

THE CASHING-IN:
THE STUDENT
“REBELLION”
by Ayn Rand

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To People,

may they eternally be of benefit to each other.

The so-called student “rebellion,”

which was started and keynoted at the University of California at Berkeley, has profound significance, but not of the kind that most commentators have ascribed to it. And the nature of the misrepresentations is part of its significance.

The events at Berkeley began, in the fall of 1964, ostensibly as a student protest against the University administration's order forbidding political activity—specifically, the recruiting, fund-raising, and organizing of students for political action off-campus—on a certain strip of ground adjoining the campus, which was owned by the University. Claiming that their rights had been violated, a small group of “rebels” rallied thousands of students of all political views, including many “conservatives,” and assumed the title of the “Free Speech Movement.” The Movement staged “sit-in” protests in the administration building, and committed other acts of physical force, such as assaults on the police and the seizure of a police car for use as a rostrum.

The spirit, style, and tactics of the rebellion are best illustrated by one particular incident. The University administration called a mass meeting, which was attended by eighteen thousand students and faculty members, to hear an address on the situation by the University President, Clark Kerr; it had been expressly announced that no student speakers would be allowed to address the meeting. Kerr attempted to end the rebellion by capitulating; he promised to grant most of the rebels' demands; it looked as if he had won the audience

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to his side. Whereupon, Mario Savio, the rebel leader, seized the microphone, in an attempt to take over the meeting, ignoring the rules and the fact that the meeting had been adjourned. When he was—properly—dragged off the platform, the leaders of the F.S.M. admitted, openly and jubilantly, that they had almost lost their battle, but had saved it by provoking the administration to an act of "violence" (thus admitting that the victory of their publicly proclaimed goals was not the goal of their battle).

What followed was nation-wide publicity, of a peculiar kind. It was a sudden and, seemingly, spontaneous out-pouring of articles, studies, surveys, revealing a strange unanimity of approach in several basic aspects: in ascribing to the F.S.M. the importance of a national movement, unwarranted by the facts—in blurring the facts by means of unintelligible generalities—in granting to the rebels the status of spokesmen for American youth, acclaiming their "idealism" and "commitment" to political action, hailing them as a symptom of the "awakening" of college students from "political apathy." If ever a "puff-job" was done by a major part of the press, this was it.

In the meantime, what followed at Berkeley was a fierce, three-cornered struggle among the University administration, its Board of Regents, and its faculty, a struggle so sketchily reported in the press that its exact nature remains fogbound. One can gather only that the Regents were, apparently, demanding a "tough" policy toward the rebels, that the majority of the faculty were on the rebels' side and that the administration was caught in the "moderate" middle of the road.

The struggle led to the permanent resignation of the University's Chancellor (as the rebels had demanded)—the temporary resignation, and later reinstatement, of President Kerr—and, ultimately, an almost complete capitulation to the F.S.M., with the administration granting most of the rebels' demands. (These included the right to advocate illegal acts and the right to an unrestricted freedom of speech *on campus*.)

To the astonishment of the naive, this did not end the rebellion: the more demands were granted, the more were made. As the administration intensified its efforts to appease the F.S.M., the F.S.M. intensified its provocations. The unrestricted freedom of speech took the form of a “Filthy Language Movement,” which consisted of students carrying placards with four-letter words, and broadcasting obscenities over the University loudspeakers (which Movement was dismissed with mild reproof by most of the press, as a mere “adolescent prank”).

This, apparently, was too much even for those who sympathized with the rebellion. The F.S.M. began to lose its following—and was, eventually, dissolved. Mario Savio quit the University, declaring that he “could not keep up with the *undemocratic* procedures that the administration is following” [*italics mine*]—and departed, reportedly to organize a nation-wide revolutionary student movement.

This is a bare summary of the events as they were reported by the press. But some revealing information was provided by volunteers, outside the regular news channels, such as in the letters-to-the-editor columns.

An eloquent account was given in a letter to *The New York Times* (March 31, 1965) by Alexander Grendon, a biophysicist in the Donner Laboratory, University of California:

The F.S.M. has always applied coercion to insure victory. One-party “democracy,” as in the Communist countries or the lily-white portions of the South, corrects opponents of the party line by punishment. The punishment of the recalcitrant university administration (and more than 20,000 students who avoided participation in the conflict) was to “bring the university to a grinding halt” by physical force.

To capitulate to such corruption of democracy is to teach students that these methods are right. President Kerr capitulated repeatedly. . . .

Kerr agreed the university would not control “advocacy of illegal acts,” an abstraction until illustrated by examples: In a university lecture hall, a self-proclaimed anarchist advises students how to

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cheat to escape military service; a nationally known Communist uses the university facilities to condemn our Government in vicious terms for its action in Vietnam, while funds to support the Vietcong are illegally solicited; propaganda for the use of marijuana, with instructions where to buy it, is openly distributed on campus.

Even the abstraction “obscenity” is better understood when one hears a speaker, using the university’s amplifying equipment, describe in vulgar words his experiences in group sexual intercourse and homosexuality and recommend these practices, while another suggests students should have the same sexual freedom on campus as dogs. . . .

Clark Kerr’s “negotiation”—a euphemism for surrender—on each deliberate defiance of orderly university processes contributes not to a liberal university but to a lawless one.

David S. Landes, Professor of History, Harvard University, made an interesting observation in a letter to *The New York Times* (December 29, 1964). Stating that the Berkeley revolt represents potentially one of the most serious assaults on academic freedom in America, he wrote:

In conclusion, I should like to point out the deleterious implications of this dispute for the University of California. I know personally of five or six faculty members who are leaving, not because of lack of sympathy with “free speech” or “political action,” but because, as one put it, who wants to teach at the University of Saigon?

The clearest account and most perceptive evaluation were offered in an article in the *Columbia University Forum* (Spring 1965), entitled “What’s Left at Berkeley,” by William Petersen, Professor of Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley. He writes:

The first fact one must know about the Free Speech Movement is that it has little or nothing to do with free speech. . . . If not free speech, what then is the issue? In fact, preposterous as this may seem, the real issue is the seizure of power. . . .

That a tiny number, a few hundred out of a student body of more than 27,000, was able to disrupt the campus is the consequence of more than vigor and skill in agitation. This minuscule group could not have succeeded in getting so many students into motion without

three other, at times unwitting, sources of support: off-campus assistance of various kinds, the University administration, and the faculty.

Everyone who has seen the efficient, almost military organization of the agitators' program has a reasonable basis for believing that skilled personnel and money are being dispatched into the Berkeley battle. . . . Around the Berkeley community a dozen "*ad hoc* committees to support" this or that element of the student revolt sprang up spontaneously, as though out of nowhere.

The course followed by the University administration . . . could hardly have better fostered a rebellious student body if it had been devised to do so. To establish dubious regulations and when they are attacked to defend them by unreasonable argument is bad enough; worse still, the University did not impose on the students any sanctions that did not finally evaporate. . . . Obedience to norms is developed when it is suitably rewarded, and when noncompliance is suitably punished. That professional educators should need to be reminded of this axiom indicates how deep the roots of the Berkeley crisis lie.

But the most important reason that the extremists won so many supporters among the students was the attitude of the faculty. Perhaps their most notorious capitulation to the F.S.M. was a resolution passed by the Academic Senate on December 8, by which the faculty notified the campus not only that they supported all of the radicals' demands but also that, in effect, they were willing to fight for them against the Board of Regents, should that become necessary. When that resolution passed by an overwhelming majority—824 to 115 votes—it effectively silenced the anti-F.S.M. student organizations.

...

The Free Speech Movement is reminiscent of the Communist fronts of the 1930's, but there are several important differences. The key feature, that a radical core uses legitimate issues ambiguously in order to manipulate a large mass, is identical. The core in this case, however, is not the disciplined Communist party, but a heterogeneous group of radical sects.

Professor Petersen lists the various socialist, Trotskyist, communist, and other groups involved. His conclusion is:

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The radical leaders on the Berkeley campus, like those in Latin American or Asian universities, are not the less radical for being, in many cases, outside the discipline of a formal political party. They are defined not by whether they pay dues to a party, but by their actions, their vocabulary, their way of thinking. The best term to describe them, in my opinion, is Castroite. [This term, he explains, applies primarily to their choice of tactics, to the fact that] in critical respects all of them imitate the Castro movement. . . .

