

Aftermath of the Berkeley Revolt

ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS I have been asked by friends of mine visiting the Berkeley campus: "Why is Berkeley so dead politically nowadays? Is it because of LSD?"

Time recently carried an article commenting upon the big change from a more approving point of view: ". . . while sit-in protests over draft-deferment tests swept Chicago, Wisconsin, CCNY and Stanford, Berkeley students kept their cool, and the campus moved hopefully toward creation of a cohesive community." (July 1 1966)

LSD is not responsible; the few people who have taken up psychedelics as a religion were never more than casual devotees of politics. As for marijuana, which is much more widespread than LSD, it has had about the same effect on the student movement as beer has had on the labor movement. But there is no denying that during the past six months or more we have been *figuratively* drugged. Here are some of the symptoms:

- Ten thousand people attended the Vietnam Day Committee teach-in in May, 1965, and fifteen thousand people joined the VDC anti-war march in October of that year. But in March, 1966, when Arthur Goldberg was presented with an honorary degree, less than a thousand students walked out in protest; and only five hundred people attended the VDC teach-in of May, 1966.
- In the Fall of 1964, the University Administration was never able to take disciplinary action against students for violating campus regulations on political activity. Each time it tried, it provoked massive demonstrations of solidarity. (The famous Sproul Hall sit-in was the FSM's response to the Administration's attempt to summon four students to a disciplinary hearing.) Yet in the Spring of 1966, the Administration succeeded in expelling three students and disciplining in lesser ways a score of others, with hardly a ripple of protest.
- In campus elections last Fall, the left-wing party SLATE won a heavy majority in the convention charged with drafting a new constitution for the student government. In the Spring, when the draft constitution was ready, the Chancellor declared his opposition to it and a student referendum voted it down.

Chancellor Roger Heyns is gratified with what he has achieved, but he recognizes that the Berkeley campus is far from tamed. As long as the regular noon rallies on the Sproul Hall steps continue to be held, the specter of radical Berkeley will haunt not only Chancellor Heyns but the entire State of California as well. Heyns has taken preliminary steps toward abolishing the Sproul Hall rallies, but the battle is hardly joined and the outcome far from certain. Nevertheless, that Heyns could even propose "taking away the steps" shows how much the mood at Berkeley has changed.

The Sproul Hall rallies began during the Free Speech Movement, when students set up sound equipment on the steps without ever bothering to ask permission. Chancellor Edward Strong was powerless to prevent these "illegal" rallies. In January, 1965, the new regime of Chancellor Meyerson began by *providing* sound equipment, at University expense, for the rallies. By the time Chancellor Heyns took office last Fall, the rallies were as much a part of

traditional University life as were Commencement exercises. The "fight for the steps" will probably be postponed until after November (Berkeley is one of the biggest issues in the gubernatorial race, and Heyns does not want to create a messy situation for Reagan to exploit); but the very fact that it is next on the agenda shows how far Berkeley has come from the heady days of December, 1964, when professors stood on the steps of Sproul Hall and told thousands of assembled students that power was now in their hands.

Despite mutterings that "we've lost everything we fought for," there remain very real gains. The current Administration does not dare to challenge the main principle for which the FSM fought, namely that "the University shall not regulate the content of expression." In attempting to encourage the expression of moderate ideas ("responsible dissent") and discourage the expression of radical ideas ("protest for its own sake"), the Administration has had to play at the very indirect and awkward game of manipulating the rules concerning the *time, place and manner* of expression.

Moreover, Berkeley retains a spirit of radical opposition which is immediately apparent to any visitor. The town blooms with such posters and stickers as "MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR" and "Support Your Local Anarchist." In addition to the many left-wing sects, which prosper in Berkeley as much as anywhere, there are a whole set of "movement" institutions: *The Berkeley Barb*, an eight page weekly with circulation of 8,000; the Berkeley Free Press, a fully-equipped offset print shop; the Free University of Berkeley, a smaller version of the Free University of New York; the Council for Justice, which provides legal aid for "movement" cases that the ACLU is reluctant to handle; the Better Berkeley Committee, whose monitors patrol the police force; and, of course, the usual left-wing coffee houses and bookstores. The influence of these institutions is sometimes felt far beyond the campus area. The Delano grape strikers, three hundred miles away, get all their legal aid from staff provided by the Council for Justice. The leaflets distributed in Watts saying "Wanted For Murder: Parker The Cop" were printed at the Berkeley Free Press.

The radical *spirit* has held its own since the Free Speech Movement; in fact it has grown. The problem is that every attempt at radical *action* has failed.

TIME CREDITS THE LACK of any radical action to "the effective peacemaking of Chancellor Roger W. Heyns, . . . who was specifically—and desperately—hired last July to calm Berkeley's combatants."

