate quietly behind the scenes. Sensing the enormity of the crisis, Kerr decided to go before the students on the third day of the strike; it was the first time he had addressed the students directly during the whole dispute.

A special university convocation was called to hear Kerr present a compromise proposal for ending the dispute, which had been drawn up by the department chairmen. The convocation was held at the university's outdoor Greek Theatre; it was an appropriate setting for a drama that was farce and tragedy all at the same time. Eighteen thousand members of the university community filed into the theatre as in some feudal assembly, each to his appointed place: first the students in the rear, then the faculty up closer to the stage, then the Department Chairmen seated up on both sides of the stage; finally the President himself made his appearance and took a seat in the center of the stage. It was a processional that had been followed before and is common practice on most university campuses. But coming at a time when the students had brought the university machinery to a halt, it must have seemed like the final absurdity of the administrative ethos.

The students whose action had forced the calling of the convocation were not to be allowed representation. Both the leaders of the F.S.M. and the President of the Student Government had asked to be allowed to speak and were denied. President Kerr read his "peace plan" without even mentioning the existence of the F.S.M. It was as if to dramatize the missing factor that Mario Savio walked up on the stage and toward the microphone as the chairman was announcing that the meeting was adjourned. Before Savio could speak, two campus policemen rushed up from behind and dragged him bodily from the stage. To the thousands of students who witnessed this incident and roared their disapproval, it was another outrageous example of the crudities that the processes of the "multiversity" lead to.

Clark Kerr's peace plan only alienated the students further. He had learned nothing from the experiences

of the past few months and seemed incapable of leading or teaching in such a situation. The strike went on, and was ended only the next day when the Academic Senate voted overwhelmingly to support almost all the demands of the students and pledged to work for their adoption by the Board of Regents. The students now put away their picket signs, stirred and exhilarated by the support they had received from the faculty and the prospect of total victory.

The issue of political expression at the campus is, at the time of writing, not yet settled. The regents of the State of California are a collection of all the practicality that the leaders of the state's political and economic system have to offer. Perhaps it ought not to have been expected that they would deal with a set of requests formulated under the pressures of a student rebellion, as a question of principle. At their first meeting on the subject they tried to fob-off all the parties concerned. To the citizens of the state, they pledged their determination to preserve Law and Order on the campus; to the students, they pledged their devotion to the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Finally there were more committees set up to study the problems of political advocacy on the campus.

Whatever the final outcome, it is clear that the meaning of these events lie deeper than the use of the Berkeley campus for political activity. The students themselves, slightly amazed at the proportions of the movement they had touched off, also looked about for meanings.

The Search for Community

It was widely understood that some deeper disenchantment lay behind the free-speech fight. A campus minister had written to the school newspaper that he saw behind the student rebellion a reaction to "the modern isolation and alienation of the spirit" and that the students were trying to restore a lost sense of "community." "Alienation" and "community"; these words were much heard from the students during their rallies and demonstrations. The computer, too, somehow became a symbol of the "system" that the students were objecting to. "Are you a student or an I.B.M. card?" Thus read one of the F.S.M. leaflets urging students to support the strike.

Yet this revolt was not just a blind lashing out at the machine—a modern Luddite rebellion. The I.B.M. card and "the bureaucracy" were symbols, but behind the symbols stood men. And among the students there was a widespread feeling that the men who ran the system here at Berkeley, those who rationalized it and those who spoke for it, had betrayed them. That these men spoke with the rhetoric of sophisticated liberalism was only more appalling. Here on the campus, Clark Kerr and others like him were bowing to and abetting all the forces of mindless bureaucracy and alienation. One must admit that even Clark Kerr had known and spoken of the alienation of students. In his Godkin Lectures he had recognized that the student was often

confused and lonely and without purpose, in the "Knowledge Factory." But for Kerr, the source of this alienation lay not with any policies of men, nor with any institution. Like the "multiversity" itself, alienation was an immutable, inevitable consequence of the growing complexity of modern society.

