Review Articles

Education At Berkeley

*Education at Berkeley** stands as a landmark to the new concepts of higher education that have been evolving in the twenty-one years since the publication of Harvard's *General Education in a Free Society* (1945).

As the Select Committee partisanly observes, the Harvard Report by its stress on a compulsory core program in general education "seems to mark the end of an era, rather than the beginning: since World War II innovations in American higher education . . . have chiefly moved in a quite different direction . . . [away from] respect for the essential unity and performance of Western civilization as a basis for common intellectual experience and communication" to the view that "new courses and curricula should be defined as a result of experience and of changing intellectual concerns" (p. 107). The Berkeley Report marks the beginning of a new era. By formulizing and cataloguing trends observed at Berkeley, and by taking into account changing directions in major as well as smaller institutions (such as Harvard itself, or Antioch, Oberlin, and Reed), the Committee has produced what will surely become bible and blueprint for mass education for the next few decades. This is the major reason for its significance: It is a practical how-to manual whose suggestions will be followed—or hotly debated—at universities throughout the U.S.A.

Because it is a report of nine UC Berkeley professors on the direction they wish their own university to take, its conclusions are of concern primarily to those teaching in similar mammoth institutions with mainline graduate schools. But because the Report discusses in considerable detail the management of undergraduate courses, it is also of concern to teachers and students in small hinterland colleges. The Report gives only five pages (pp. 3-7) to edu-

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**Education at Berkeley: Report of the Select Committee on Education.* University of California, Academic Senate, Berkeley, March, 1966. Pp. xi, 228. $3.50. Reprinted (paperback), Berkeley: California University Press, 1967.

cational theorizing, concentrating rather on the practic of teaching; but a frame of mind, whether formalized or not, structures all its recommendations.

To most Canadians, particularly in the Maritimes, Berkeley is many, many miles distant, and despite the plethora of magazine articles, its repute is largely spread by travellers' tales, and the Bluenose who has pilgrimed On the Road to the academic mecca returns, like some modern Marco Polo, with fantastic stories of the hippie subculture on and off Telegraph Avenue, of psychedelic rock and light happenings with the Grateful Dead and the Quicksilver Messenger Service, of bearded youth and pale-lipped teeny-boppers studying the latest issue of *The Oracle,* of bumper stickers on Volkswagens reading "Trouble parking? Planned parenthood," and, most memorable, of the noonday meetings of several thousand students on the steps of Sproul Hall (the "Winter Palace") listening to a Mario Savio or Jack Weinberg—a twentieth-century Bartholomew Fair. Berkeley, America's Left Bank (as Clark Kerr dubbed it), is in fact a way of life.[1] Such are the "groky" condiments to the most solid and most satisfying dish American higher education has to offer. Just a year ago, after a thorough comparison of the customary indices of academic excellence (faculty-student ratio, number of laureates, size of library, variety of courses, distinction of alumni), the American Council on Education adjudged UC Berkeley "Number One in the [U.S.] Nation."

The ingredients that together comprise a university—faculty (at Berkeley there is a third sex, the teaching assistants) and students, their interaction: learning and teaching, courses, experimental programmes, standards, awards (or rewards)—are analyzed in the light of Berkeley's peculiar situation. To the non-professional reader, the most fascinating chapter in the Report is The Berkeley Student (pp. 11-36), a meticulously documented portrait of today's student, not necessarily just a Berkeley student, because his hopes and frustrations are fundamentally little different (save in degree) from those of a student at Dalhousie or Bishop's or Simon Fraser.[2] Berkeley mirrors the present and the future of academe. While paradoxically agreeing that "Cal is a good place to go to school" (80 per cent), too many swinging youngsters at this swinging university are not satisfied; they complain of the lack of close contact with faculty (40 per cent), the grading system (50 per cent), the impersonality of the university symbolized as a factory (80 per cent); they distrust the administration (50 per cent).

Such criticisms are heard on many campuses. At Berkeley, however, the alienation of the superior student from the university seems more profound

than at other institutions (perhaps excluding City College of New York, Chicago, Michigan State, possibly Harvard—if Kenneth Keniston's *The Uncommitted* be accepted). Why does Berkeley have so many drop-outs and rebels?