A good many of the combatants themselves would agree with *Time's* analysis. Indeed, a certain mythology has grown up among the radical graduate students who congregate for coffee every day on The Terrace. They see Heyns as a brilliant but cold-blooded scientist who has manipulated Berkeley in accordance with theories he developed as a social psychologist at the University of Michigan. But the myth rests only on the fact that Heyn's published works are obscure and unread; upon examination, they turn out to be scanty and trivial. If Roger Heyns has any profound theories of social control, or of anything else, he has nowhere committed them to print.

Heyns is certainly not as stupid and bullheaded as his predecessor, Chancellor Strong, whom students called "the FSM's secret weapon." But neither is he so brilliant as to have tamed Berkeley single-handed; the pressure of events was on his side.

Roger Heyns was appointed Chancellor of the Berkeley campus at a time when both sides had fought each other to a standstill. The Free Speech Movement had been knocked off balance by the "dirty word crisis," and its energies had been severely drained by the trial of the 800 Sproul Hall sit-in defendants, which dragged on for three months. The Regents had suffered a complete failure of nerve. Their proposals for a new set of regulations on campus political activity had provoked so much verbal opposition, from faculty as well as students, that they backed off and decided not to make any campus rules at all. Instead they recruited Heyns and gave him virtually complete powers to run the campus as he saw fit. Since then they have pretty much kept their hands off Berkeley.

When Heyns began his administration, the Vietnam Day Committee was at the height of its power. The previous Spring it had held a teach-in on campus with 10,000 participants. During the Summer it had established itself as a going organization, and brought off the sensational troop-train demonstrations. It had set October 15-16, 1965 as the International Days of Protest, and was laying plans for massive civil disobedience at the Oakland Army Terminal. During Heyns's first weeks on campus, the VDC was holding open meetings in University classrooms to discuss the exact nature of its civil disobedience: whether to sit-in at the gates of the Army Terminal, or to broadcast appeals to the soldiers there to refuse to cooperate in the war effort. The VDC, moreover, was not even a campus organization in the strict sense; the representatives it sent to deal with Heyns included some full-time activists ("non-student agitators"). But Heyns had to grin and bear it, even to the point of saying on television that the VDC was a purely student group. When the VDC marched on October 15, it was 15,000 strong. No new Chancellor would be wise to stand in front of that. (The Oakland police *did* stand in front of the march and turned it around—but in those days their footing was a lot firmer than Roger Heyns's.)

After October 15, the VDC had shot its bolt. It had had its big march, and the war had not ended: now what? It held another march, on November 20, quite a bit smaller and less spirited than the first. The mystique of marching was gone; now one was merely walking five miles in order to hear some speeches.

DURING THE "PEACE OFFENSIVE" of December and January, the VDC held a series of meetings to discuss plans for actions to take when the bombing of North Vietnam began again. These inconclusive and half-hearted meetings revealed how few ideas the peace movement had. When the bombing did begin again, the week before the Spring Semester opened, the VDC decided on the spur of the moment to call a student strike for the first few days of classes. The chief argument against a student strike had been made many times before; since the University of California was not exactly a belligerent in the Vietnam war, it made no emotional sense to strike against *it*. Why walk out of a Comparative Literature class in protest against the war? The answer was that it was somehow immoral to listen to academic lectures while bombs were falling in Vietnam. But then, why come back to the lectures after three days? Why not drop out of school altogether? Despite its reservations, the VDC decided to go ahead with the strike anyway; after all, what else was there to do?

The strike was a dismal failure and the VDC, very much discredited, disappeared from the scene for two months. In April it tried to organize a street

demonstration in Berkeley in solidarity with the street demonstrations then going on in South Vietnam. As part of a clever plan to outflank the police, it decided not to apply for a permit for sound equipment, never dreaming that the ordinarily mild-mannered Berkeley police would use clubs to enforce a petty municipal ordinance. But the police broke up the rally by clubbing several dozen people (two were sent to the hospital with lacerated scalps). During the next few weeks many of the VDC's one-time friends denounced its decision not to apply for a permit as being "elitist and manipulative"—rather than just plain stupid, as it was.

At this point no one was interested in keeping the VDC alive except the Young Socialist Alliance, whose reasons had more to do with the national scene than the local. They held a dispirited little teach-in on May 21, the anniversary of the first Vietnam Day. The contrast was bewildering for Isaac Deutscher, who had flown in especially from London and expected to see a crowd at least as big as the 10,000 people who had heard him the year before. The five hundred or so people who heard him this time looked lost in the plaza.

