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NEWS AND COMMENT

Crisis at Berkeley: (II) The Second Front

A few months after the student uprising last December, it appeared that the University of California had resolved some of its problems and would return to normal pursuits. At the beginning of March, the Berkeley campus appeared pacified. Many people, to be sure, particularly in the administration, felt that the fall's events had seriously eroded the regard in which the people of California held the university, and that the damage to fund-raising, appropriations, and the university's general reputation was likely to be irreparable. Many others, however, among both faculty and students, felt that the crisis had been productive, not only in affirming a principle of political freedom but in refreshing an academic atmosphere that some felt had gone somewhat stale. It was common, in interviews with students, to hear variants of the sentiment expressed by one undergraduate involved with the Free Speech Movement, who commented, "That was the first time I felt that faculty members took students seriously." Many faculty members seemed almost grateful to the students for having jogged their political consciences. "We had a lot to learn from them," one physicist remarked, and several faculty members expressed views similar to that of the sociologist who stated that he was "deeply impressed by the earnestness, dedication, and basic moral enlightenment" of the students he encountered. As for the administration, many tensions remained, but Acting Chancellor Martin Meyerson was proving almost magically popular, gaining the confidence of students and faculty alike, not only for his liberal approach to the problem of campus politics but for his interest in educational reform.

Then came the cataclysm. Although the obscenity controversy has been treated as a major demonstration, the key episodes actually involved only nine individuals, only three of whom were students. A young boy, a nonstudent, sat on the steps of the student union one day holding a placard containing an obscene word. When he was turned over to the police, a handful of his acquaintances (students and nonstudents) set up tables to collect money for his defense, marking the tables with signs saying "F. . . Defense Fund," and making speeches using the word. When they too were arrested, still another boy became involved, reading to the police from the last page and a half of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (in which the word occurs several times), a work which is protected by court decision and is further sanitized by a preface by Berkeley English professor Mark Schorer. This boy was arrested also, and his copy of *Lady Chatterley* temporarily confiscated.

On the campus, the events provoked little response. There was little enthusiasm for the issue, little inclination among either students or faculty to defend the obscenity, and almost no objection as the administration prepared to initiate disciplinary proceedings. Elsewhere in the state, however, in Sacramento, within the Regents, among alumni, and within the population generally, there were serious reverberations. "Public opinion" is usually a tricky and amorphous thing to measure, but in this case there could be no doubt: it turned against Berkeley with incredible passion.

Why the reaction was so severe is by no means certain. One reason is that, although many students take a fairly relaxed view of obscenity, it makes many adults apoplectic. As the *Lady Chatterley* decision suggests, the students are products of a time when public standards of morality are very much in flux. They are not really sure what is allowed and what isn't, and they take an experimental view of trying to find out. Many adults, on the other hand, grew up in a period when obscenity was confined to the barracks, and are genuinely alarmed to see it invading the ivied halls. The rising political fervor of the Berkeley students had been troubling enough, and contributed to an uneasiness in the relations between the university and the outside community that had been deepening even before the Free Speech Movement came along to exacerbate it. But to many influential Californians the obscenity incident—quickly dubbed the Filthy Speech Movement—seemed the final step on the road to anarchy and depravity. Attacks on the university from outsiders became so hysterical, pressures on the administration for arbitrary action against the offending students so intense, that, as President Kerr described it in an interview with *Science*, "the whole thing just burst open."

"There were tensions before," Kerr commented. "Underneath the great public support for university expansion under the master plan there were always political resentments. On a wide variety of issues, running from the lifting of the ban on Communist speakers to the abolition of compulsory ROTC, we were usually able to persuade the Regents to go along—usually on the argument that it was best for the university. But the sit-ins and the strike really provoked the public, and the

obscenity issue was simply the last straw. I believed it when I argued that giving the students freedom would lead them to act responsibly," he concluded, "and it has been a great personal disappointment to me that it didn't."