At Berkeley, provocative tactics applied not against a dictatorship but against the liberal, divided, and vacillating University administration proved to be enormously effective. Each provocation and subsequent victory led to the next.

Professor Petersen ends his article on a note of warning:

By my diagnosis . . . not only has the patient [the University] not recovered but he is sicker than ever. The fever has gone down temporarily, but the infection is spreading and becoming more virulent.

Now let us consider the ideology of the rebels, from such indications as were given in the press reports. The general tone of the reports was best expressed by a headline in *The New York Times* (March 15, 1965): “The New Student Left: Movement Represents Serious Activists in Drive for Changes.”

What kind of changes? No specific answer was given in the almost full-page story. Just “changes.”

Some of these activists “who liken their movement to a ‘revolution,’ want to be called radicals. Most of them, however, prefer to be called ‘organizers.’”

Organizers—of what? Of “deprived people.” For what? No answer. Just “organizers.”

Most express contempt for any specific labels, and they don’t mind being called cynics. . . . The great majority of those questioned said they were as skeptical of Communism as they were of any other form of political control. . . . “You might say we’re a-Communist,” said one of them, “just as you might say we’re amoral and a-almost everything else.”

There are exceptions, however. A girl from the University of California, one of the leaders of the Berkeley revolt, is quoted as saying: "At present the socialist world, even with all its problems, is moving closer than any other countries toward the sort of society I think should exist. In the Soviet Union, it has almost been achieved."

Another student, from the City College of New York, is quoted as concurring: "'The Soviet Union and the whole Socialist bloc are on the right track,' he said."

In view of the fact that most of the young activists were active in the civil rights movement, and that the Berkeley rebels had started by hiding behind the issue of civil rights (attempting, unsuccessfully, to smear all opposition as of "racist" origin), it is interesting to read that: "There is little talk among the activists about racial integration. Some of them consider the subject passé. They declare that integration will be almost as evil as segregation if it results in a complacent, middle-class interracial society."

The central theme and basic ideology of all the activists is: *anti-ideology*. They are militantly opposed to all "labels," definitions, and theories; they proclaim the supremacy of the immediate moment and commitment to action—to subjectively, emotionally motivated action. Their anti-intellectual attitude runs like a stressed leitmotif through all the press reports.

An article in *The New York Times Magazine* (February 14, 1965) declares:

The Berkeley mutineers did not seem political in the sense of those student rebels in the Turbulent Thirties. They are too suspicious of all adult institutions to embrace wholeheartedly even those ideologies with a stake in smashing the system. An anarchist or I.W.W. strain seems as pronounced as any Marxist doctrine. "Theirs is a sort of political existentialism," says Paul Jacobs, a research associate at the university's Center for the Study of Law and Society, who is one of the F.S.M.'s applauders. "All the old labels are out. . . ."

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The proudly immoderate zealots of the F.S.M. pursue an activist creed—that only commitment can strip life of its emptiness, its absence of meaning in a great “knowledge factory” like Berkeley.

An article in *The Saturday Evening Post* (May 8, 1965), discussing the various youth groups on the left, quotes a leader of Students for a Democratic Society:

“We began by rejecting the old sectarian left and its ancient quarrels, and with a contempt for American society, which we saw as depraved. We are interested in direct action and specific issues. We do not spend endless hours debating the nature of Soviet Russia or whether Yugoslavia is a degenerate workers’ state.” [And]: “With sit-ins we saw for the first time the chance for direct participation in meaningful social revolution.”

In their off-picket-line hours, [states the same article] the P.L. [Progressive Labor] youngsters hang out at the experimental theaters and coffee shops of Manhattan’s East Village. Their taste in reading runs more to Sartre than to Marx.

With an interesting touch of unanimity, a survey in *Newsweek* (March 22, 1965) quotes a young man on the other side of the continent: “‘These students don’t read Marx,’ said one Berkeley Free Student Movement leader. ‘They read Camus.’”

“If they are rebels,” the survey continues, “they are rebels without an ideology, and without long-range revolutionary programs. They rally over issues, not philosophies, and seem unable to formulate or sustain a systematized political theory of society, either from the left or right.”

“Today’s student seeks to find himself through what he does, not what he thinks,” the survey declares explicitly—and quotes some adult authorities in sympathetic confirmation. “‘What you have now, as in the 30’s,’ says *New York Post* editor James A. Wechsler, ‘are groups of activists who really want to function in life.’ But not ideologically. ‘We used to sit around and debate Marxism, but students now are working for civil-rights and peace.’” Richard Unsworth, chaplain at Dartmouth, is quoted as saying: “In the world of today’s campus ‘the avenue now is doing and then reflecting on

your doing, instead of reflecting, then deciding, and then doing, the way it was a few years ago.’ ” Paul Goodman, described as writer, educator and “one of the students’ current heroes,” is quoted as hailing the Berkeley movement because: “The leaders of the insurrection, he says, ‘didn’t play it cool, they took risks, *they were willing to be confused*, they didn’t know whether it all would be a success or a failure. Now they don’t want to be cool any more, they want to take over.’ ” [Italics mine. The same tribute could be paid to any drunken driver.]

The theme of “taking over” is repeated again and again. The immediate target, apparently, is the take-over of the universities. *The New York Times Magazine* article quotes one of the F.S.M. leaders: “Our idea is that the university is composed of faculty, students, books, and ideas. In a literal sense, the administration is merely there to make sure the sidewalks are kept clean. It should be the servant of the faculty and the students.”

The climax of this particular line was a news story in *The New York Times* (March 29, 1965) under the heading: “Collegians Adopt a ‘Bill of Rights.’ ”

A group of Eastern college students declared here [in Philadelphia] this weekend that college administrators should be no more than housekeepers in the educational community.

“The modern college or university,” they said, “should be run by the students and the professors; administrators would be maintenance, clerical and safety personnel whose purpose is to enforce the will of faculty and students.”

A manifesto to this effect was adopted at a meeting held at the University of Pennsylvania and attended by two hundred youths

from 39 colleges in the Philadelphia and New York areas, Harvard, Yale, the University of California at Berkeley, and from schools in the Midwest.

A recurring theme in the meeting was that colleges and universities had become servants of the “financial, industrial, and military establishment,” and that students and faculty were being “sold down the river” by administrators.

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Among the provisions of the manifesto were declarations of freedom to join, organize or hold meetings of any organization . . . abolition of tuition fees; control of law enforcement by the students and faculty; an end to the Reserve Officer Training Corps; abolition of loyalty oaths; student-faculty control over curriculum. . . .

The method used to adopt that manifesto is illuminating: "About 200 students attended the meeting, 45 remaining until the end when the 'Student Bill of Rights' was adopted." So much for "democratic procedures" and for the activists' right to the title of spokesmen for American youth.

What significance is ascribed to the student rebellion by all these reports and by the authorities they choose to quote? Moral courage is not a characteristic of today's culture, but in no other contemporary issue has moral cowardice been revealed to such a naked, ugly extent. Not only do most of the commentators lack an independent evaluation of the events, not only do they take their cue from the rebels, but of all the rebels' complaints, it is the most superficial, irrelevant and, therefore, the safest, that they choose to support and to accept as the cause of the rebellion: the complaint that the universities have grown "too big."

As if they had mushroomed overnight, the "bigness" of the universities is suddenly decried by the consensus as a national problem and blamed for the "unrest" of the students, whose motives are hailed as youthful "idealism." In today's culture, it has always been safe to attack "bigness." And since the meaningless issue of mere *size* has long served as a means of evading real issues, on all sides of all political fences, a new catch-phrase has been added to the list of "Big Business," "Big Labor," "Big Government," etc.: "Big University."

For a more sophisticated audience, the socialist magazine *The New Leader* (December 21, 1964) offers a Marxist-Freudian appraisal, ascribing the rebellion primarily to "alienation" (quoting Savio: "Somehow people are being separated off from something") and to "generational revolt" ("Spontaneously the natural idiom of

the student political protest was that of sexual protest against the forbidding university administrator who ruled in *loco parentis*").

