

Edward Norden

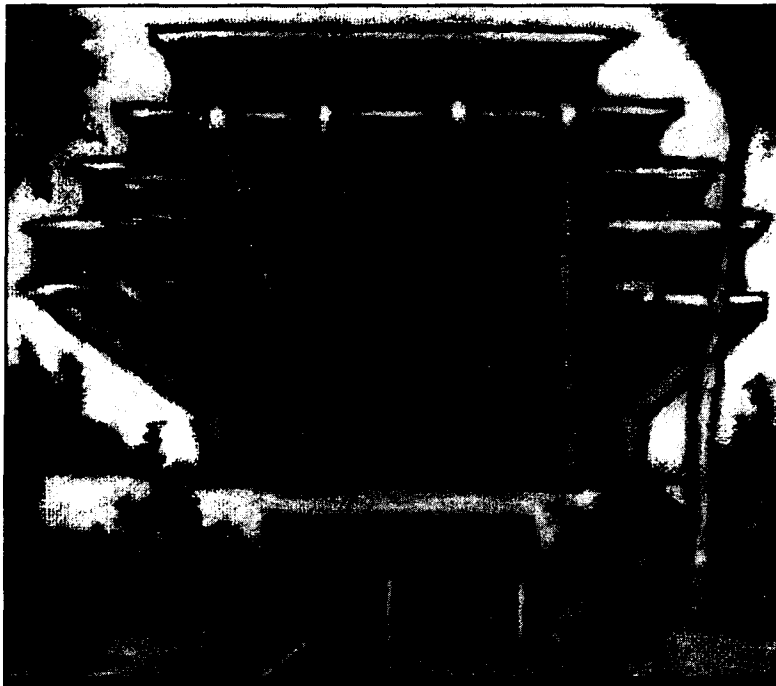
A Month in Paradise

*Scenes from the University of California, San Diego
—a kinder, gentler campus, sort of.*

I. Free Speech

Arnie's voice carried best. The living Arnold Schoenberg, we're talking about, who graduated from UCSD a few years ago and belongs to the doomed Caucasian majority. It was another gorgeous day in December on the campus of a school praised by *U.S. News & World Report*, and as he led the chants, Arnie also banged hard, very hard, on his drum. *Whump!* If the chanting was ragged, Arnie's drumming was nonstop and professional. Every time a student exited the main bookstore with a just-autographed copy of *Under Fire*, he pounced. The noise at point-blank range hurt, and Arnie's wasn't the only instrumental noise being made. Each of the six other protesters had a rattle or cymbals or pair of hollow sticks.

"HEY, HEY, OLLIE, OLLIE, HOW MANY SECRETS DID YOU SHRED TODAY?" It looked like a stab at old-fashioned guerilla theater, right here in the sun-drenched, spanking-new Price Center, donated by Sol Price and known to progressives as the High Price Center. A girl had colored her hair green, her fingernails black. And, of course, Andrew was there—he always is. Andy, a Caucasian and *New Indicator* person who has never matriculated, stands out whenever he's on campus, thanks to his bush of naturally orange hair. He was throwing shredded paper about while Col. North, a



left-hander, did his thing inside for 250 patient buyers and fans in a line snaking from greeting cards all the way to faculty publications.

A student of Asian background now came out with her book. She had paid an undiscounted \$27.06 for it, including the California sales tax. Her face was as fetching as a painted dish, and her meeting with a TV personality had put her on Cloud Nine, off of which Arnie's banging—*whump!*—knocked her with a wince. Ditto one of

those innumerable blondes sporting bouncing ponytails, UCSD sweatshirt, roomy shorts, cotton socks and Reeboks. And ditto a very large, crewcut type, also carrying *Under Fire*, who, if the University of California at San Diego were a different kind of place, might be getting his undergraduate education on a football scholarship.

One and all were Arnie's victims, and none of them, like, protested, far less punched him in the mouth. Indeed, it was hard to get any sort of rise out of these young, clean, fit, quiet, polite Americans and hyphenated Americans. The seven protesters had earlier invaded the store and tried to initiate dialogues. One guy in line had said, "I'm exercising my free speech, so shut up," and a girl had said, "I don't owe you an explanation." But the main reaction was no reaction. There was no dialogue, and no presentiment of violence, not even when a couple of campus cops, one Asian, the other African-American, ever-so-gently steered the long-hairs out. What's the good of free speech if no one gives a damn?

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II. The Chancellor

If you want to know why this gentle institution is hailed as an up-and-comer in *U.S. News's* greatly feared annual college roundup, you could do worse than drop in on Richard Atkinson, UCSD's chancellor of the last twelve years.

You're reminded of the CEO of a large firm. He'll tell you that entering SATs are higher than they used to be, and that UCSD is no longer just a hard sciences and engineering Mecca. More kids are trying to get in to major in everything from biology to music, fewer are being accepted, more of those accepted matriculate and fewer of those matriculated drop out or switch to other campuses of the incredible, wobbling UC system. By all measures, UCSD is closing in on UCLA and Berkeley. No other public university sends as many of its undergrads to medical school as UCSD does. And then there's the money: UCSD, with \$194 million, will come in fifth this year in the federal R&D sweepstakes, ahead of Yale, Harvard, and Berkeley, and with not a hint of any monkey business *à la* Atkinson's alma mater, Stanford. He'll also explain to you the virtues of UCSD's unique setup of five colleges in one.