Why Kerr resigned, taking Meyerson with him, is a question that would require the skills of an army of mind-readers and detectives to answer fully. Pique and exhaustion seem the two most probable motives. Reports of a single ultimatum by the Chairman of the Board of Regents have been explicitly denied by the President, albeit in a rather ambiguous way. "It wasn't just Regent [Edward W.] Carter," he says; "that is entirely unfair. It was more than one person and more than just one thing." In publicly explaining his resignation, Kerr appeared to align himself with the outsiders who saw the university sliding into moral chaos, stating that his action was an attempt to forestall "the continuing and destructive degradation of freedom into license" on the Berkeley campus. He did not, however, explain why he thought his resignation would have that effect.

However complex and personal the motives for Kerr's resignation, one thing it does not appear to have been was a bid for support or a power play aimed at strengthening the administration's hand in dealing with the Regents. Superficially, it appeared at first to have had that result. The Berkeley faculty, eager to keep Martin Meyerson, whom they like, and to prevent the Regents from installing as Kerr's successor a conservative "man on horseback" who would overturn what many take to be the victories of the fall (and for about as many other reasons as there are members of the faculty), overcame their long-standing mistrust of the president and voted a resolution of unmistakably qualified support. The faculties and chancellors of the other campuses all chorused their support without reservation. Even the Regents, among whom disapproval of the administration appeared to be at its highest peak, agreed after a long and reportedly stormy secret session that it would be best for the university if Kerr and Meyerson would stay on, at least temporarily.

The net result of the resignations, nonetheless, was not to strengthen the administration but to leave it even more vulnerable. "A university President has very few weapons," one of Kerr's subordinates observed recently, "and one of them is threatening to resign. It's the nuclear bomb of University politics. When that threat is used up, he has very little left." At this stage it appears to most observers that Kerr's position has become untenable and that he is unlikely to remain in office very long. Whether Meyerson will remain depends in part on whether the Regents are persuaded that the campus can be stabilized in what they regard as an appropriately decorous fashion under his rule.

The Regents

It is a mistake to characterize the Regents either sociologically or politically as a united bloc. It is true that the overall impression is one of business domination: more than half of the 24 Regents have business connections that read like a who's who of the power elite. "We have here," said a student publication analyzing the assorted jobs and directorships of the individuals they termed the "business regents," "the Bank of America, three other big banks, and a few smaller ones; two oil companies; three aircraft manufacturers; two shipping lines, two airlines, a trucking line and two railways; two giant utilities; several chain stores; two publishing empires; half of the [California] food-packing industry; and hundreds of thousands of acres of irrigated farmland." The rest, however, are lawyers, politicians, bureaucrats, and civic leaders with no spectacular personal wealth. Eight of the Regents are ex officio members, serving for the duration of their terms in various state offices, but having full voting powers. The others are appointed by the Governor for staggered terms of 16 years.

Among the things that most of the Regents do seem to have in common is a total lack of professional association with education. Except for Clark Kerr and state superintendent of public instruction Max Rafferty (both ex officio members), only one Regent has had experience in education outside of being a student. The exception is Donald McLaughlin, an engineer who held academic posts at Harvard and California, and is now chairman of the Homestake Mining Company. To a certain extent the Regents seem to irritate faculty and student liberals simply by virtue of who they are, quite apart from what they do. As for their politics, there is no predictable consistency: some of the Democratic politicians and bureaucrats are known as conservatives, some of the millionaires as liberals. While individual Regents are by no means uniformly conservative, however, the intervention of the Board as a whole, and the attitudes of the most vociferous individual members, have always tended to be on the conservative side.

The power of the Regents in running the university is not easy to overstate. Formally it derives from a section of the state constitution awarding them "full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure compliance with the terms of the endowment of the University and the security of its funds." In practice it involves direct supervision of university affairs, from the broadest questions of social and educational policy to the narrowest matters of dormitory design and landscaping.