But the prize for expressing the moral-intellectual essence of today's culture should go to Governor Brown of California. Remember that the University of California is a state institution, that its Regents are appointed by the Governor and that he, therefore, was the ultimate target of the revolt, including all its manifestations, from physical violence to filthy language.

Have we made our society safe for students with ideas? [said Governor Brown at a campus dinner.] We have not. Students have changed but the structure of the university and its attitudes towards its students have not kept pace with that change.

Therefore, some students felt they had the right to go outside the law to force the change. But in so doing, they displayed the height of *idealistic hypocrisy*. [Italics mine.] On the one hand, they held up the Federal Constitution, demanding their rights of political advocacy. But at the same time, they threw away the principle of due process in favor of direct action.

In doing so, they were as wrong as the university. This, then, is the great challenge that faces us, the challenge of change.¹

Consider the fact that Governor Brown is generally regarded as a powerful chief executive and, by California Republicans, as a formidable opponent. Consider the fact that "according to the California Public Opinion Poll, 74 percent of the people disapprove of the student protest movement in Berkeley."² Then observe that Governor Brown did not dare denounce a movement led or manipulated by a group of forty-five students—and that he felt obliged to qualify the term "hypocrisy" by the adjective "idealistic," thus creating one of the weirdest combinations in today's vocabulary of evasion.

¹ *The New York Times*, May 22, 1965.

² *The New Leader*, April 12, 1965.

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Now observe that in all that mass of comments, appraisals, and interpretations (including the ponderous survey in *Newsweek* which offered statistics on every imaginable aspect of college life), not one word was said about the content of modern education, about *the nature of the ideas* that are being inculcated by today’s universities. Every possible question was raised and considered, except: *What are the students taught to think?* This, apparently, was what no one dared discuss.

This is what we shall now proceed to discuss.

If a dramatist had the power to convert philosophical ideas into real, flesh-and-blood people, and attempted to create the walking embodiments of modern philosophy—the result would be the Berkeley rebels.

These “activists” are so fully, literally, loyally, devastatingly the products of modern philosophy that someone should cry to all the university administrations and faculties: “Brothers, you asked for it!”

Mankind could not expect to remain unscathed after decades of exposure to the radiation of intellectual fission-debris, such as: “Reason is impotent to know things as they are—reality is unknowable—certainty is impossible—knowledge is mere probability—truth is that which works—mind is a superstition—logic is a social convention—ethics is a matter of subjective commitment to an arbitrary postulate.” And the consequent mutations are those contorted young creatures who scream, in chronic terror, that they know nothing and want to rule everything.

If that dramatist were writing a movie, he could justifiably entitle it “Mario Savio, Son of Immanuel Kant.”

With rare and academically neglected exceptions, the philosophical “mainstream” that seeps into every classroom, subject, and brain in today’s universities, is: epistemological agnosticism, avowed irrationalism, ethical subjectivism. Our age is witnessing the ultimate climax, the cashing-in on a long process of destruction, at the end of the road laid out by Kant.

Ever since Kant divorced reason from reality, his intellectual descendants have been diligently widening the breach. In the name of reason, Pragmatism established a range-of-the-moment view as an enlightened perspective on life, context-dropping as a rule of epistemology, expediency as a principle of morality, and collective subjectivism as a substitute for metaphysics. Logical Positivism carried it farther and, in the name of reason, elevated the immemorial psycho-epistemology of shyster-lawyers to the status of a scientific epistemological system—by proclaiming that knowledge consists of linguistic manipulations. Taking this seriously, Linguistic Analysis declared that the task of philosophy is, not to identify universal principles, but to tell people what they mean when they speak, which they are otherwise unable to know (which last, by that time, was true—in philosophical circles). This was the final stroke of philosophy breaking its moorings and floating off, like a lighter-than-air balloon, losing any semblance of connection to reality, any relevance to the problems of man's existence.

No matter how cautiously the proponents of such theories skirted any reference to the relationship between theory and practice, no matter how coyly they struggled to treat philosophy as a parlor or classroom game—the fact remained that young people went to college for the purpose of acquiring *theoretical* knowledge to guide them in *practical* action. Philosophy teachers evaded questions about the application of their ideas to reality, by such means as declaring that “reality is a meaningless term,” or by asserting that philosophy has no purpose other than the amusement of manufacturing arbitrary “constructs,” or by urging students to temper every theory with “common sense”—the common sense they had spent countless hours trying to invalidate.

As a result, a student came out of a modern university with the following sediment left in his brain by his four to eight years of study: existence is an uncharted, unknowable jungle, fear and uncertainty are man's permanent state, skepticism is the mark of maturity, cynicism is the mark of realism, and, above all, the hallmark of an intellectual is the denial of the intellect.

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When and if academic commentators gave any thought to the practical results of their theories, they were predominantly united in claiming that uncertainty and skepticism are socially valuable traits which would lead to tolerance of differences, flexibility, social "adjustment," and willingness to compromise. Some went so far as to maintain explicitly that intellectual certainty is the mark of a dictatorial mentality, and that chronic *doubt*—the absence of firm convictions, the lack of absolutes—is the guarantee of a peaceful, "democratic" society.

They miscalculated.

It has been said that Kant's dichotomy led to two lines of Kantian philosophers, both accepting his basic premises, but choosing opposite sides: those who chose reason, abandoning reality—and those who chose reality, abandoning reason. The first delivered the world to the second.

The collector of the Kantian rationalizers' efforts—the receiver of the bankrupt shambles of sophistry, casuistry, sterility, and abysmal triviality to which they had reduced philosophy—was *Existentialism*.

Existentialism, in essence, consists of pointing to modern philosophy and declaring: "Since *this* is reason, to hell with it!"

In spite of the fact that the pragmatists-positivists-analysts had obliterated reason, the existentialists accepted them as reason's advocates, held them up to the world as examples of rationality and proceeded to reject reason altogether, proclaiming its impotence, rebelling against its "failure," calling for a return to reality, to the problems of human existence, to values, to action—to subjective values and mindless action. In the name of reality, they proclaimed the moral supremacy of "instincts," urges, feelings—and the cognitive powers of stomachs, muscles, kidneys, hearts, blood. It was a rebellion of headless bodies.

The battle is not over. The philosophy departments of today's universities are the battleground of a struggle which, in fact, is only a family quarrel between the analysts and the existentialists. Their progeny are the activists of the student rebellion.

If these activists choose the policy of “doing and then reflecting on your doing”—hasn’t Pragmatism taught them that truth is to be judged by consequences? If they “seem unable to formulate or sustain a systematized political theory of society,” yet shriek with moral righteousness that they propose to achieve their social goals by physical force—hasn’t Logical Positivism taught them that ethical propositions have no cognitive meaning and are merely a report on one’s feelings or the equivalent of emotional ejaculations? If they are savagely blind to everything but the immediate moment—hasn’t Logical Positivism taught them that nothing else can be claimed with certainty to exist? And while the linguistic analysts are busy demonstrating that “The cat is on the mat” does not mean that “the mat” is an attribute of “the cat,” nor that “on-the-mat” is the genus to which “the cat” belongs, nor yet that “the-cat” equals “on-the-mat”—is it any wonder that students storm the Berkeley campus with placards inscribed “Strike now, analyze later”? (This slogan is quoted by Professor Petersen in the *Columbia University Forum*.)

On June 14, CBS televised a jumbled, incoherent, unintelligible—and for these very reasons, authentic and significant—documentary entitled *The Berkeley Story*. There is method in every kind of madness—and for those acquainted with modern philosophy, that documentary was like a display of sideshow mirrors throwing off twisted reflections and random echoes of the carnage perpetrated in the academic torture-chambers of the mind.

“Our generation has no ideology,” declared the first boy interviewed, in the tone of defiance and hatred once reserved for saying: “Down with Wall Street!”—clearly projecting that the enemy now is not the so-called Robber Barons, but *the mind*. The older generation, he explained scornfully, had “a neat little pill” to solve everything, but the pill didn’t work and they merely “got their hearts busted.” “We don’t believe in pills,” he said.

“We’ve learned that there are no absolute rules,” said a young girl, hastily and defensively, as if uttering an axiom—and proceeded to explain inarticulately, with the help of gestures pointing

inward, that "we make rules for ourselves" and that what is right for her may not be right for others.