On the other hand, Atkinson, former president of the National Science Foundation and current president of the American Association of Universities, isn't the best source on the undergraduate side of things. For one thing, modesty forbids him from mentioning that thirty-four chairs have been endowed on his watch, mainly in the hard and medical sciences, but also Drama and Chinese Studies and Political Science. Money talks, money helps, little or nothing happens without money, and Atkinson knows its ways. What did Roger Revelle, the late, by-now-legendary founder of UCSD, say on that subject? "The number one problem with a university is money."

True, when asked what his prime concern is, Atkinson said, "To make sure the faculty stays top-notch." But that depends on money, budgets, and position in the academic pecking order, statewide and nationwide. The Big Picture preoccupies Atkinson, maybe has to preoccupy the poor man. He has at his fingertips birth-rate statistics, immigration projections, budget printouts. He thinks about the consequences of the military-industrial complex going on the dole. He's worried about the Great Recession, UC funding cuts putting the 1960 Master Plan at risk, the expected shortfall in American-born hard science and engineering Ph.D.s. Yet his faith is that a university where great research is done, like UCSD, can also be one where undergrads in all the majors have reason to be happy.

Atkinson is also bothered by the lack of appreciation for UCSD in San Diego. More than thirty-five companies

have spun off from R&D here, important players like Hybritech, Immune Response, Gensia Pharmaceuticals. They've generated employment and won prestige for a town that used to begin with the Navy and end with General Dynamics. UCSD's accomplishments in fusion energy research, Alzheimer's, digital communications, and other hot fronts have put it on the non-military, non-tourist map, just as Roger Revelle wanted. Yet many San Diegans still picture the university as it was for a moment in the sixties, when Herbert Marcuse was making headlines. It's not right—why should ancient history dog the present? In conclusion, the chancellor gave your reporter a copy of a recent paper he co-authored, "Equilibrium in the Research University."

That was all very well, but your reporter understood his assignment: ignore the graduate programs and the research. Discover the college at UCSD, or to be more exact the colleges; the substance and atmospherics; what if any undergraduate life of the mind there is at this up-and-comer; to

what extent Political Correctness stifles learning; what kind of general education the kids get for their, their parents', and the taxpayers' money; and in general what's becoming of the good old American dream of a college education in a time of unemployment

nightmares, budget meltdowns, and demographic sea change. To make things slightly easier for himself, and as a measure of gen ed, your reporter decided to ask kids whether they knew who Arnold Schoenberg, the dead one, was. It was unfair, of course, because the name doesn't appear in *Cultural Literacy* by J.D. Hirsch. All this, a few months after the ashes of the man whose baby UCSD is had been scattered offshore.

III. The Founder

The lanky Roger Revelle seems to have been a WASP liberal in word and deed. A liberal, that is, before liberals went off red meat. For example, Revelle organized the A-bomb test at Bikini in 1946. For another example, when Joe McCarthy was having his day, Revelle said that loyalty oaths for professors were a dumb idea, not a popular thing to say in San Diego at the time. Revelle was retired from the Navy and boss of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The newspaper Scripps, along with the newspaper Copleys, were the paladins of charity and pull in town, keepers of the conscience of its Old Money. Being married to a Scripps, heading the SIO, and having held a Navy commission made it somewhat less hard for Revelle, whose name appeared on the earliest papers describing what any child today recognizes as the Greenhouse Effect, to make his dream come true.

The SIO, with its pier poking beyond the surf in the Edenic suburb of La Jolla, had been an arm of the UC

All this under a blue sky hardly tainted by smog—the F-18s from the Miramar Naval Air Station love exercising in it—and a sun analogous to a mother's love.

archipelago since 1912. Overlooking it was a mesa with nothing on it except pines, eucalyptus, chaparral, and Camp Mathews, a Marine base that Revelle's friends on active duty were ready to part with if he really needed it. His idea was to build a full-fledged, world-class campus, and quickly. Big names in the hard sciences, and the soft ones and humanities also, were to be lured to La Jolla. Resistance came from the UC trustees—known as the Regents—and from some of the Old Money in San Diego. The Regents in the mid-1950s, when Revelle got his bright idea, thought UC had enough campuses. As for the local Old Money, much of it was comfortable, thank you, with a gentleman's agreement. It seems to have been easier to bring the Regents and local business types around to the idea of a new campus than it was to persuade the La Jolla Real Estate Brokers Association (REBA) to sell to Jewish professors. The Chamber of Commerce quickly signed on, and General Dynamics paid for the first appointment to the faculty. They sensed that a university could help finish off San Diego as a snug harbor and put it in the big time.

The time was right. In 1957, in the wake of *Sputnik*, a cloudburst of dollars and taxpayer understanding suddenly rained on the heads of American scientists. More than any other state, California was to reap the benefits, the UC system especially. On this, at least, the lefty *New Indicator's* "Disorientation" issue for this year is right—the military-industrial complex was present at the inception of UCSD, spurred its growth, and remains a factor. If lots of others could benefit from the billions thus allocated—if humanists in addition to engineers could get a piece of the action, if San Diego County, buffered from the inferno of L.A. by Camp Pendleton and separated from the Third World by a fence, could burgeon with freeways and aqueducts and new hamlets far into the desert—why not? This new-type game required a major-league research university in town, and that, Revelle said, required letting new-type people into La Jolla.