Both the style and the substance of the Regents' operations seem habitually to offend the rest of the university community. Procedurally they are autocratic, meeting in secret session and announcing their decisions by decree. In their view of the world the Regents are about as far removed from academia as Tsar Nicholas from the Bolsheviks. The psychological distance between the Regents and the Berkeley community can perhaps be better illustrated than expressed.

In the midst of the crisis over the resignations, to begin with a relatively minor example, a committee of Regents proposed a ruling that would have made employed students involved in sit-ins or strikes against the university subject to loss of jobs or dismissal—a move which would instantly have precipitated a major strike by the fledgling graduate student union. Individual Regents have threatened in evident seriousness that if Chancellor Meyerson fails to restore Berkeley to what they regard as a respectable state of political and social morality, they will step in and supervise campus discipline themselves. Others have suggested that they would rather see the Berkeley campus closed down altogether than permit what they regard as the present slide into decadence to go unchecked.

It is not clear whether a majority of the Regents recognize that almost any of these moves might be fatal to the University of California as a great institution, perhaps provoking the students to further acts of rebellion and almost certainly inducing large num-

bers of faculty to seek employment elsewhere. On the contrary, it appears likely that in their present mood some of the Regents would find the opportunity to transform the character of the Berkeley campus a welcome one. If the bearded, politically radical, but highly gifted students who flock to Berkeley were dismissed and replaced by the more collegiate clean-cut youths who seem to populate the Santa Barbara campus, for example, it is probable that the Regents, and many citizens of California, would be not distressed but relieved.

What the Regents and many adult Californians may fail to understand, however, is that there is a certain trade-off between the kind of student "beatniks" they dislike and the academic distinction of which they are so proud. It is mainly because of Berkeley that the university has been able to attract its dozen Nobel prizewinners to the faculty. It is mainly because of Berkeley that the university has finally surpassed Harvard in number of members of the National Academy of Sciences. The other university campuses are developing rapidly, building first-rate facilities and attracting excellent scholars. They appear to have promising futures. But it is no secret that at this stage it is only Berkeley that has placed the university as a whole in a position of leadership in American higher education. Maintaining that distinction will take more than money; it will take the self-restraint necessary to permit the academic community a major role in shaping its own affairs, even when it makes choices that upset or scandalize the public. At this moment it is not at all clear that the majority of Californians think the result is worth the price. Many of the state's needs in agriculture, commerce, and industry can be nearly as effectively serviced by a mediocre university as by an excellent one. Many California citizens would rather see the university be "respectable" than great.

The "Last Hope"?

Whether the Regents can be dissuaded from a course which would lead them either dramatically (by one of the spectacularly provocative acts now being contemplated) or subtly (by adjustments in the university budget) to "reform" the Berkeley campus is not at all certain. One of the casualties of the loss of confidence between the Regents and President Kerr is that few individuals seem to have much influence with the Regents. And the Regents seem to have the problem of all autocrats—that the advisers in whom they do have confidence tend to tell them what they want to hear. One possible exception is a staff report to a committee of Regents now in preparation. The committee itself, which was set up to study the basic causes of unrest at the university, is composed of Regents. The staff, however, which has been doing most of the work, is an independent one, composed of lawyers, sociologists, and graduate students, and its report may serve to confront the Regents with some unpleasant truths they would otherwise like to avoid. At least one high official of the university regards the committee report as the "last hope" of saving the university, and several members of the faculty appear to view it the same way. How the Regents themselves will react, however, remains the central mystery.