UC Berkeley has a proud tradition of student political activity in support of radical and unpopular causes.[3] Unfortunately, because of eyecatching headlines, the notion has been engendered that the recent "Free Speech Movement" of 1964 was the letting off of steam by a few anti-intellectual malcontents.[4] In point of fact, not until the firing of President Clark Kerr by the new Regents on January 20, 1967, had so many students, graduates, teaching assistants and faculty been so united. Moreover, "many of the most promising students in the College of Letters and Science and in graduate school, especially in the humanities and social sciences," the Report notes (p. 25), "were strongly enough devoted to the cause of the FSM to face arrest in its behalf." Of the 773 carted away from the sit-in on the night of December 2, 1964, when troopers of the Highway Patrol stormed the campus, "their grades were significantly higher than those of the average student. Nearly half had grade-point averages higher than 3.0, whereas only 21% of the total student body had grades this high. Among the graduate students arrested, more than two thirds had averages about 3.5; only 55% of all graduates were at this level." (p. 24)

The Free Speech Movement was concerned with the university only in so far as it was a microcosm of society as a whole: "The dissatisfied student finds the University to be just another part of the established order" (p. 33). The alienation stemmed (as it still stems, perhaps even more strongly in 1967 than in the naïve days of 1964) from the discrepancy between precept and practice which the student finds not only in the university but everywhere in the outside world. He sees a student leadership, ostensibly practising the principles of the open society, actually serving as clandestine paid propagandists.[5] He finds professors ostensibly dedicated to freedom of opinion secretly in the pay of the FBI to inform on their colleagues' disagreement with the Administration's [President Johnson's] war on Vietnam,[6] and Fulbright students and professors similarly reporting back to the CIA the attitudes of their foreign counterparts.[7] He sees a public denial of the flight of a spy plane over the Soviet Union at the very moment that same plane is being downed, and a public denial of a U.S. invasion of Cuba at the very moment the Bay of Pigs is under attack. He finds his own beloved country

taking over the tactics of the supposed enemy. The credibility gap leads inevitably to alienation from a ticky-tacky great society: students "have grown up under the dread, not of poverty, but of annihilation . . . . Behind their existentialism and their pessimism lies a long awareness of the possibility of sudden death should an irresponsible adult push the wrong button" (p. 31).

During the year of agitation, 1964, while protesting against national shortcomings, Berkeley students were also protesting shortcomings closer to home. Student organizations like ASUC and SLATE were holding conferences from the summer of 1963 through the spring of 1965. To some degree, the establishment of the Select Committee by the Faculty was sparked by previous student activity. "We do have something to say, and are capable of *saying* it: almost all of the recommendations of the Select Committee on Education Report have been suggested by students for years" (ASUC release, March 21, 1966).

The Berkeley Report tries to bring higher education in line with the thinking of the mid 1960s. But its underlying philosophy applies as much to society as it does to education.

Throughout the entire Report there is overt as well as implicit stress on *integrity* or *ethos*. We live in a naughty world, and the world is fast becoming naughtier. Those who should be trusted falter, defect, rat. Fortune's wheel turns toward Armageddon.

The stress on integrity is not accidental. Berkeley has an especially loyal faculty. In the U.S. salary scale, California ranks twenty-third; most of its professors could easily obtain better-paying posts, yet they choose to stay at Berkeley, not merely because of its pleasing location on the slopes of Grizzly Peak, but because they are committed to quality public education. The Chairman of the Committee, Charles Muscatine, is one of the foremost Chaucer scholars in America; he was, in the early 1950s, the ultimately successful challenger in the suit supported by the American Civil Liberties Union against the degrading California "loyalty" oath. Decency comes to such a man instinctively. Personal worth is the key to the pluralistic university envisioned in the Committee's report. The students "will have in common the exposure to a noble stance, both scientific and humane, that will be exemplified in the conduct of everyone of us. It is not, then, what we teach that will give final validity to education at Berkeley, but what we are" (p. 6). "An ethos is produced by the emulation of respected models; the responsibility for its maintenance falls most heavily, then, on the more respected members of the faculty" (p. 40). "One way to encourage a healthier attitude towards grades

among our students is to develop a healthier attitude ourselves" (p. 98). The Committee looks for a campus that breathes "the excitement of the intellectual endeavor," in which students can "take on the challenge of serious thinking" (pp. 60, 69). It is good that teachers at Berkeley say this: it gives courage to others in depressed and depressing faculties.

The twelve chapters into which the Report is divided are not all of equal interest to the general academic reader.

Some are oriented to the Berkeley scene, like the valuable discussion on the Teaching Assistant: not many universities allow 31 per cent of an undergraduate's total courses and 41 per cent of all freshmen and sophomore courses to be so taught. Yet the Report indicates how the Teaching Assistant can be integrated into the academic family, learn the techniques of teaching without falling into the clutches of departments of education, and profit by association with a mature scholar. With the increase in higher education, universities will have to employ teaching assistants; without them, most large universities will not be able to function.

Other chapters are general and conclude with recommendations that seem banal, like No. 12 in the chapter on Freshman Admissions: "The campus should improve its recruitment of able candidates through the use of alumni, faculty, and students, and an improved program of scholarship assistance." The point, of course, is that state-supported universities have hitherto not resorted to the methods of private institutions.