"You can't have a university without having Jewish professors," he years later remembered saying back then to REBA. "That worked itself out more or less." But it took time, the fracas over Marcuse didn't help, and meanwhile Revelle, a man in a hurry, had to build a subdivision of bungalows near the budding campus for some of his transplants to live in.

Unfamiliar, scarcely credible history for the clean, fit, polite kids cramming in the Price Center. If you seek Revelle's monument, take a walk around the campus which has spread on the mesa. Looming near and over the center is the very good Central Library. An upside-down pyramid of glass fully utilized from morning to midnight, it's one of the few interesting buildings around, Engi-

neering being another. Someone has scratched an obscenity on a wall in one of the men's rooms, but "Lassie Eats Chickens" is more typical of UCSD graffiti.

Keep strolling. The ivy is young and tentative on the dorms of the five colleges, and on the graduate schools, including Medicine. There's the Nonlinear Science building, the gleaming Career Services Building, the supercomputer facility humming beneath its outsize dish like a visitation from another galaxy, the International Relations and Pacific Studies complex from the picture windows of which you can see the world's largest ocean and the vast student parking lots. There's the non-threatening Student Health Center, with its brochures in English and Spanish on acne and AIDS. There's Niki de Saint Phalle's landmark sculpture, "Sun God," which looks more like a papier-mâché bird. All this under a blue sky hardly tainted by smog—the F-18s from the Miramar Naval Air Station love exercising in it—and a sun analogous to a mother's love. Paths lead through the trees to the various colleges: structured Revelle, easier

Muir, multicultural Third, Warren for engineers, fledgling Fifth.

Among the seniors this year at Revelle is Jason, who hails from an *American Graffiti*-like hometown in the San Joaquin Valley.

One of the smartest kids

your reporter met, Jason is no progressive—in fact, he's on the conservative side, which made it interesting for him in his major, Communications. Most of his complaints about UCSD, however, can also be heard at the other end of the spectrum, and in between: Atkinson cares about landing the big research grants, not about the undergraduate herd. He delegates all responsibility for undergraduate business to Joe Watson, who enforces an alcohol ban on campus. UCSD lacks communal spirit, Jason goes on. Deprived of watering holes, students flee the dorms, rent pads by their sophomore year and metamorphose into commuters, and well before that head across the border to Tijuana (TJ) every weekend to get soused. Furthermore, classes are too big and there's still not enough parking.

Oddly enough, some of these complaints were adumbrated by Revelle himself in an oral history for UCSD's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1985. Said the Founder: "You were asking me what are my criteria for a great university? One of the criteria is that the students love it." And how do you get them to do that? One way, said Revelle, is to make sure there's a Telegraph Avenue, as in Berkeley, where he was a graduate student, an "area around the campus where the students can be themselves . . . restaurants, and beer joints . . . everything to make the students happy. . . . It has never happened here." Revelle spoke thus before construction of the Price Center. For all its amenities—nationality food outlets, a waterfall, movie theater, record store, ballroom, recreation halls, bookstore, and study lounges—it hasn't triggered the hoped-for and necessary love. Yet having complained, Jason

*Not only the hard sciences and engineering,
but whole departments in the social sciences
and even a few in the humanities
are uninfected by P.C.*

readily admits that the teaching is great—he has nothing to complain of when it comes to the education UCSD has afforded him on the cheap. He can identify the dead Arnold Schoenberg and is especially happy with the meaty general education he got in his college.

IV. Oxbridge on the Pacific

UCSD's college set-up remains somewhat unorthodox. As Revelle saw it, the colleges would take after Oxbridge, where dons and students interact in a cozier setting than the whole university, but with the whole university at their disposal. Revelle hoped to fend off anomie and balance the yin of research with the yang of undergraduate teaching and learning. Anyone in any UCSD college may take any course and major in any subject. The unique part is that each college fashions its own required courses for general education. The student must get this core out of the way, together with the departmental requirements of the major, before he gets a diploma.

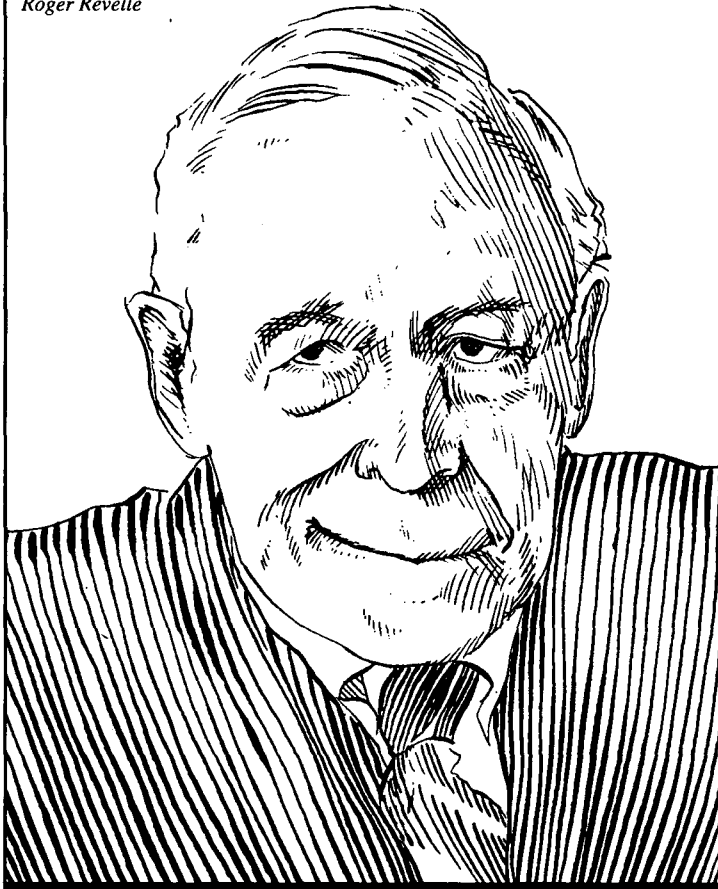
The odd-numbered colleges—Revelle, Third, Fifth—load on the most general requirements. Revelle, the oldest, is the least understanding, making you study two years' worth of Humanities. This is nothing less than a Great Books & Ideas of Western Civilization survey course. It is relieved only by the occasional *Bhagavad-Gita* assigned by one or another of the professors involved, most of whom are nominally tied to Revelle but whose main affiliation is with the all-university departments of Philosophy, Literature, History, Theatre, and Music. On top of Humanities, the masochistic Revelle boys and girls must take a dollop of physics, math, chemistry, and a foreign language, plus, new this year, a course given by either the History or Ethnic Studies department on "the interaction of two or more culturally identifiable groups in the U.S."