For awhile it seemed that electoral action might make up for the feebleness of anti-war demonstrations. Toward the end of the Spring semester, many former VDC supporters devoted their energies to the campaign of Robert Scheer for the Democratic nomination in the Seventh Congressional District. Scheer waged a militant campaign, demanding United States withdrawal from Vietnam, and he was able to draw hundreds of enthusiastic precinct workers from the campus. In the primary election on June 7 he drew an impressive 45% of the vote against the liberal "dove" incumbent, Jeffrey Cohelan. Cohelan himself admitted that he won in spite of his position on the war rather than because of it.

But after its triumph of June 7, the Scheer campaign had shot its bolt, just as the VDC had after *its* triumph of October 15. Having run in the primary, Scheer is prohibited by law from having his name on the ballot as an independent in November; moreover, anyone who even *voted* in the primary is similarly disqualified. Although the Scheer campaign has continued in existence, renaming itself the "Community for New Politics," it is unwilling to run a write-in campaign or otherwise to intervene in the November general elections. So electoral action too has run its course, for the time being at least.

Despite the impasse of the anti-war organizations, anti-war *sentiment* is probably greater than ever before, both on the Berkeley campus and in the surrounding communities. But there seems to be no way to capitalize on this sentiment. Both demonstrations and electoral action have lost their glamorous promise; the next step—political strikes in war plants, mass refusals to fight by soldiers—is so far away as to be beyond realistic consideration. Hence Berkeley's ennui may in part be explained by its very success. Having already done what activists elsewhere dream of, we find ourselves with nothing left to do.

It is only within this broader context of impotence that the University Administration has been able to keep the campus itself quiet while nibbling away at the rights of student political organizations. The first Administrative crackdown came at the time of the VDC's greatest frustration, the week the "peace offensive" ended and the VDC called its ill-conceived strike. The Chancellor invoked an obscure regulation prohibiting any organization from holding two rallies in one week on the Sproul Hall steps, even when (as was the case)

no other organization wanted to use the steps. The VDC could not submit to the rule, for it was both humiliating and crippling; at the same time it could not effectively fight the rule, for it was a relatively technical matter with no great principle *visibly* at stake. Three students who spoke at the "illegal" second rally were placed on "non-academic probation" for the remainder of the semester, i.e., they were forbidden to take part in any student organizations. One of the three, Bettina Aptheker, declared publicly that she would not submit to the terms of probation, but at the moment of truth she too decided to comply.* No one accused the three of "selling out"; everyone recognized that if they stood firm they would stand alone. The only weapon the student movement ever had was the ultimate weapon—the willingness of hundreds or thousands to risk expulsion through mass civil disobedience. But this is a gross weapon that can be used only in situations—like the FSM—where survival is felt to be at stake. Because of the very success of the FSM, the Chancellor was careful to wage only limited war on the student organizations, escalating slowly and cautiously. There was nothing to do but take it.

During the semester the Chancellor continued to nibble away, forbidding student organizations to have non-students as members, appointing a policeman as an assistant dean, and proclaiming his right to prohibit "obscene" films from being shown on campus. At every step there were student radicals who grumbled, threatened and denounced, at one point even going so far as deliberately to violate certain regulations and getting expelled for their pains. But it all seemed so petty, compared not only to what was happening in Vietnam but even to what had happened during the FSM. It was not hard for the Chancellor to make it appear that refractory students were motivated simply by a desire to make trouble for its own sake.

ON ONE OCCASION, however, the guerrilla skirmishes on campus seemed to converge both with the war in Vietnam and with the highest questions of academic honor. U.N. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg had been invited to receive an honorary degree as the highlight of the University's Charter Day ceremonies on March 25, which happened also to be an International Day of Protest. It seemed the perfect occasion for a dramatic antiwar protest.

As it happened, the VDC's morale and prestige were at that time so low that it felt incapable of preparing anything for March 25. A new group, the Peace/Rights Organizing Committee, came into existence as an organization both for defending students rights and for launching anti-war actions.

One half of P/ROC made plans for a demonstration against Goldberg while the other half probed the Chancellor through deliberate violations of the campus rules pertaining to non-students in student organizations. Only those with organizational experience could understand how debilitating these rules were for student organizations. The great majority of students didn't want to be drawn into an apparently unnecessary conflict with the Administration, and suspected P/ROC of going out of its way to pick a fight. The suspicion of P/ROC carried over into its anti-Goldberg demonstration. Although P/ROC maintained that it merely intended to have students carry anti-war signs with

* Another, Susan Stein, found the terms of probation so humiliating that a few weeks later she changed her mind and announced that she would no longer comply. As expected, she was expelled.

them into the Greek Theater and display them during the ceremony, it was widely believed that the P/ROC leadership had secret plans for something outrageous.