The most valuable chapters (I find) are those on the Berkeley students (II), the Undergraduate Requirements in Letters and Science (IX), and Graduate Education (X). To the Select Committee that produced this Report, however, the most significant chapter is VII, which proposes a Board of Educational Development. In 1963, Clark Kerr—then President of the whole University of California with its nine huge campuses—had written *The Uses of the University*, wherein he developed his views on the "multiversity". In a somewhat similar approach, Chapter VII advocates a kind of pluralist campus, in which several kinds of instruction and programmes may be concurrent. With a campus of some 26,834 students (Fall, 1965), this is common sense. Departing from the Harvard concept of a basic-core curriculum, fundamentally an eighteenth or nineteenth-century belief that all educated men (and hence all leaders) should share a common educational experience based on "the traditional values of our intellectual and human heritage" (p. 108), the Berkeley Report suggests that the present student (and faculty) dissatisfaction stems from American acceptance of Von Humboldt's "design for a specialized graduate

university, without at the same time introducing his pattern for a liberal *Gymnasium* on the secondary school level" (p. 109). In order to keep needed experiments in teaching under faculty control, the Committee proposed a Board of Educational Development to allow such projects to be tried out for a couple of years and evaluated afterwards—rather than to have every new programme first run the gauntlet of hostile committees. After much discussion about this "university within a university," this recommendation has been approved by the Academic Senate.

There remain two major contributions to university thinking worthy of mention. First is the undergraduate programme (Chapter IX). This chapter questions the basis of most liberal arts programmes, the so-called "breadth requirement," that all students take courses in all three areas—humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (including one physical and one biological science). Rejecting the common Western-heritage theory, the Committee stresses "the illusion of the well-rounded man, conversant with all the important fields of knowledge" (p. 153). With the obsolescence of scientific knowledge, the limitation of such breadth courses to the most elementary introductory surveys can lead (says the Committee) only to dilettantism and superficiality. Consequently, the Berkeley Report maintains the "breadth requirement . . . should logically be determined in relation to the work in the major. . . . It should provide the kind of intellectual perspective which the area of specialization fails to do" (pp. 153-4). Unfortunately the three paragraphs devoted to "inner breadth" and "outer breadth" are insufficiently developed—even in their definitions: "inner" breadth courses are those in related or background subjects; "outer" breadth courses those in "which the student might feel ill at ease in competition with students whose aptitude is different from his" (p. 154). The Committee implies that the content of such courses is less important than the "concepts, methods, human and social relevance, and the pleasures that may derive from intellectual activity" (p. 155).

This chapter was debated by the ASUC Committee, which was wary about the introduction of competition. It believed that the Select Committee saw students as products of an educational system oriented "toward the production merely of efficiently operating engineers, or social workers, or even graduate student researchers." For its part, ASUC would regard students as individuals, and their education in terms of "internal and external"—"external" referring to the "student's admitted chores of some vocational training," and "internal" education stressing "the internal satisfaction of learning . . . to

resolve his personal philosophical problems, not just to state the issues more cleverly than the next man."

Although this chapter and "New Programs" (VIII) open up novel vistas (like granting university credit for "Field Study"), by and large, I think, they allow too much permissiveness to the student. The Report would put "the final responsibility for choice of courses on the student." Ultimately this means that an English major could graduate without ever having formally read Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton. So long as less "worthy" students crowd the admission tables, so long the "worthy" faculty should not abdicate its standards to students trying to extend the labour-saving devices of "instant poetry, instant psychoanalysis, and instant mysticism" (p. 30) to instant education.

The other major area is Chapter X, Graduate Education. Berkeley cannot escape the continuing problems of all major graduate schools: the small proportion of graduates who complete their degrees, and the inordinate time for their completion. Throughout the United States there were in 1966 some 338,981 graduate students; of these about 15,000 (in all disciplines) completed their doctorate. Berkeley parallels this ratio of five per cent success. In 1964-65, for example, out of 497 graduate students in English alone (some 200 of them registered for the Ph. D.), only ten doctorates were awarded. Since 1960, at Berkeley, there has been each year a minimum of over 400 graduate students in English, and the doctorates granted have scarcely ever risen above the 1956 figure of eight. In the contemporary world any institution which operates at only five per cent efficiency cannot survive.

And at this point occurs a crisis of conflict between the rosy ideal and the dirty reality.