A girl described her classes as "words, words, words, paper, paper, paper"—and quietly, in a tone of authentic despair, said that she stopped at times to wonder: "What am I doing here? I'm not learning anything."

An intense young girl who talked volubly, never quite finishing a sentence nor making a point, was denouncing society in general, trying to say that since people are social products, society has done a bad job. In the middle of a sentence, she stopped and threw in, as a casual aside: "Whatever way I turn out, I still am a product," then went on. She said it with the simple earnestness of a conscientious child acknowledging a self-evident fact of nature. It was not an act: the poor little creature meant it.

The helpless bewilderment on the face of Harry Reasoner, the commentator, when he tried to sum up what he had presented, was an eloquent indication of why the press is unable properly to handle the student rebellion. "Now—immediacy—any situation must be solved now," he said incredulously, describing the rebels' attitude, neither praising nor blaming, in the faintly astonished, faintly helpless tone of a man unable to believe that he is seeing savages running loose on the campus of one of America's great universities.

Such are the products of modern philosophy. They are the type of students who are too intelligent not to see the logical consequences of the theories they have been taught—but not intelligent nor independent enough to see through the theories and reject them.

So they scream their defiance against "The System," not realizing that they are its most consistently docile pupils, that theirs is a rebellion against the *status quo* by its archetypes, against the intellectual "Establishment" by its robots who have swallowed every shopworn premise of the "liberals" of the 1930's, including the catch-phrases of altruism, the dedication to "deprived people," to such a safely *conventional* cause as "the war on poverty." A rebellion

that brandishes banners inscribed with bromides is not a very convincing nor very inspiring sight.

As in any movement, there is obviously a mixture of motives involved: there are the little shysters of the intellect, who have found a gold mine in modern philosophy, who delight in arguing for argument's sake and stumping opponents by means of ready-to-wear paradoxes—there are the little role-players, who fancy themselves as heroes and enjoy defiance for the sake of defiance—there are the nihilists, who, moved by a profound hatred, seek nothing but destruction for the sake of destruction—there are the hopeless dependents, who seek to “belong” to any crowd that would have them—and there are the plain hooligans, who are always there, on the fringes of any mob action that smells of trouble. Whatever the combination of motives, neurosis is stamped in capital letters across the whole movement, since there is no such thing as rejecting reason through an innocent error of knowledge. But whether the theories of modern philosophy serve merely as a screen, a defense-mechanism, a rationalization of *neurosis* or are, in part, its cause—the fact remains that modern philosophy has destroyed the best in these students and fostered the worst.

Young people do seek a comprehensive view of life, *i.e.*, a philosophy, they do seek meaning, purpose, ideals—and most of them take what they get. It is in their teens and early twenties that most people seek philosophical answers and set their premises, for good or evil, for the rest of their lives. Some never reach that stage; some never give up the quest; but the majority are open to the voice of philosophy for a few brief years. These last are the permanent, if not innocent, victims of modern philosophy.

They are not independent thinkers nor intellectual originators; they are unable to answer or withstand the flood of modern sophistries. So some of them give up, after one or two unintelligible courses, convinced that thinking is a waste of time—and turn into lethargic cynics or stultified Babbitts by the time they reach twenty-five. Others accept what they hear; they accept it blindly and *literally*; these are today's activists. And no matter what tangle of

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motives now moves them, every teacher of modern philosophy should cringe in their presence, if he is still open to the realization that it is by means of the best within them, by means of their twisted, precarious groping for ideas, that he has turned them into grotesque little monstrosities.

Now what happens to the better minds in modern universities, to the students of above average intelligence who are actually eager to learn? What they find and have to endure is a long, slow process of psycho-epistemological torture.

Directly or indirectly, the influence of philosophy sets the epistemological standards and methods of teaching for all departments, in the physical sciences as well as in the humanities. The consequence, today, is a chaos of subjective whims setting the criteria of logic, of communication, demonstration, evidence, proof, which differ from class to class, from teacher to teacher. I am not speaking of a difference in viewpoint or content, but of the absence of *basic epistemological principles* and the consequent difference in the method of functioning required of a student’s mind. It is as if each course were given in a different language, each requiring that one *think* exclusively in that language, none providing a dictionary. The result—to the extent that one would attempt to comply—is intellectual disintegration.

Add to this: the opposition to “system-building,” *i.e.*, to the integration of knowledge, with the result that the material taught in one class contradicts the material taught in the others, each subject hanging in a vacuum and to be accepted out of context, while any questions on how to integrate it are rejected, discredited, and discouraged.

Add to this: the arbitrary, senseless, haphazard conglomeration of most curricula, the absence of any hierarchical structure of knowledge, any order, continuity or rationale—the jumble of courses on out-of-context minutiae and out-of-focus surveys—the all-pervading unintelligibility—the arrogantly self-confessed irrationality—and, consequently, the necessity to memorize, rather than learn, to recite, rather than understand, to hold in one’s mind

a cacophony of undefined jargon long enough to pass the next exam.

Add to this: the professors who refuse to answer questions—the professors who answer by evasion and ridicule—the professors who turn their classes into bull-sessions on the premise that “we’re here to mull things over together”—the professors who *do* lecture, but, in the name of “anti-dogmatism,” take no stand, express no viewpoint and leave the students in a maze of contradictions with no lead to a solution—the professors who *do* take a stand and invite the students’ comments, then penalize dissenters by means of lower grades (particularly in political courses).

Add to this: the moral cowardice of most university administrations, the policy of permanent moral neutrality, of compromising on anything, of evading any conflict at any price—and the students’ knowledge that the worst classroom injustice will remain uncorrected, that no appeal is practicable and no justice is to be found anywhere.

Yes, of course, there are exceptions—there are competent educators, brilliant minds, and rational men on the university staffs—but they are swallowed in the rampaging “mainstream” of irrationality and, too often, defeated by the hopeless pessimism of bitter, long-repressed frustration.

And further: most professors and administrators are much more competent and rational as individuals than they are in their collective performance. Most of them realize and, privately, complain about the evils of today’s educational world. But each of them feels individually impotent before the enormity of the problem. So they blame it on some nameless, disembodied, almost mystical power, which they designate as “The System”—and too many of them take it to be a *political* system, specifically *capitalism*. They do not realize that there is only one human discipline which enables men to deal with large-scale-problems, which has the power to integrate and unify human activities—and that that discipline is *philosophy*, which they have set, instead, to the task of disintegrating and destroying their work.

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What does all this do to the best minds among the students? Most of them endure their college years with the teeth-clenched determination of serving out a jail sentence. The psychological scars they acquire in the process are incalculable. But they struggle as best they can to preserve their capacity to think, sensing dimly that the essence of the torture is an assault on their mind. And what they feel toward their schools ranges from mistrust to resentment to contempt to hatred—intertwined with a sense of exhaustion and excruciating boredom.

To various extents and various degrees of conscious awareness, these feelings are shared by the entire pyramid of the student body, from intellectual top to bottom. *This* is the reason why the handful of Berkeley rebels was able to attract thousands of students who did not realize, at first, the nature of what they were joining and who withdrew when it became apparent. Those students were moved by a desperate, incoherent frustration, by a need to protest, not knowing fully against what, by a blind desire to strike out at the university somehow.

I asked a small group of intelligent students at one of New York's best universities—who were ideologically opposed to the rebels—whether they would fight for the university administration, if the rebellion came to their campus. All of them shook their heads, with faint, wise, bitter smiles.

The philosophical impotence of the older generation is the reason why the adult authorities—from the Berkeley administration to the social commentators to the press to Governor Brown—were unable to take a firm stand and had no rational answer to the Berkeley rebellion. Granting the premises of modern philosophy, logic was on the side of the rebels. To answer them would require a *total* philosophical re-evaluation, down to basic premises—which none of those adults would dare attempt.

Hence the incredible spectacle of brute force, hoodlum tactics, and militantly explicit irrationality being brought to a university campus—and being met by the vague, uncertain, apologetic

concessions, the stale generalities, the evasive platitudes of the alleged defenders of academic law and order.