These mixed feelings were displayed dramatically at a rally P/ROC held just before the ceremonies. Thousands of students came to pick up the picket signs P/ROC had printed and to hear anti-war speeches. Yet when a P/ROC member who had been cited for violating campus rules tried to make a speech appealing to his fellow demonstrators for support, he was hissed. An hour later, many of these same sign-carrying demonstrators gave a standing ovation to Heyns's speech in the Greek Theater, despite the fact that only twenty-four hours earlier Heyns had still not decided whether to allow picket signs in the Greek Theater or to keep them out by force. At the moment Goldberg came forward to receive his degree, only five hundred or so students walked out. Several thousand sign carriers felt they should stay and give Goldberg a hearing.

The demonstration in the Greek Theater might have been a good deal more impressive if Heyns had not deliberately undercut it by persuading Goldberg to take part in a debate later the same day under the genteel auspices of the Faculty Peace Committee. In the last few days before March 25, Faculty Peace Committee spokesmen had urged students not to participate in any Greek Theater demonstration; the real confrontation, they said, would take place afterward at the debate.

In fact, however, there was no confrontation. The Faculty Peace Committee had chosen as its speaker Franz Schurmann, who is very well-informed and scholarly, but has no gift for extemporaneous speaking. Goldberg presented the government's case in its crudest, most sloganized form; instead of exposing what Goldberg had said, Schurmann read a prepared speech word-for-word. As a standing vote revealed, at least 90% of the 7,000 people in the audience opposed government policy; they had to listen in complete silence (the ground rules set up by the Faculty Peace Committee forbade both applause and boos) while Schurmann let Goldberg's most outrageous statements go unchallenged. All told, Goldberg got his honorary degree very cheap.

The point is not only that Heyns managed to undercut the Greek Theater demonstration, but that he felt he had to. Goldberg agreed to appear at the debate only because Heyns feared there might otherwise be a riot in the Greek Theater. Despite the apparent calm, Berkeley has a tremendous amount of frustrated radical sentiment; the Chancellor's job is to make sure that it has no opportunities for an outlet.

The triumphant *Time* article on Berkeley quotes Heyns as saying Berkeley "will continue to be a place of tensions arising from the vigorous testing of ideas, some of which will strike sparks." It sums up as follows: "But having learned how to fight fire, Roger Heyns does not fear sparks."

In fact, however, Roger Heyns has never had any experience fighting a real fire, and he has every reason to fear sparks. Berkeley is still composed of highly flammable political material, capable of being ignited at any time by the spark of some compelling program for radical action.

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Negro Retaliatory Violence In the Twentieth Century

FOR MOST AMERICANS the increasingly overt talk of retaliatory violence among Negro militants, and the outbreaks in the urban ghettos over the past three years, signify something new and different in the history of Negro protest. Actually, retaliatory violence has never been entirely absent from Negro thinking. Moreover, advocacy of retaliatory violence, and actual instances of it, have tended to increase during periods of heightened Negro protest activity.

Thus, the past decade of rising Negro militancy has been no stranger to the advocacy of retaliatory violence. For example, as far back as 1949, Robert F. Williams, at the time president of the Monroe, North Carolina branch of the NAACP, came to public attention when the Union County Superior Court acquitted two white men of brutal assaults on two Negro women, but sentenced a mentally retarded Negro to imprisonment as a result of an argument he had with a white woman. Williams angrily told a UPI reporter: "We cannot take these people who do us injustice to the court, and it becomes necessary to punish them ourselves. . . . If it's necessary to stop lynching with lynching, then we must be willing to resort to that method." The NAACP dismissed Williams as branch president, but he remained a leader of Monroe's working-class Negroes, who for several years had been using guns to protect their homes from white klansmen. In 1961, he was falsely charged with kidnapping a white couple and fled from the country. Williams became the most potent of that group of militants existing at the fringe of the civil rights movement, who in their complete alienation from American society, articulate a revolutionary synthesis of nationalism and Marxism.¹ From his place of exile in Havana, Cuba, William undertook the publication of a monthly newsletter, *The Crusader*. In a typical issue he declared:

What is integration when the law says yes, but the police and howling mobs say no? Our only logical and successful answer is to meet organized and massive violence with massive and organized violence. . . . The weapons of defense employed by Afro-American freedom fighters must consist of a poor man's arsenal. . . . Molotov cocktails, lye or acid bombs (made by injecting lye or acid in the metal end of light bulbs) can be used extensively. During the night hours such weapons, thrown from roof tops, will make the streets impossible for racist cops to patrol. . . . Yes, a minority war of self-defense can succeed.²

Over a year ago Williams was named chairman-in-exile of an organization known as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), a tiny group of Negro students in a few major northern cities, particularly Philadelphia and

* This article is based upon a paper delivered by Elliott M. Rudwick at the 1965 Convention of the American Historical Association. We wish to express our thanks to both Louis Harlan of the University of Cincinnati and Walter Johnson of the University of Hawaii for their helpful suggestions.