This last is right up Third College's alley. Its "Dimensions of Culture" sequence has Locke and Madison on its list, and many readings tending to favor affirmative action, the right to abortion, conscientious objection, and so on. Third also requires math and logic. Again, the lecturers who speak to hundreds of freshmen and sophomores at a time come from all departments, but here they are selected for

their radical or super-liberal slant, which most do not project too crudely. As for "Making of the Modern World" at Fifth, much depends on which professors you catch introducing the treasures of Jewish, Greek, Indian, and Chinese civilization.

The idea was that all the colleges would grow to be roughly the same size. As it has turned out, Muir is by far the most popular. "Flexibility" is the motto here, i.e., no core to speak of, virtually the run of the catalogue to do it your way. It's very good for "exceptionally able students with well-defined academic interests," as Muir's ad says. While some Muirites, like Michael of the conservative *California Review*, may be in that category, most aren't—Muir is home to lots of kids who want to take it as easy as they can. Warren is likewise a college with few requirements. But here, computer logic is mandatory, a tip-off that this is a college where engineers-to-be from Taiwan can get on with their game plans.

Roger Revelle



Revelle in that oral history declared that this college system "never worked out. And the reason it didn't work out is that college professors, university professors, are essentially journeymen professionals" who have their minds on their departments. He was tough, maybe too tough, on his baby. What's for sure is that there are no crenelated walls around these colleges. Peopling the UCSD campus on weekdays you have tweeded professors sucking pipes, trousered women faculty, a detachment of temperate-looking cops packing .45s, and thousands of nice, terribly hard-working kids on the move. Seemingly innumerable blondes sport those bouncing ponytails. The kids move in and out of their classes like shifts

in a Honda factory. Nearly all the 14,529 undergrads come from in-state—the blonde Sherry from Twin Falls, Idaho, is exceptional in this and other respects. (She edits the *California Review*.) Out-of-staters, unless they can wangle residency, pay \$10,185 in yearly fees, which is about what it costs the state to educate an undergrad, while the Californians grouch about having to pay the lousy greedy Regents \$2,486, which if Governor Pete Wilson has his way with the legislature will jump next fall to \$3,036, double the hit

five years ago. One in three of these not-particularly-grateful kids, however, gets some fee relief.

Who knows how many thousands of hours at the beach or in front of the tube or between the earphones of a Walkman these mainly white, mainly middle-class, mainly Southern California adults-to-be have spent by the time they matriculate? But their average SAT scores are public record—524 Verbal, 617 Math. In other words, though not the very brightest and/or driven of their statewide high school class, they're up there, a few cuts below the monsters who claw their way into Stanford and Yale.

The fact that they are generally better with numbers than words can be deduced from their overheard talk. The Asian-American girl walking holding hands with her Caucasian boyfriend is saying à propos of something, "It was, like, weird, you know?" Comprising eight percent of the population of California, the various Asians are slightly more than one in five UCSD undergrads, almost their share at UCLA—the University of Caucasians Lost among Asians. The latter everywhere in the UC system allegedly study as if possessed, making the former work even harder or be obliterated by the curve. Your reporter overheard no verbalized Caucasian resentment of Asian-origin geeks—none at all. A "geek," not to be confused with a member of one of the Greek frats or sororities, is a person so devoted to studying that he's incapable of socializing—formerly, geeks were called nerds, and when your reporter was at Harvard a generation ago, they were grinds. The worst thing at UCSD isn't to be a geek, however, but a "weasel," that is, insincere. To "wease" is to speak or behave insincerely, to have ulterior motives.