Thus Kerr and many other observers could not fully understand the nature of this revolt against the university administration and against Kerr himself. Were not all the rallies and demonstrations and sit-ins slightly irrational, like tilting against history itself? Sometimes, to Kerr and others, these events, being irrational and inexplicable, had to have some sinister force behind them. Thus Kerr at one point spoke of outside agitators, Maoists, Castroites and other such devils stirring up the students. A professor at the university, Lewis Feuer, in an article* which otherwise showed understanding of the terrible effects of the "multiversity" also had to explain much of the student revolt as being instigated by a collection of Maoist-beatnik-sexual libertine pseudo-students who were all looking for some synthetic revolution to make up for the emptiness which they felt in their lives. Finally, everyone spoke of the unreasonableness of the students. They were rejecting all the "normal channels" for settling disputes; they showed a contempt for Law and Order. They were, according to Clark Kerr, attempting to disrupt the orderly processes of the university and impose anarchy on the campus.

To the students however all the talk about "reasonableness," "orderly processes" and "normal channels" seemed but a facade behind which a "higher irrationality" was being practiced by the administrators, the bureaucrats and the politicians. These men defined "orderly processes" and "reasonableness" as all that was consistent with the on-going system. To Clark Kerr, for example, it was presumably "reasonable" that the university engage in contracted research for the Defense Department, "reasonable" for the university to allow its facilities to be used by the Marine Corps to recruit students, but it was "unreasonable" for the students to recruit civil-rights workers to disrupt the flow of commerce in the outside community.

Behind all the talk of "orderly processes" was a demand that the students accommodate themselves to a style of protest that would have frozen them to the very administrative apparatus that they were trying to change. It was this administrative style that was as much a source of the students' alienation as "the complexity of modern society." Correspondingly, it was the style of the student protest that most upset so many of the important people of the state and the university. The students had set up their own counter-community, independent of the university system. Their own stand-

ards of justification prevailed and they kept their own counsel, not paying too much attention to the pleas for "realistic" approaches that came from their elders, many of whom were jaded ex-radicals.

In acting as they did the students achieved some unique results. They took the first genuine steps toward that sense of community everybody was always vainly searching for. It was widely remarked that there was more face-to-face communication among the faculty and between faculty and students during the days of the strike than there had ever been before. The classroom had been replaced by the open and unstructured forum. In those innumerable spontaneous sessions between professors and students, important educational experiences unfolded. There was a give and take and an openness that could not have occurred in the classroom. The professors faced the students without their academic regalia, without their grade books, without the prospects of giving or withholding a recommendation. There was much talk during those days of a "Free University of California." Unlike Clark Kerr's "multiversity" it was an idea and a model of a future university that *the students* would have liked to create and participate in—one that would more often act in opposition to the powers-that-be in the society outside.

In all this a new mood seemed to grip the students. The "multiversity," with all its horrendous consequences, was not historically inevitable as the technological determinists were continuously announcing, but would come because men with power abetted it. The new technology should have brought with it greater opportunities for community and more meaningful purpose in life. The problem was how to make those in power and in the entrenched bureaucracy use those opportunities for decent purposes. To bring such pressure, it became necessary to shake up the bureaucrats and dramatize the gap between them and the students by creating new and audacious styles of protest.

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One does not wish to exaggerate or romanticize what the students at Berkeley did. The "multiversity" is still omnipresent and students must go back and play by its rules. Yet it must not be forgotten that behind the facade of orderly and pleasant campuses there are deep currents of unrest and dissatisfaction. White, middle-class students in the North also need a liberation movement, for they have no community in which they exercise citizenship. They feel imprisoned and oppressed by a smiling and genial bureaucracy.

The issues at Berkeley are deeper than civil rights and civil liberties. These issues merely provided the form of this first serious revolt against modern liberal bureaucracy. When and if the "pocket" problems of civil rights and poverty are solved, this society will still have to deal with a crisis that is more basic to the lives of most of its citizens. It is this that concerns the students at Berkeley, and in response to that crisis they created an important little wedge against the creeping totalitarianism that threatens all of us.

*"Rebellion at Berkeley," *The New Leader*, December 21, 1964. Other articles dealing with these events include "Paul Goodman on the Berkeley Riots," *New York Review of Books*, January 14, 1965; and "The Student Riots at Berkeley: Dissent in the Multiversity," by Joseph Paff et al., *The Activist*, January 1965.