In a civilized society, a student's declaration that he rejects reason and proposes to act outside the bounds of rationality would be taken as sufficient grounds for immediate expulsion—let alone if he proceeded to engage in mob action and physical violence on a university campus. But modern universities have long since lost the moral right to oppose the first—and are, therefore, impotent against the second.

The student rebellion is an eloquent demonstration of the fact that when men abandon reason, they open the door to physical force as the only alternative and the inevitable consequence.

The rebellion is also one of the clearest refutations of the argument of those intellectuals who claimed that skepticism and chronic doubt would lead to social harmony.

When men reduce their virtues to the approximate, then evil acquires the force of an absolute, when loyalty to an unyielding purpose is dropped by the virtuous, it's picked up by scoundrels—and you get the indecent spectacle of a cringing, bargaining, traitorous good and a self-righteously uncompromising evil. (*Atlas Shrugged*)

Who stands to profit by that rebellion? The answer lies in the nature and goals of its leadership.

If the rank-and-file of the college rebels are victims, at least in part, this cannot be said of their leaders. Who are their leaders? Any and all of the statist-collectivist groups that hover, like vultures, over the remnants of capitalism, hoping to pounce on the carcass—and to accelerate the end, whenever possible. Their minimal goal is just “to make trouble”—to undercut, to confuse, to demoralize, to destroy. Their ultimate goal is to take over.

To such leadership, the college rebels are merely cannon-fodder, intended to stick their headless necks out, to fight on campuses, to go to jail, to lose their careers and their future—and eventually, if the leadership succeeds, to fight in the streets and lose their “nonabsolute” lives, paving the way for the absolute dictatorship of

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whoever is the bloodiest among the thugs scrambling for power. Young fools who refuse to look beyond the immediate “*now*” have no way of knowing whose long-range goals they are serving.

The communists are involved, among others; but, like the others, they are merely the manipulators, not the cause, of the student rebellion. This is an example of the fact that whenever they win, they win by default—like germs feeding on the sores of a disintegrating body. They did not create the conditions that are destroying American universities—they did not create the hordes of embittered, aimless, neurotic teen-agers—but they *do* know how to attack through the sores which their opponents insist on evading. They are professional ideologists, and it is not difficult for them to move into an intellectual vacuum and to hang the cringing advocates of “anti-ideology” by their own contradictions.

For its motley leftist leadership, the student rebellion is a trial balloon, a kind of cultural temperature-taking. It is a test of how much they can get away with and what sort of opposition they will encounter.

For the rest of us, it is a miniature preview—in the microcosm of the academic world—of what is to happen to the country at large, if the present cultural trend remains unchallenged.

The country at large is a mirror of its universities. The practical result of modern philosophy is today’s mixed economy with its moral nihilism, its range-of-the-moment pragmatism, its anti-ideological ideology, and its truly shameful recourse to the notion of “Government by Consensus.”

Rule by pressure groups is merely the prelude, the social conditioning for mob rule. Once a country has accepted the obliteration of moral principles, of individual rights, of objectivity, of justice, of reason, and has submitted to the rule of legalized brute force—the elimination of the concept “legalized” does not take long to follow. Who is to resist it—and in the name of what?

When numbers are substituted for morality, and no individual can claim a right, but any gang can assert any desire whatever, when *compromise* is the only policy expected of those in power, and the

preservation of the moment's "stability," of peace at any price, is their only goal—the winner, necessarily, is whoever presents the most unjust and irrational demands; the system serves as an open invitation to do so. If there were no communists or other thugs in the world, such a system would create them.

The more an official is committed to the policy of compromise, the less able he is to resist anything: to give in is his "instinctive" response in any emergency, his basic principle of conduct, which makes him an easy mark.

In this connection, the extreme of naive superficiality was reached by those commentators who expressed astonishment that the student rebellion had chosen Berkeley as its first battleground and President Kerr as its first target *in spite of* his record as a "liberal" and as a renowned mediator and arbitrator. "Ironically, some of the least mature student spokesmen . . . tried to depict Mr. Kerr as the illiberal administrator," said an editorial in *The New York Times* (March 11, 1965). "This was, of course, absurd in view of Mr. Kerr's long and courageous battle to uphold academic freedom and students' rights in the face of those right-wing pressures that abound in California." Other commentators pictured Mr. Kerr as an innocent victim caught between the conflicting pressures of the "conservatives" on the Board of Regents and the "liberals" on the faculty. But, in fact and in logic, the middle of the road can lead to no other final destination—and it is clear that the rebels chose Clark Kerr as their first target, not *in spite of*, but *because of* his record.

Now project what would happen if the technique of the Berkeley rebellion were repeated on a national scale. Contrary to the fanatical belief of its advocates, compromise does not satisfy, but *dissatisfies* everybody; it does not lead to general fulfillment, but to general frustration; those who try to be all things to all men end up by not being anything to anyone. And more: the partial victory of an unjust claim encourages the claimant to try further; the partial defeat of a just claim discourages and paralyzes the victim. If a determined, disciplined gang of statists were to make an assault on the crumbling

remnants of a mixed economy, boldly and explicitly proclaiming the collectivist tenets which the country had accepted by tacit default—what resistance would they encounter? The dispirited, demoralized, embittered majority would remain lethargically indifferent to any public event. And many would support the gang, at first, moved by a desperate, incoherent frustration, by a need to protest, not knowing fully against what, by a blind desire to strike out somehow at the suffocating hopelessness of the *status quo*.

Who would feel morally inspired to fight for Johnson's "consensus"? Who fought for the aimless platitudes of the Kerensky government in Russia—of the Weimar Republic in Germany—of the Nationalist government in China?

But no matter how badly demoralized and philosophically disarmed a country might be, it has to reach a certain psychological turning point before it can be pushed from a state of semi-freedom into surrender to full-fledged dictatorship. And this was the main ideological purpose of the student rebellion's leaders, whoever they were: *to condition the country to accept force as the means of settling political controversies.*

Observe the ideological precedents which the Berkeley rebels were striving to establish: all of them involved the abrogation of rights and the advocacy of force. These notions have been publicized, yet their meaning has been largely ignored and left unanswered.

1. The main issue was the attempt to make the country accept *mass civil disobedience* as a proper and valid tool of political action. This attempt has been made repeatedly in connection with the civil rights movement. But there the issue was confused by the fact that the Negroes were the victims of legalized injustice and, therefore, the matter of breaching legality did not become unequivocally clear. The country took it as a fight for justice, not as an assault on the law.

Civil disobedience may be justifiable, in some cases, when and if an individual disobeys a law in order to bring an issue to court, as a test case. Such an action involves respect for legality and a protest

directed only at a particular law which the individual seeks an opportunity to prove to be unjust. The same is true of a group of individuals when and if the risks involved are their own.

But there is no justification, in a civilized society, for the kind of mass civil disobedience that involves the violation of the rights of others—regardless of whether the demonstrators' goal is good or evil. The end does *not* justify the means. No one's rights can be secured by the violation of the rights of others. Mass disobedience is an assault on the concept of rights: it is a mob's defiance of legality as such.

The forcible occupation of another man's property or the obstruction of a public thoroughfare is so blatant a violation of rights that an attempt to justify it becomes an abrogation of morality. An individual has no right to do a "sit-in" in the home or office of a person he disagrees with—and he does not acquire such a right by joining a gang. Rights are not a matter of numbers—and there can be no such thing, in law or in morality, as actions forbidden to an individual, but permitted to a mob.

The only power of a mob, as against an individual, is greater muscular strength—*i.e.*, plain, brute physical force. The attempt to solve social problems by means of physical force is what a civilized society is established to prevent. The advocates of mass civil disobedience admit that their purpose is intimidation. A society that tolerates intimidation as a means of settling disputes—the *physical* intimidation of some men or groups by others—loses its moral right to exist as a social system, and its collapse does not take long to follow.

Politically, mass civil disobedience is appropriate only as a prelude to civil war—as the declaration of a total break with a country's political institutions. And the degree of today's intellectual chaos and context-dropping was best illustrated by some "conservative" California official who rushed to declare that he objects to the Berkeley rebellion, but respects civil disobedience as a valid American tradition. "Don't forget the Boston Tea Party," he said, forgetting it.