Working against the development of a more liberal attitude on the part of the Regents is the attitude of the legislature, which appears increasingly delirious. Bits and pieces of evidence of what they regard as the unspeakable depravity of the Berkeley students and faculty keep falling into their hands and provoke them to attacks on the university as a whole. Dozens of legislators are reported to have entertained themselves one afternoon by listening to tapes of speeches made by students during the incident that provoked the obscenity controversy. One member pounced on a student pamphlet advocating marijuana as if he thought it proved the student body consisted of 27,000 confirmed addicts. Other individuals have been reaching into the Berkeley campus as if it were a hatful of rabbits, pulling out little symptoms of iniquity for display to the public. In recent weeks they have discovered (i) that a biochemistry professor asked an optional question about civil disobedience on an exam last semester; (ii) that FSM leader Mario Savio was employed as a reader by the philosophy department; and (iii) that another member of the science faculty was a former Communist youth organizer. All of these situations had their explanations—the biochemist felt that students who hadn't learned much biochemistry because of the Free Speech Movement might as well be given a chance to demonstrate whether they had learned anything else; Savio had a reputation as a good reader; and the university knew all about the Communist background of its employee. But all the incidents were used by politicians to make the headlines and further exacerbate public outrage against the university.

More serious than the incursions of individual legislators is the possibility of action taken by the legislature as a whole. So far, moves to begin a general legislative inquiry have been held off. But the legislature is reported to be dragging its feet on matters of great importance to the university—such as an urgent request by President Kerr for faculty salary increases. And a variety of new proposals have been introduced, all of which—regardless of merit—signal the demise of the tradition of "keeping the University out of politics."

Some of the legislative proposals might actually be beneficial. One, which many at the university would probably favor, calls for selection of the Regents by the faculty, not by the Governor. Another, which has fairly wide support from liberal and conservative legislators alike, calls for the Regents to cease conducting their business in secret session and to open their meetings to the public. Other proposals might easily prove disastrous. One calls for the expulsion of the 800 or so students arrested in the December sit-in, if they are found guilty by the court. Another would give the legislature, rather than the Regents, power to regulate discipline of both students and faculty members.

The importance of the legislative proposals is not so much in their substance as in the fact that passage of any one of them could lead to revolutionary change in the governance of the university. It may be that a revolutionary change is just what is needed. But whether that change should consist of replacing regental government by legislative government is another question entirely. And, in any event, such a decision should be taken on its merits and not be allowed to slip through as a by-product of legislative rage at particular events on the Berkeley campus. At this stage it is not at all certain that the university has enough responsible friends in the legislature to beat down the proposals that threaten it.

"Why Berkeley?"

A question that appears to be on the mind of every college president in the country today is, "Why Berkeley?" They have good reason to worry, for although there were a number of special circumstances affecting the nature

of the Berkeley revolt, the special circumstances may not have been the decisive ones. It is true that relatively few large urban universities are as physically compact as the Berkeley campus, and few have an open plaza daily traversed by so many students or so inviting for political rallies. Few universities have quite so many part-time, occasional, or nonstudents identifying quite so closely with the campus. Relatively few universities have student political leaders quite so radical, or a student body quite so willing to be drawn into a protracted political struggle. Perhaps few universities have administrations that could be made to appear quite so intransigent as the administration at California. But almost all universities have a rising number of student radicals willing to confront their administrations with issues and tactics similar to those which the Free Speech Movement posed for Berkeley. And almost all universities, public and private, have a history of tension with their neighbors or their benefactors that, if provoked, could explode in similar fashion. In the past few months there have been smaller-scale student rebellions in New York (at St. John's and Brooklyn), at Yale, at Kansas, and in several other universities across the country. There are certain to be more. Unless ways are found of dealing with them—refraining from obstructing the students' rising concern for civil rights and liberties, and perhaps giving them an increased role in formulating the rules governing their universities—more "Berkeleys" could conceivably arise.

At Berkeley now, efforts are being made to recover the situation and stabilize the campus. After the December sit-ins the students were allowed almost unrestricted political freedom, and many people feel that the apparent absence of rules was responsible for encouraging the experiment with obscenity. Chancellor Meyerson appears to be trying to restore orderliness, even at the risk of his initial popularity with faculty and students. He has issued new rules redefining the limits of political activity and restricting the degree to which nonstudents will be allowed to participate. The new rules may restrain the tempo and alter the character of campus politics somewhat, without provoking outright defiance on the part of the students. What nobody can say for sure is whether the damage to the university community and to its relations with the state is already irrreversible.