Not only did your reporter overhear no resentment of the Asians—he failed almost completely to elicit it. It took digging to establish that the two geeks with whom V., a Caucasian male, was assigned to room in freshman year were Asians. Seemingly, V. hadn't understood the official UC-wide definition of Fighting Words:

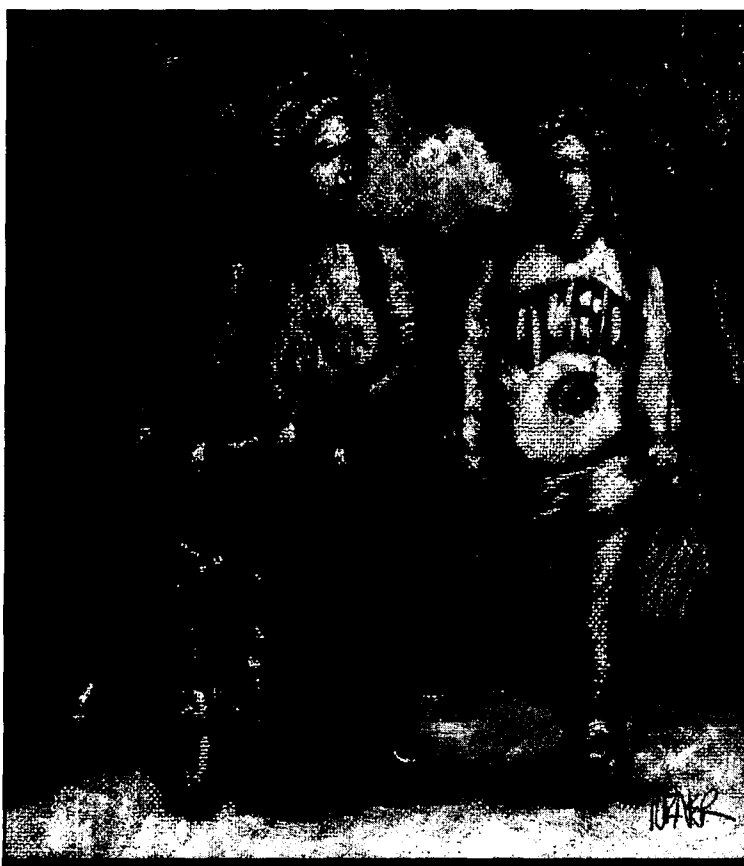
Those personally abusive epithets which, when directly addressed to any ordinary person are, in the context used and as a matter of common knowledge, inherently likely to provoke a

violent reaction whether or not they actually do. Such words include, but are not limited to, those terms widely recognized to be derogatory references to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and other personal characteristics.

For uttering Fighting Words in direct speech, any student may be punished. Your reporter was soon under the impression that the regulation had either been perfectly internalized, or hadn't been necessary in the first place. On this campus, such words didn't get uttered even in indirect speech, perhaps didn't get thought.

V. On the Lecture Circuit

"Gotta jet, you guys," said a Caucasian sincerely to a couple of female students as he mounted his customized skateboard. Let's follow him as he dry-surfs to his next class, American Lit. with Ronald Berman.



A cultural and political non-progressive and one of Revelle's earliest recruits in the humanities, the professor is lecturing today on *A Farewell to Arms*. This novel, Berman wishes his roughly 150, mainly female students to understand, is a great, intellectually sophisticated, prophetic book about our century's politics. Hemingway is making his modernist point by educating Frederick Henry—"Mr. Instant Gratification"—in the knowledge of who he is and the realization that there are, in the friendly Berman's words, "many things worse than war—defeat, for example." The skateboarder and the young women scribble away. No wonder that accord-

ing to the student-produced UCSD Course and Professor Evaluation guide (CAPE), Berman is one of the most popular teachers. Best of all, in praising Hemingway to the skies, Berman seems to be preparing to introduce the disturbing idea that, preoccupied though he is by morality, the writer finally and erroneously and unforgivably believes everything is chaotic.

Or was it your reporter's stimulated imagination? In his month back at school, he audited three dozen lectures, to his amazement finding none sleep-inducing—none except those in Electrical and Computer Engineering, where the lan-

guage of instruction could have been Aramaic. He was amazed, because unless his memory was going, the professors at Harvard had tended to be dull. But here in *fin-de-siècle* La Jolla, the teachers with their Ph.D.s from Stanford, Berkeley, the Ivies, Chicago and Oxbridge were all brilliant, dedicated, friendly, clear, organized, sincere, valuable—Revelle in his old age was wrong and Atkinson could relax.¹

Not only the hard sciences and engineering, but whole departments in the social sciences and even a few in the humanities are uninfected by P.C. Take the excellent Nicholas Jolley of the Philosophy Department, an Englishman in a yellow necktie. He teaches Milton in historical and theological context. Maybe he touches on the poor man's sexism, but he leaves no doubt as to the poet's heroism and the universal greatness and relevance of his work. Listening, your badly educated reporter was charmed, and wondered if he hadn't been a callow punk on whom Harvard was inevitably wasted. More to the point, he wondered how much of Jolley's knowledge, reasonableness, and eloquence was traveling over if not right through the heads of most of his wide-awake, busily note-taking students with their pony-tails and backwards Dodgers caps.

The question came up in other lectures, too, especially when the professor interrupted himself to try to involve the youngsters. Getting a volunteer to finish a thought or fill in a blank fact was analogous to pulling teeth. Unusual indeed was a word from the floor in a lower-level humanities or social science lecture addressing the material in its own right, much less challenging the professor. Question periods were focused on pinning down as firmly as possible what might be on the exam. It was like the press trying to get a usable answer out of Margaret Tutwiler, except that the professors are handier with words and a lot more forthcoming. Does the level of lecturing at UCSD connote and inspire a genuine life of the mind among undergrads, or does it obscure their real business, i.e., racking up grades? Donald Tuzin has the answer. Co-author with Atkinson of "Equilibrium in the Research University," he's an anthropology prof who has jumped from teaching to administering and should be upbeat when talking to a reporter. Tuzin, it seems, visited Harvard recently—how wonderful, he says, it would be to hear at UCSD the kind of "intellectual talk" he heard in the Freshman Union there!