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If the meaning of civil disobedience is somewhat obscured in the civil rights movement—and, therefore, the attitude of the country is inconclusive—that meaning becomes blatantly obvious when a sit-in is staged on a university campus. If the universities—the supposed citadels of reason, knowledge, scholarship, civilization—can be made to surrender to the rule of brute force, the rest of the country is cooked.

2. To facilitate the acceptance of force, the Berkeley rebels attempted to establish a special distinction between *force* and *violence*: force, they claimed explicitly, is a proper form of social action, but violence is not. Their definition of the terms was as follows: coercion by means of a *literal* physical contact is “violence” and is reprehensible; any other way of violating rights is merely “force” and is a legitimate, peaceful method of dealing with opponents.

For instance, if the rebels occupy the administration building, that is “force”; if policemen drag them out, that is “violence.” If Savio seizes a microphone he has no right to use, that is “force”; if a policeman drags him away from it, that is “violence.”

Consider the implications of that distinction as a rule of social conduct: if you come home one evening, find a stranger occupying your house and throw him out bodily, he has merely committed a peaceful act of “force,” but *you* are guilty of “violence,” and *you* are to be punished.

The theoretical purpose of that grotesque absurdity is to establish a moral inversion: to make the *initiation* of force moral, and *resistance* to force immoral—and thus to obliterate *the right of self-defense*. The immediate practical purpose is to foster the activities of the lowest political breed: the provocateurs, who commit acts of force and place the blame on their victims.

3. To justify that fraudulent distinction, the Berkeley rebels attempted to obliterate a legitimate one: the distinction between *ideas* and *actions*. They claimed that freedom of speech means freedom of action and that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between them.

For instance, if they have the right to advocate any political viewpoint—they claimed—they have the right to organize, on campus, any off-campus activities, even those forbidden by law. As Professor Petersen put it, they were claiming the right “to use the University as a sanctuary from which to make illegal raids on the general community.”

The difference between an exchange of ideas and an exchange of blows is self-evident. The line of demarcation between freedom of speech and freedom of action is established by the ban on the initiation of physical force. It is only when that ban is abrogated that such a problem can arise—but when that ban is abrogated, no political freedom of any kind can remain in existence.

At a superficial glance, the rebels’ “package-deal” may seem to imply a sort of anarchistic extension of freedom; but, in fact and in logic, it implies the exact opposite—which is a grim joke on those unthinking youths who joined the rebellion in the name of “free speech.” If the freedom to express ideas were equated with the freedom to commit crimes, it would not take long to demonstrate that no organized society can exist on such terms and, therefore, that the expression of ideas has to be curtailed and some ideas have to be forbidden, just as criminal acts are forbidden. Thus the gullible would be brought to concede that the right of free speech is undefinable and “impracticable.”

4. An indication of such a motive was given by the rebels’ demand for unrestricted freedom of speech on campus—with the consequent “Filthy Language Movement.”

There can be no such thing as the right to an unrestricted freedom of speech (or of action) on someone else’s *property*. The fact that the University at Berkeley is owned by the state merely complicates the issue, but does not alter it. The owners of a state university are the voters and taxpayers of that state. The University administration, appointed (directly or indirectly) by an elected official, is, theoretically, the agent of the owners—and has to act as such, so long as state universities exist. (Whether they *should* exist is a different question.)

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In any undertaking or establishment involving more than one man, it is the owner or owners who set the rules and terms of appropriate conduct; the rest of the participants are free to go elsewhere and seek different terms, if they do not agree. There can be no such thing as the right to act on whim, to be exercised by some participants at the expense of others.

Students who attend a university have the right to expect that they will not be subjected to hearing the kind of obscenities for which the owner of a semi-decent barroom would bounce hoodlums out on the street. The right to determine what sort of language is permissible belongs to the administration of a university—fully as much as to the owner of a barroom.

The technique of the rebels, as of all statist, was to take advantage of the principles of a free society in order to undercut them by an alleged demonstration of their “impracticability”—in this case, the “impracticability” of the right of free speech. But, in fact, what they have demonstrated is a point farthest removed from their goals: that *no rights of any kind can be exercised without property rights*.

It is only on the basis of property rights that the sphere and application of individual rights can be defined in any given social situation. Without property rights, there is no way to solve or to avoid a hopeless chaos of clashing views, interests, demands, desires, and whims.

There was no way for the Berkeley administration to answer the rebels except by invoking property rights. It is obvious why neither modern “liberals” nor “conservatives” would care to do so. It is not the contradictions of a free society that the rebels were exposing and cashing-in on, but the contradictions of a mixed economy.

As to the question of what ideological policy should properly be adopted by the administration of a state university, it is a question that has no answer. There are no solutions for the many contradictions inherent in the concept of “public property,” particularly when the property is directly concerned with the dissemination of ideas. This is one of the reasons why the rebels would choose a state university as their first battleground.

A good case could be made for the claim that a state university has no right to forbid the teaching or advocacy of any political viewpoint whatever, as, for instance, of communism, since some of the taxpaying owners may be communists. An equally good case could be made for the claim that a state university has no right to permit the teaching and advocacy of any political viewpoint which (as, for instance, communism) is a direct threat to the property, freedom, and lives of the majority of the taxpaying owners. Majority rule is not applicable in the realm of ideas; an individual's convictions are not subject to a majority vote; but neither an individual nor a minority nor a majority should be forced to support their own destroyers.

On the one hand, a government institution has no right to forbid the expression of any ideas. On the other hand, a government institution has no right to harbor, assist, and finance the country's enemies (as, for instance, the collectors of funds for the Vietcong).

The source of these contradictions does not lie in the principle of individual rights, but in their violation by the collectivist institution of "public property."

This issue, however, has to be fought in the field of constitutional law, not on campus. As students, the rebels have no greater rights in a state university than in a private one. As taxpayers, they have no greater rights than the millions of other California taxpayers involved. If they object to the policies of the Board of Regents, they have no recourse except at the polls at the next election—if they can persuade a sufficient number of voters. This is a pretty slim chance—and this is a good argument *against* any type of "public property." But it is not an issue to be solved by physical force.

What is significant here is the fact that the rebels—who, to put it mildly, are *not* champions of private property—refused to abide by the kind of majority rule which is inherent in public ownership. *That* is what they were opposing when they complained that universities have become servants of the "financial, industrial, and military establishment." It is the rights of these particular groups of

taxpayers (the right to a voice in the management of state universities) that they were seeking to abrogate.

If anyone needs proof of the fact that the advocates of public ownership are not seeking “democratic” control of property by majority rule, but control by dictatorship—this is one eloquent piece of evidence.

5. As part of the ideological conditioning for that ultimate goal, the rebels attempted to introduce a new variant on an old theme that has been the object of an intense drive by all statist-collectivists for many years past: the obliteration of the difference between private action and government action.

This has always been attempted by means of a “package-deal” ascribing to private citizens the specific violations constitutionally forbidden to the government, and thus destroying individual rights while freeing the government from any restrictions. The most frequent example of this technique consists of accusing private citizens of practicing “censorship” (a concept applicable only to the government) and thus negating their right to disagree.³

The new variant provided by the rebels was their protest against alleged “double jeopardy.” It went as follows: if the students commit illegal acts, they will be punished by the courts and must not, therefore, be penalized by the university for the same offense.

“Double jeopardy” is a concept applicable only to the government, and only to *one* branch of the government, the judiciary, and only to a specific judiciary action: it means that a man must not be put on trial twice for the same offense.

To equate private judgment and action (or, in this context, a government official’s judgment and action) with a court trial is worse than absurd. It is an outrageous attempt to obliterate the right to moral judgment and moral action. It is a demand that a law-breaker suffer no *civil* consequences of his crime.

If such a notion were accepted, individuals would have no right to evaluate the conduct of others nor to act according to their

³ See my article “Man’s Rights.”

evaluation. They would have to wait until a court had decreed whether a given man was guilty or innocent—and even after he was pronounced guilty, they would have no right to change their behavior toward him and would have to leave the task of penalizing him exclusively to the government.

For instance, if a bank employee were found guilty of embezzlement and had served his sentence, the bank would have no right to refuse to give him back his former job—since a refusal would constitute “double jeopardy.”