—ELINOR LANGER

Oceanography: House Subcommittee Encourages Use of Merchant Ships To Gather Data on the High Seas

The recently released record of a morning's hearings before a House oceanography subcommittee reveals an unusual example of persistence by a congressional committee in advocating a particular mode of research and a novel instance of congressional staff members serving as observers and participants in a scientific enterprise.

Titled "Oceanography—Ships of Opportunity,"* the hearings before the oceanography subcommittee of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee dealt with a project designed to show whether the American merchant marine fleet can be used to gather oceanographic data without hindrance to normal operation of the vessels.

The hearings, held 22 January, were cast in the form of a seminar to discuss what subcommittee chairman Alton Lennon (D–N.C.) called an "interesting experiment" conducted last fall. Under review was a voyage of the merchantman S.S. *Java Mail* across the North Pacific, which Lennon describes as an attempt "to determine whether or not oceanographic data could be collected for merchant ships on a truly not-to-interfere basis."

Called Project Neptune—Pacific, the effort was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research with the collaboration of the Naval Missile Center at Point Magu, Calif. (which provided a mobile lab and scientific personnel), the General Motors Research Laboratories at Santa Barbara, and the American Mail Lines, Ltd., of Seattle. The committee appears to have acted as a kind of broker in the project by helping to bring the principals together.

The oceanography subcommittee was formed in 1959 at a time when the oceanography budget was expanding and congressional committees were vying for jurisdiction.

"Our subcommittee soon became interested," said Lennon, "in the possibility of the greater use of the merchant fleet for the collection of oceanographic data. The National Academy of Sciences Committee on Oceanography advised us that worldwide surveys, ocean surveys, were prime essentials to any concerted research program."

The subcommittee maintained its interest and looked for ways to learn whether the idea was feasible.

"The use of the S.S. *Java Mail* last fall was the test," said Lennon. "Committee staff members of our subcommittee participated to a rather large degree in an observatory capacity, and they advised our committee that this worked exceedingly well, and it proved the merit of this particular concept; that it showed the way to make a greater and immediate advance in our oceanographic programs by freeing our new, specialized oceanographic research ships to do advanced work while these existing 'ships of opportunity,' as we refer to them, collected the basic survey data."

A strong proponent of the ships-of-opportunity idea has been Sidney Galler, head of the biology branch of the Office of Naval Research, who has been interested in finding more efficient and less expensive means for obtaining bio-oceanographic data which the Navy needs.

The use of ships of opportunity for gathering scientific data actually has a history which dates back to the earliest days of the U.S. Navy. The Navy Oceanographic Office, for example, is running a 4-year program using Military Sea Transport Service ships to make bathythermograph readings. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries has been getting systematic records of seabird sightings from some commercial ships to gain information on the fisheries. Project Neptune was different in that an effort was made to determine whether much more extensive and sophisticated work could be done.

The voyage of the *Java Mail* covered 17 days in October, in which the ship traveled from Seattle to Yokohama and then to Hong Kong. On board were members of a four-man scientific party which included two Ph.D.'s, and also two committee staff members. They were John M. Drewry, an attorney who is chief counsel to the full committee, and Paul M. Bauer, consultant to the committee, an engineer who teaches earth sciences as an adjunct professor at American University in Washington. It is worth at least a footnote in the annals of Congress-science relations that the two staff members went along and then gave the committee their assessment of the project.

The original aim of Project Neptune –Pacific was simply to test equipment and procedures and to determine whether the activities of the oceanographers would create problems with the

* Copies of the hearings (Serial No. 89–1) may be obtained from the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.