In his teaching days, Tuzin despaired of students who didn't believe him when he swore he would be delighted to talk with them one-on-one, or who, if they did show up,

¹Well, maybe not all, some of the teachers of P.C. comprising the known exceptions. Expelled by Dr. Lisa Lowe from her "Intro to Women's Studies" class before the lecturer started doing her stuff, your reporter can't say whether she's brilliant, etc.

apologized for wasting his time. The dedicated Berman warned of likely interruptions when he agreed to a chat during office hours, yet just one kid materialized. You apparently can't have everything—what Berman calls "stability" in the young doesn't coexist with the itch of curiosity, at least not these days. The professor seems almost, yet not quite, sorry about that. He's a born teacher who wrote in 1968, presciently, that "the new Jewish radicalism is conservative," and who, when he took leave to be chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities under Nixon, persuaded Congress to open the till, implicitly to reclaim culture from the America-haters after the plagues of the 1960s.

UCSD got away with a relatively mild case of the sickness, according to Berman, and with few permanent ill effects. This is thanks, he says, to its hard sciences pedigree and the type of student it draws. Granted, some of the revolutionaries of yesteryear have job security at UCSD today, including in Berman's own Department of Literature, where they spread the deconstructionist, neo-Marxist, multicultural, feminist, illiberal faith—Roger Kimball's infamous tenured radicals. Or to be more exact, where they try to spread it. What Berman approvingly calls the "pragmatism" of most students here makes them bad material for such indoctrination, compared with, say, the high flyers at Stanford. They're too sensible, and too nice. Of course,

this raises the question of how deeply Berman's own lectures penetrate, not only those on Hemingway and Fitzgerald but on even deader white males like Aristophanes. Being nice himself, your reporter didn't pose it. He did get Berman to admit that the passivity here, the general flatness, wears down a scholar's edge. If this be the price of keeping P.C. at bay, the professor is determined to pay it with a smile.

VI. What's Left of the Left?

The too-sincere Tuzin was right about brilliant talk, however. You hear little of it at the Wendy's in the Price Center. And not much more at the Grove Cafe, in the funky Old Student Center that functions as a rival hub. Most of the doings and denizens make it the nearest thing on campus to a liberated zone. Peasant dresses, torn jeans, and Birkenstocks hold their own against Reeboks and sweatshirts. The Gay & Lesbian Organization, a pottery and jewelry workshop, the Grove, the Student Affirmative Action Committee, the various embattled co-ops and Groundworks Books, are here. Skip Groundworks if you're after Solzhenitsyn, Milton Friedman, or P.J. O'Rourke—they don't stock that kind of thing. But there's a full range of feminist novels and apologies for Fidel, as well as Greenpeace buttons and the required reading in P.C. courses. "Save the Co-ops!" appeals a painted bedsheet draped from

You apparently can't have everything—what Berman calls "stability" in the young doesn't coexist with the itch of curiosity, at least not these days.

a balcony facing the Hump, a grassy knoll below. "No More Fee Hikes!" says another.

Also headquartered in the Old Student Center is the New Indicator collective, which occasionally publishes a newspaper of the same name. Its manifesto reads in part, "Capitalism is the underlying source of so much injustice and suffering that it must be replaced," though of course "we are opposed to all forms of dictatorship." Its free annual "Disorientation Manual" proudly traces the group's roots to the Students for a Democratic Society in the legendary sixties. Some of the articles are horribly dated—especially the one accusing UCSD of being the tool of forces "currently responsible for the mindless drift toward World War Three." There is a wistful air about the manual, as if the powers-that-be had been having it their own way for too many years now. But as a compendium of P.C., the manual is unrivaled, and some of its formulations are pungent indeed: "[The Regents] believe, as did Hitler's Eichmann, that students should sit quietly at their desks."

Curiously, the manual doesn't count the advent of P.C. departments, courses, and tenured faculty as victories. The only political success of note in a couple of decades was the forced divestment by UCSD of its South African holdings, and the only progressive "enclave" remaining are the co-ops, which "function, to some extent, as microcosms of what a socialist society would be like." As such, the co-ops are the target of "relentless Administration hostility." All students should patronize and defend them.

Concludes the manual: "This year, students may rise up, studying and struggling, towards a better future!"

If they're going to, they'll have to be diverted from a lot of other activities. The bulletin board in the Old Student Center is always a horn of plenty. Announcements of the Marines coming to recruit future pilots, of evangelical Bible study, Greek rushes, prep courses for the Medical College Aptitude Test and Law School Aptitude Test, Chinese movies, lesbian movies, Chicano movies, a meeting of the student council and another of the UCSD chapter of the Objectivists, cars and motorcycles and surfboards and bicycles and dogs and books for sale, air tickets to San Francisco, meditation, Alcoholics Anonymous, Filipino dancing, apartments to share, come hear Ralph Nader. The usual extra-curricular cornucopia available to American collegians, making them the envy of the world—so usual and ordinary, in fact, that it wouldn't be worth mentioning, but for the following poster stuck among the rest:

THIS IS WHAT THE KOALA THINKS ABOUT MEXICANS:

"Bottom Five Things to do in TJ

1. Piss on a cop's shoe

2. Buy some chiclets
3. Volunteer to help out with the donkey show
4. Contract a disease from someone named 'Juanita'
5. Use the phrase 'f---in' beaners'."