Or: a government official would have no right to watch the legality of the actions of his department’s employees, nor to lay down rules for their strict observance of the law, but would have to wait until a court had found them guilty of law-breaking—and would have to reinstate them in their jobs, after they had served their sentences for influence-peddling or bribe-taking or treason.

The notion of *morality as a monopoly of the government* (and of a single branch or group within the government) is so blatantly a part of the ideology of a dictatorship that the rebels’ attempt to get away with it is truly shocking.

6. The rebels’ notion that universities should be run by students and faculties was an open, explicit assault on the right attacked implicitly by all their other notions: the right of private property. And of all the various statist-collectivist systems, the one they chose as their goal is, politico-economically, the least practical; intellectually, the least defensible; morally, the most shameful: *guild socialism*.

Guild socialism is a system that abolishes the exercise of individual ability by chaining men into groups according to their line of work, and delivering the work into the group’s power, as its exclusive domain, with the group dictating the rules, standards, and practices of how the work is to be done and who shall or shall not do it.

Guild socialism is the concrete-bound, routine-bound mentality of a savage, elevated into a social theory. Just as a tribe of savages seizes a piece of jungle territory and claims it as a monopoly by reason of the fact of being there—so guild socialism grants a

monopoly, not on a jungle forest or water-hole, but on a factory or a university—not by reason of a man’s ability, achievement, or even “public service,” but by reason of the fact that he is there.

Just as savages have no concept of causes or consequences, of past or future, and no concept of efficacy beyond the muscular power of their tribe—so guild socialists, finding themselves in the midst of an industrial civilization, regard its institutions as phenomena of nature and see no reason why the gang should not seize them.

If there is any one proof of a man’s incompetence, it is the stagnant mentality of a worker (or of a professor) who, doing some small, routine job in a vast undertaking, does not care to look beyond the lever of a machine (or the lectern of a classroom), does not choose to know how the machine (or the classroom) got there or what makes his job possible, and proclaims that the management of the undertaking is parasitical and unnecessary. Managerial work—the organization and integration of human effort into purposeful, large-scale, long-range activities—is, in the realm of action, what man’s conceptual faculty is in the realm of cognition. It is beyond the grasp and, therefore, is the first target of the self-arrested, sensory-perceptual mentality.

If there is any one way to confess one’s own mediocrity, it is the willingness to place one’s work in the absolute power of a group, particularly a group of one’s *professional colleagues*. Of any forms of tyranny, this is the worst; it is directed against a single human attribute: the mind—and against a single enemy: the innovator. The innovator, by definition, is the man who challenges the established practices of his profession. To grant a professional monopoly to any group is to sacrifice human ability and abolish progress; to advocate such a monopoly is to confess that one has nothing to sacrifice.

Guild socialism is the rule of, by, and for mediocrity. Its cause is a society’s intellectual collapse; its consequence is a quagmire of stagnation; its historical example is the guild system of the Middle Ages (or, in modern times, the fascist system of Italy under Mussolini).

The rebels' notion that students (along with faculties) should run universities and determine their curricula is a crude absurdity. If an ignorant youth comes to an institution of learning in order to acquire knowledge of a certain science, by what means is he to determine what is relevant and how he should be taught? (In the process of learning, he can judge only whether his teacher's presentation is clear or unclear, logical or contradictory; he cannot determine the proper course and method of teaching, ahead of any knowledge of the subject.) It is obvious that a student who demands the right to run a university (or to decide who should run it) has no knowledge of the concept of knowledge, that his demand is self-contradictory and disqualifies him automatically. The same is true—with a much heavier burden of moral guilt—of the professor who taught him to make such demands and who supports them.

Would you care to be treated in a hospital where the methods of therapy were determined by a vote of doctors and patients?

Yet the absurdity of these examples is merely more obvious—not more irrational nor more vicious—than the standard collectivist claim that workers should take over the factories created by men whose achievement they can neither grasp nor equal. The basic epistemological-moral premise and pattern are the same: the obliteration of reason obliterates the concept of reality, which obliterates the concept of achievement, which obliterates the concept of the distinction between the earned and the unearned. Then the incompetent can seize factories, the ignorant can seize universities, the brutes can seize scientific research laboratories—and nothing is left in a human society but the power of whim and fist.

What makes guild socialism cruder than (but not different from) most statist-collectivist theories is the fact that it represents the other, the usually unmentioned, side of altruism: it is the voice, not of the givers, but of the receivers. While most altruistic theorists proclaim "the common good" as their justification, advocate self-sacrificial service to the "community," and keep silent about the exact nature or identity of the recipients of sacrifices—guild socialists brazenly declare themselves to be the recipients and present their

claims to the community, demanding its services. If they want a monopoly on a given profession, they claim, the rest of the community must give up the right to practice it. If they want a university, they claim, the community must provide it.

And if "selfishness" is taken, by the altruists, to mean the sacrifice of others to self, I challenge them to name an uglier example of it than the pronouncement of the little Berkeley collectivist who declared: "Our idea is that the university is composed of faculty, students, books, and ideas. In a literal sense, the administration is merely there to make sure the sidewalks are kept clean. It should be the servant of the faculty and the students."

What did that little disembodied mystic omit from his idea of a university? Who pays the salaries of the faculty? Who provides the livelihood of the students? Who publishes the books? Who builds the classrooms, the libraries, the dormitories—and the sidewalks? Leave it to a modern "mystic of *muscle*" to display the kind of contempt for "vulgar material concerns" that an old-fashioned mystic would not quite dare permit himself.

Who—besides the university administration—is to be the voiceless, rightless "servant" and sidewalk-sweeper of the faculty and students? No, not only the men of productive genius who create the material wealth that makes universities possible, not only the "tycoons of big business," not only the "financial, industrial, and military establishment"—but every taxpayer of the state of California, every man who works for a living, high or low, every human being who earns his sustenance, struggles with his budget, pays for what he gets, and does not permit himself to evade the reality of "vulgar material concerns."

Such is the soul revealed by the ideology of the Berkeley rebellion. Such is the meaning of the rebels' demands and of the ideological precedents they were trying to establish.

Observe the complexity, the equivocations, the tricks, the twists, the intellectual acrobatics performed by these avowed advocates of unbridled feelings—and the ideological consistency of these activists who claim to possess no ideology.

The first round of the student rebellion has not gone over too well. In spite of the gratuitous “puff-job” done by the press, the attitude of the public is a mixture of bewilderment, indifference, and antagonism. Indifference—because the evasive vagueness of the press reports was self-defeating: people do not understand what it is all about and see no reason to care. Antagonism—because the American public still holds a profound respect for universities (as they might be and ought to be, but are not any longer), and the commentators’ half-laudatory, half-humorous platitudes about the “idealism of youth” have not succeeded in white-washing the fact that brute physical force was brought to a university campus. That fact has aroused a vague sense of uneasiness in people, a sense of undefined, apprehensive condemnation.

The rebellion’s attempt to invade other campuses did not get very far. There were some disgraceful proclamations of appeasement by some university administrators and commencement orators this spring, but no discernible public sympathy.

There were a few instances of a proper attitude on the part of university administrations—an attitude of firmness, dignity and uncompromising severity—notably at Columbia University. A commencement address by Dr. Meng, President of Hunter College, is also worth noting. Declaring that the violation of the rights of others “is intolerable” in an academic community and that any student or teacher guilty of it deserves “instant expulsion,” he said: “Yesterday’s ivory tower has become today’s foxhole. The leisure of the theory class is increasingly occupied in the organization of picket lines, teach-ins, think-ins, and stake-outs of one sort or another.”⁴

But even though the student rebellion has not aroused much public sympathy, the most ominous aspect of the situation is the fact that it has not met any *ideological opposition*, that the implications of the rebels’ stand have neither been answered nor rejected, that such

⁴ *The New York Times*, June 18, 1965.

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criticism as it did evoke was, with rare exceptions, evasively superficial.

As a trial balloon, the rebellion has accomplished its leaders' purpose: it has demonstrated that they may have gone a bit too far, bared their teeth and claws a bit too soon, and antagonized many potential sympathizers, even among the “liberals”—but that the road ahead is empty, with no intellectual barricades in sight.

