

Thoughts on Berkeley

Paul Goodman

1

The function of administration is to expedite the essential academic business of teaching and learning, e.g., as secretary and janitor; and protectively to represent the academic community in its external relations, e.g., in court or as fund-raiser. When administration becomes the dominant force in the community, however, it is a sign that extra-mural powers are in control—State, Church, or Economy—and the administration is their agent. Notoriously, Image-burnishing and fund-raising disregard or even prevent teaching and learning.

At Berkeley, the students griped that the University of California has become a "factory, disregarding faculty and students," a factory to process professional licences and apprentices for technological corporations, and to do extra-mural contracted research. The particular bone of contention, the Free Speech ban, seems also to have been extra-murally instigated, by backlash elements, persons like Senator Knowland, etc. The administration certainly acted with panic, under outside pressure and out of touch with its own

community.

At present in the United States, students—middle-class youth—are the major exploited class. (Negroes, small farmers, the aged are rather out-caste groups; their labor is not needed and they are not wanted.) The labor of intelligent youth *is* needed and they are accordingly subjected to tight scheduling, speedup, and other factory methods. Then it is not surprising if they organize their CIO. It is frivolous to tell them to go elsewhere if they don't like the rules, for they have no choice but to go to college, and one factory is like another.

2

Thus far in the Berkeley revolt, two new factors have emerged: 1) The students want to extend the concept of Academic Freedom from *Lehrfreiheit* (freedom of professors to teach according to their lights) to include *Lernfreiheit* (freedom of students to ask for what they need to be taught, and if necessary to invite teachers, including advocates of causes.) I shall return to this later. 2) The Faculty energized by the students, wants to resume prerogatives that it had given up to the administration, e.g., discipline. This is probably the more important issue; but



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in my opinion the administration can not agree (and the Regents have so voted) to the Faculty resumption of prerogatives, because this could go very far and entirely unmake the academic-factory; e.g., the Faculty might hire or teach in disregard of Image, Endowments, or Research grants; they might resist huge classes or abolish grading. The question, then, will be whether there are enough professors who are concerned for the academic community to fight it out, rather than pursuing their grants and independent research.

It is useful to recall the important student strike, a few years ago, at New York State University at Oyster Bay (now Stony Brook). Here the State tried to impose a new President, to turn the Liberal Arts school into an engineering institute. The students were angered by disregard of their physical and social needs; the Faculty was indignant at the attempt to fragment the divisional system into departments that could be administratively subjugated. Backed by the Faculty, very many students struck and the new President had to go.

Generally speaking, student efforts to get an education befitting free men rather than slaves can succeed only with strong Faculty backing, for the students are transient, they do not

definitely know what they want, they do not know the score behind the scenes and thus they can be abashed by administrative double-talk. On the other hand, given the supine history of American faculties in our sectarian and trustee-ridden colleges, and given the present extra-mural careerism of the important professors, the students must lead if there is to be any change.

3

The extension of Academic Freedom to the claim to Freedom-to-Learn implies a revolutionary change in the status of American college-going. Up to now, American collegians have been regarded, and have regarded themselves, as late-adolescents; but the claim to *Lernfreiheit* means that they are young adults who are capable of knowing what they ought to get.

This is, of course, the (non-English) European and Latin tradition. It goes with early sexual maturity, with economic independence (often in bohemian poverty), and with active involvement in politics. Classically, in Europe, it has also involved drawn-out education, many moratoria, much changing of schools and career plans, and "being a student" as itself a kind of profession of young adults, especially of the upper class.

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Some of these changes are evident in this country. Whatever parents and administrators may say about extended sexual tutelage and *in loco parentis*, the young are practicing earlier sexual maturity without apologies. The past ten years have witnessed a remarkable resurgence of youthful political engagement. And since the selective service, it becomes far-fetched to deny the eighteen-year-old vote. It is hard to see how the university can welcome recruiters for Peace Corps or Army and disallow CORE or SNCC. (Incidentally, since the Supreme Court's "abatement" decision the illegal activity has turned out to be legal after all!) Administration itself has dealt a mortal blow to the notion of late-adolescence by its persistent attempts to abolish the fraternity system, which was a bulwark of Youth House and Social Life ideology (leading, for instance, to trivial student governments). I do not think the aim of Administration has been to treat the students as young adults; rather, the abolition of fraternities seems to be an attempt to tighten control, increase academic performance, and to gouge rent (since dormitories are built with Federal funds). Nevertheless, the effect of abolition must be student maturation, demands to live off-campus or to liberalize dormitory rules, to lower rents and improve food, and to be represented by a government that is not otiose.

On the other hand, there are strong American influences to prevent student maturation and independence. First, the frantic career-drive, spurred by the anxiety of middle-class parents, leading to conformism, and willingness to submit to scheduled mis-education, cred-

its, and grading, in order to get a diploma quick. Secondly, the students are not financially independent; tuition is exceedingly high, so that it is impossible to opt for independent poverty; scholarships and loans put the student under administration control. Probably most important, the universal compulsory school-going without alternative choices, is infantile. In 1900, only 6 per cent graduated from high school. We thus have conflict: the direct and evident need for the students as a working class of the economy would tend to make the students more mature; but the conditions of their collegiate exploitation tend to make them insecure and immature.

The evolution of both Faculty and Student organizations in the United States has been different from the communities of scholars in Europe. We do not have community guilds but rather national unions. The Faculty unions—e.g., The American Association of University Professors or the Teachers Union—were first formed as defensive leagues; my guess is that they will now begin to take the offensive. I can conceive of them declining to take graduate students from Ole Miss; or defending the principles of the original Mobilization for Youth, as a committee of the American Sociological Association has done; or attacking the entrenched Boards of Education with new ideas for the public schools. On the other hand, the Student unions—e.g., the Student Peace Union, the Students for a Democratic Society—started largely for extra-mural political reasons; but my guess is that they will now, as at Berkeley, look to improve

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119 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10003