THIS IS WHAT THE KOALA THINKS ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICANS:

"I don't wanna be called YO! Niga . . .

JOE WATSON HAS A BIG HAIRY PUSSY

Joe Watson, our favorite Vice-Chancellor of Undergraduate Affairs, has come out of the closet. He told us last week that he has a big hairy pussy. That's right, our Joe Watson is a cat lover who owns a 15 lb. Persian pussy cat. Mr. Watson is relieved that his little secret is out and he says that he plans to show off his pussy and will even let students play with it if they want to. We are all grateful to Mr. Watson."

The Koala? What's the Koala? Your curious reporter removed this poster and filed it in his notebook to ask Lauren and Greg about.

A senior, Lauren puts in forty hours a week at the Food Co-op and the Recycling Co-op. This she does because she's in accord with the goals of the co-ops, and because she needs the dough, having she says lost most of the value of her scholarship after the latest

fee hikes. Lauren's dad isn't in a position to cover her expenses—he's just the foreman, not the owner, of a vineyard in Carmel, home of Joan Baez and Clint Eastwood. This is a first-generation American speaking. Her family came to the U.S. in 1968, shortly before Lauren's birth, after her dad got in trouble in his native Guatemala. He has a year of college from back there. Her mom only got her high school diploma a couple of years ago. There has been no rebellion on Lauren's part against her parent's fairly left-wing views. She considers herself, however, a pacifist, an absolute pacifist, no fan of the gun-toting Sandinista women, photos of whom the *New Indicator* likes to publish with their infants. Nor does Lauren hold it against her brother and sister that they both enlisted in the U.S. Army to get ahead.

Once she gets her diploma in biology and history, she'll be the first college grad in her family. What does this mean to her? "A piece of paper," she answers. "That's the only reason I'm here." What's she going to do? "Start a co-op, maybe go to medical school." Is she grateful for her education? "Yeah—I'm grateful to myself." Greg, her boyfriend, child of gringos, also a progressive, received his UCSD degree in communications last year. He says he is looking for work. He vows it won't be with a corporation, not CNN and not Sony. In need of a shave, unhappy compared with Lauren, he says when asked which books have meant the most to him, "Marx and Engels," though he is unable to explain why. Your reporter entertains, then excludes, the possibility that Lauren's young man is putting him on. "I could have

Once she gets her diploma in biology and history, she'll be the first college grad in her family. What does this mean to her?
"A piece of paper," she answers.
"That's the only reason I'm here."

skipped college for all the good it's done me," says gloomy Greg.

The cheerful Lauren wears a beat-up, felt prospector's hat with a band of Navajo metalwork around it. "Professor Irons is good. I like him," she says in answer to the question whether any UCSD teachers have made a difference for her. And that bedsheet? She explains that the administration and the co-ops have been at war for years. The co-ops are financed by the students, by a cut from student fees, but the administration wants to kill them and put in commercial vendors, so she says, and if the "apocalypse" of this war comes, the "apathetic, naive, ignorant" mass of students will be mobilizable. The *Koala*? "Oh, that's the humor magazine. It's racist, but sometimes it's right on." Neither Lauren nor Greg seemed as astonished by the content or style of the posted material as your reporter was, or as upset as whoever it was who had copied and put it up. Nor did either know what the dead Arnold Schoenberg's claim to fame is, though Lauren took "Making of the Modern World" at Fifth, and Greg took "Dimensions of Culture" at Third.

VII. The Ex-Chancellor

"Never heard of it," claims William J. McGill in his office in the McGill building. "The campus humor magazine, you say?" The ex-chancellor is a white-haired, shirt-sleeved, crew-cut gent, an authority on reaction times. He has adjunct status, teaching a course in the psychology of student rebellion, keeping up and, he says, being consulted. His sincerity is of the twinkle-eyed variety, and returning the poster he says, "This is awful stuff—racist." Framed on the wall is a *New York Times Magazine* cover from 1970, portraying a younger McGill in front of the Low Library. McGill, president of Columbia for a whole decade starting then, did as much as anyone to save it from the Visigoths, exactly what he was hired to do. A still younger McGill had made his administrative name at UCSD in the very special years 1968-70. This man's accomplishment had been to keep the tender young campus open and working, at a time when, if it had been shut down or the National Guard called in, UCSD might never have grown to be what it is.

He wrote a book about it after returning from Columbia.

"One of those bedrock ordeals," he called it, when he was "caught between an opaque state administration and ruthless campus adversaries." A pugnacious Ronald Reagan sat in the governor's mansion, insisting that UC clean up its act, otherwise he would do it himself. The local chapters of SDS and the Black Panthers demanded that UCSD (1) cut loose from the military-industrial complex, and (2) get their approval on course and tenure decisions. Otherwise they, the people, would shut it down.

The great student revolt was a product of "idealism" and a symptom of "extended adolescence in post-industrial society," aggravated by Vietnam, wrote McGill, and he wasn't the only one. He was kept busy on his right flank, too. The local American Legionnaires and the Copleys' *San Diego Union* demanded severance for Prof. Herbert Marcuse, the

69-year-old neo-Marxist guru of the young revolutionaries and inventor of the concept of "repressive tolerance." Marcuse had been imported a few years earlier to beef up the non-sciences. Well, said Marcuse, of course—San Diego was "one of the most reactionary communities in the United States," and the capitalists' sly habit of repressing dissent by tolerating it notwithstanding, was unable to tolerate a free university.