Teachers have to accept the fact that universities are no longer educational establishments; nor are teachers uniformly dedicated partisans of a higher (and hopefully better) way of life. Education is a facet of Western society, an aspect of business, and rightly or wrongly that society demands more and more schools and more and more students attending them, just as it demands and expects more factories and more hands employed. A decline in either, university or factory, might prove a disaster. In 1967, there are some millions of students in the universities; and there are more millions in the two-year junior and community colleges currently proliferating across America. What would happen to the national economy if all these millions of students were not at college but looking for jobs? The university thus has a special function in modern society: to keep young people off the streets

(where, as unemployed, they would form a major menace to social stability) and off the labour market (where they could topple the economic stability). In graduate studies, the university has to churn out sufficient doctors to meet the demands of new and expanding institutions (182 in California alone in 1966).

Universities, if they are to fill their part in the societal contract, must circumvent the requirements that produce the bottleneck and somehow fabricate more doctors. The simplest and least controversial means, because few need be aware of it, is to dilute the requirements, either the dissertation (the major stumbling block) or the foreign languages. Instead of being an original contribution to knowledge, the dissertation becomes a more or less original summary of existing non-knowledge; language requirements are softened to a working familiarity with the language(s) needed by the student.

With one eye on the practical demands of higher education in California, where the vast majority of high-school graduates go on to some kind of advanced training, and where a new campus in the multiversity is needed every few years, the Berkeley Report proposes the new degree of Doctor of Arts—all but the dissertation (ABD). Many large universities are already making similar adjustments to economic and political pressures, and for most faculties, future discussion will be concerned not with the desirability of mini-doctorates but with their implementation.

Relatively few serious reviews of the Berkeley Report have appeared; it should be more widely discussed when it circulates as a paperback. It is worthy of close attention, especially for its stress on human values and human decency in the ed biz. Whatever the reader's response to the 42 Recommendations, there can be little doubt that he will admire the Select Committee of UC Berkeley under Chairman Charles Muscatine for having produced a consensus report that has the courage at this time in history to project the continuity of humane education for future generations.

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NOTES

1. For excellent accounts of the whole Bay Area scene see James Willwerth, "Along the Avenue," *California Monthly*, Feb. 1966, pp. 31-34; Herbert Gold, "Where the Action Is," *New York Sunday Times*, Book Review Section, Feb. 19, 1967, pp. 1, 50, 51; Warren Hinckle, "The Social History of the Hippies," *Ramparts*, March 1967, pp. 5-26.
2. Further informed accounts of the students at UC Berkeley can be found in the special issue of *California Monthly*, Feb., 1966; Don Koué, "Halls Without

Ivy," pp. 6-12; Harry Bain, "Trouble for the Greeks," pp. 14-19; Paul Thayer, "What it Means to Fill the Silence," pp. 20-29; Kathryn Manoogian, "The World of the Married Student," pp. 43-51; see also Herbert Gold, "The Berkeley Scene," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 18, 1966.

3. Max Heinrich and Sam Kaplan, "Yesterday's Discord," *California Monthly*, Feb. 1965, pp. 20-32.
4. Numerous articles, generally *parti pris*, appeared at the time of the mass demonstrations; some of the more important include James Cass, "What Happened at Berkeley," *Saturday Review*, Jan. 16, 1965; Seymour Lipset and Paul Seabury, "The Lesson of Berkeley," *Reporter*, Jan. 28, 1965; A. H. Raskin, "The Berkeley Affair," *New York Sunday Times*, Magazine, Feb. 14, 1965; Nathan Glazer, "What Happened at Berkeley," *Commentary*, Feb. 1965; Sheldon S. Wolin and John Schaar, "Berkeley and the Fate of the Multiversity," *New York Review of Books*, March 11, 1965; Colvin Trillin, "Letter from Berkeley," *New Yorker*, March 13, 1965. The UC alumni journal, *California Monthly*, published a major article in the Feb. 1965 issue, "A Season of Discontent," pp. 6-19. The most complete account, with many photographs, is Steven Warsaw, *The Trouble in Berkeley*, Diablo Press, Berkeley, 1965, 128 pp. An extensive anthology of articles (including several mentioned above) has been collected by Christopher G. Katope and Paul G. Zolbrod: *Beyond Berkeley—A Sourcebook in Student Values*, Cleveland, 1966.
5. The first article to expose the infiltration of the National Student Association by the CIA appeared in *Ramparts*, March, 1967, by Sol Stern, "NSA and the CIA." The article was leaked to the press, whereupon a flood of articles revealed further CIA activities; complete documentation will be found in the *New York Times*, Feb. 14, daily through Feb. 24, 1967; also March 5, 10, 1967.
6. At New York State University, Brockport campus. *New York Times*, March 20, 1967.
7. Letter by Lee A. Segel, *New York Times*, March 7, 1967; see also letter by Professor Kenneth Little, *New York Sunday Times*, March 5, 1967.