The battle is to continue. The long-range intentions of the student rebellion have been proclaimed repeatedly by the same activists who proclaim their exclusive dedication to the immediate moment. The remnants of the “Free Speech Movement” at Berkeley have been reorganized into a “Free Student Union,” which is making militant noises in preparation for another assault. No matter how absurd their notions, the rebels' assaults are directed at the most important philosophical-political issues of our age. These issues cannot be ignored, evaded, or bribed away by compromise. When brute force is on the march, compromise is the red carpet. When reason is attacked, common sense is not enough.

Neither a man nor a nation can exist without some form of philosophy. A man has the free will to think or not; if he does not, he takes what he gets. The free will of a nation is its intellectuals; the rest of the country takes what they offer; they set the terms, the values, the course, the goal.

In the absence of intellectual opposition, the rebels' notions will gradually come to be absorbed into the culture. The uncontested absurdities of today are the accepted slogans of tomorrow. They come to be accepted by degrees, by precedent, by implication, by erosion, by default, by dint of constant pressure on one side and constant retreat on the other—until the day when they are suddenly declared to be the country's official ideology. That is the way welfare statism came to be accepted in this country.

What we are witnessing today is an acceleration of the attempts to cash-in on the ideological implications of welfare statism and to push beyond it. The college rebels are merely the commandos, charged with the task of establishing ideological beachheads for a

full-scale advance of all the statist-collectivist forces against the remnants of capitalism in America; and part of their task is the take-over of the ideological control of America's universities.

If the collectivists succeed, the terrible historical irony will lie in the fact that what looks like a noisy, reckless, belligerent confidence is, in fact, a hysterical bluff. The acceleration of collectivism's advance is not the march of winners, but the blind stampede of losers. Collectivism has lost the battle for men's minds; its advocates know it; their last chance consists of the fact that no one else knows it. If they are to cash-in on decades of philosophical corruption, on all the gnawing, scrapping, scratching, burrowing to dig a maze of philosophical rat-holes which is about to cave in, it's now or never.

As a cultural-intellectual power and a moral ideal, collectivism died in World War II. If we are still rolling in its direction, it is only by the inertia of a void and the momentum of disintegration. A social movement that began with the ponderous, brain-cracking, dialectical constructs of Hegel and Marx, and ends up with a horde of morally unwashed children stamping their foot and shrieking: "I want it *now!*"—is through.

All over the world, while mowing down one helpless nation after another, collectivism has been steadily losing the two elements that hold the key to the future: the brains of mankind and its youth. In regard to the first, observe Britain's "brain drain." In regard to the second, consider the fact (which was not mentioned in the press comments on the student rebellion) that in a predominant number of American universities, the political views of the faculty are perceptibly more "liberal" than those of the student body. (The same is true of the youth of the country at large—as against the older generation, the thirty-five to fifty age bracket, who were reared under the New Deal and who hold the country's leadership, at present.) That is one of the facts which the student rebellion was intended to disguise.

This is not to say that the anti-collectivists represent a *numerical majority* among college students. The passive supporters of the *status quo* are always the majority in any group, culture, society, or age.

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But it is not by passive majorities that the trends of a nation are set. Who sets them? Anyone who cares to do so, if he has the intellectual ammunition to win on the battlefield of ideas, which belongs to those who docare. Those who don't, are merely social ballast by their own choice and predilection.

The fact that the “non-liberals” among college students (and among the youth of the world) can be identified at present only as “anti-collectivists” is the dangerous element and the question mark in today's situation. They are the young people who are not ready to give up, who want to fight against a swamp of evil, but do not know what is the good. They have rejected the sick, worn platitudes of collectivism (along with all of its cultural manifestations, including the cult of despair and depravity—the studied mindlessness of jerk-and-moan dancing, singing or acting—the worship of anti-heroes—the experience of looking up to the dissection of a psychotic's brain, for inspiration, and to the bare feet of an inarticulate brute, for guidance—the stupor of reduction to sensory stimuli—the sense of life of a movie such as *Tom Jones*). But they have found, as yet, no direction, no consistent philosophy, no rational values, no long-range goals. Until and unless they do, their incoherent striving for a better future will collapse before the final thrust of the collectivists.

Historically, we are now in a kind of intellectual no man's land—and the future will be determined by those who venture out of the trenches of the *status quo*. Our direction will depend on whether the venturers are crusaders fighting for a new Renaissance or scavengers pouncing upon the wreckage left of yesterday's battles. The crusaders are not yet ready; the scavengers are.

That is why—in a deeper sense than the little zombies of college campuses will ever grasp—“Now, now, now!” is the last slogan and cry of the ragged, bearded stragglers who had once been an army rallied by the promise of a *scientifically* (!) planned society.

The two most accurate characterizations of the student rebellion, given in the press, were: “Political Existentialism” and “Castroite.” Both are concepts pertaining to intellectual bankruptcy:

the first stands for the abdication of reason—the second, for that state of hysterical panic which brandishes a fist as its sole recourse.

In preparation for its published survey (March 22, 1965), *Newsweek* conducted a number of polls among college students at large, on various subjects, one of which was the question of who are the students' heroes. The editors of *Newsweek* informed me that my name appeared on the resultant list, and sent an interviewer to question me about my views on the state of modern universities. For reasons best known to themselves, they chose not to publish any part of that interview. What I said (in briefer form) was what I am now saying in this article—with the exception of the concluding remarks which follow and which I want to address most particularly to those college students who chose me as one of their heroes.

Young people are constantly asking what they can do to fight today's disastrous trends; they are seeking some form of action, and wrecking their hopes in blind alleys, particularly every four years, at election time. Those who do not realize that the battle is ideological had better give up, because they have no chance. Those who do realize it should grasp that the student rebellion offers them a chance to train themselves for the kind of battle they will have to fight in the world, when they leave the university; a chance, not only to train themselves, but to win the first rounds of that wider battle.

If they seek an important cause, they have the opportunity to fight the rebels, to fight *ideologically*, on *moral-intellectual* grounds—by identifying and exposing the meaning of the rebels' demands, by naming and answering the basic principles which the rebels dare not admit. The battle consists, above all, of providing the country (or all those within hearing) with *ideological answers*—a field of action from which the older generation has deserted under fire.

Ideas cannot be fought except by means of better ideas. The battle consists, not of opposing, but of exposing; not of denouncing, but of disproving; not of evading, but of boldly proclaiming a full, consistent, and radical alternative.

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This does not mean that rational students should enter debates with the rebels or attempt to convert them: one cannot argue with self-confessed irrationalists. The goal of an ideological battle is to enlighten the vast, helpless, bewildered majority in the universities—and in the country at large—or, rather, the minds of those among the majority who are struggling to find answers or those who, having heard nothing but collectivist sophistries for years, have withdrawn in revulsion and given up.

The first goal of such a battle is to wrest from a handful of beatniks the title of "spokesmen for American youth," which the press is so anxious to grant them. The first step is to make oneself heard, on the campus and outside. There are many civilized ways to do it: protest meetings, public petitions, speeches, pamphlets, letters-to-editors. It is a much more important issue than picketing the United Nations or parading in support of the House Un-American Activities Committee. And while such futile groups as Young Americans for Freedom are engaged in such undertakings, they are letting the collectivist vanguard speak in their name—in the name of American college students—without any audible sound of protest.

But in order to be heard, one must have something to say. To have that, one must know one's case. One must know it fully, logically, consistently, all the way down to philosophical fundamentals. One cannot hope to fight nuclear experts with Republican peashooters. And the leaders behind the student rebellion are experts at their particular game.

But they are dangerous only to those who stare at the issues out of focus and hope to fight ideas by means of faith, feelings, and fund-raising. You would be surprised how quickly the ideologists of collectivism retreat when they encounter a confident, *intellectual* adversary. Their case rests on appealing to human confusion, ignorance, dishonesty, cowardice, despair. Take the side they dare not approach: appeal to human intelligence.

Collectivism has lost the two crucial weapons that raised it to world power and made all of its victories possible: intellectuality and idealism, or reason and morality. It had to lose them precisely

at the height of its success, since its claim to both was a fraud: the full, actual reality of socialist-communist-fascist states has demonstrated the brute irrationality of collectivist systems and the inhumanity of altruism as a moral code.

Yet reason and morality are the only weapons that determine the course of history. The collectivists dropped them, because they had no right to carry them. Pick them up; you have.