McGill didn't like this refugee from Hitler, nor his ideas, but was determined to prove him wrong. He disappointed the Uptight Right on the Marcuse affair, which for him came down to academic freedom and UCSD's future. He engineered a one-year reappointment for the over-age professor, after which

Marcuse had to take mandatory retirement—a dénouement that remains a scandal in the eyes of the progressives, a triumph of expediency over virtue. But it actually laid down an important principle. If today UCSD is a fixture in a town it has done a lot to civilize, and if it is the plaything neither of the ideologues on campus nor the politicians and lobbies outside, McGill deserves a healthy portion of the credit.

As, the modest ex-chancellor hastens to point out, does the object of the *Koala*'s attentions, Joe Watson. Rumors of Watson's troubles and achievements as provost of Third reached McGill on Morningside Heights. On his return in 1980, he found the scene of his ordeal again "benign, al-



most languid," and Third College a successful experiment in "minority education." McGill declares himself well satisfied with Third, which was Watson's baby in its formative years. It's what's happening in some UCSD departments, and especially what's brewing out there in the state and the nation, that gives him pause.

"Certain kinds of linguistic orthodoxies have come to be demanded, especially in the humanities," he says. "You can still say what you want, there's freedom of speech, yes, but it takes courage sometimes to say it. It's because of multiculturalism." Is he for multiculturalism or against it? Well, yes. What's for sure is that the demographics are closing in on the UC system. The Caucasians are going to be a minority in California by 2012. The majority of non-Caucasians who get into the system on pure merit are and will be Asian-Americans. McGill isn't sure that this isn't a recipe for big political trouble. He is sure that he loves the Asians—they're studious, they're quiet, they "beat you at your own game."

Or as goldminer William Kelley said about the Chinese in San Diego in 1882: "[they] are quick, industrious and persevering; . . . you never see a Chinese lolling about, or amongst the group of idlers."

VIII. Asians

Not a bad characterization of Walter Ku. He lopes quickly around the campus, gray-haired, a smile on his face, hurrying from undergraduate lecture to graduate seminar to faculty conference. Busy as he is, he gave your reporter a nice chunk of time in his office in the sleek Engineering Building. Ku has come a long way. He was born in Peking, taken to Taiwan after the revolution, then immigrated to Philadelphia. In 1925, his father was the first Chinese to get a Ph.D. from MIT. Ku has an ongoing grant from the National Science Foundation to design the next generation of ultra-high-speed integrated circuits. The best of his graduate students are in on the project. Sure, in an American recession, R&D is the first thing to be chopped, but his own grant doesn't seem to be in danger, maybe because, as the PR brochure on it says, it's to "help the U.S. remain in the vanguard of semiconductors." The Electrical Engineering department in which Ku is a professor has a red-hot feel about it and continues to be sponsored by, among others, General Dynamics, Hughes, Lockheed, and McDonnell Douglas. Ku is about to take eighteen months off to go back east to work on something "more interesting than Star Wars." He couldn't give details about that, but did invite your reporter to meet David.

Young David is one of the best students in Electrical Engineering—so good that when Jerry Waldorf of troubled IBM came by the other day to scout the talent and discuss future chip materials, he was the only undergrad brought by Ku to a

small get-together. There were seven prodigies around a table meeting the eye-patched, jovial Waldorf, six of them Asian-American. They spoke of Gigahertz, they spoke of substrates. But is David a proper Asian-American? No, he's still no more than a Californian, if to be an American means to be either native-born or naturalized. So far, he's in the country on a student visa. The diploma he got from a high school in Orange County, entitling him to a place at UC, was thanks to his hard work and the fact that his dad, the owner of a tea-house in Taipei, sent him over to live with his aunt when he was 15 and hardly knew a word of English.

Now he has learned to speak it more than well enough to be interviewed. This wasn't easy, but as David says, "No pain, no gain." Which isn't to say that he's masochistic. Finding himself at Third College as a freshman, he quickly transferred to Warren to escape all those core and diversity and extra writing courses an engineer can live without. P.C.? What's that? When it's explained to him, David understands in a flash and says he's never run into it himself, but a former

roommate at Third, another Taiwanese immigrant, mentioned that his writing prof always dumped on Reagan in class.

No kid interviewed by your reporter had his mind so powerfully focused on his work and future as David, which at UCSD is saying a lot. David evidently loves his electrical engineering for its own sake, and also

knows that when he graduates, unless he continues on to graduate school or gets a job, he'll lose his visa. Of course, with the likes of Prof. Ku and Jerry Waldorf vouching for him, there wouldn't seem to be much danger that he'll have to return to his dynamic little island or take a job washing dishes. Still, he's worried. The UC system is "trying to cut down on us," meaning on Asians, and stateside research slots, as the IBM man said, are fewer for the time being, due to the economic situation and the whimpering end of the Cold War. Arnold Schoenberg? Sorry. David didn't know who the living one is, let alone the dead one. Nor, smiling apologetically, could he identify the *Koala*.

Your reporter saved his question about that publication for last, when he went to see Joe Watson. First, however, he had to get to the bottom of this P.C. thing.

IX. P.C. Up Close

Come what may, your reporter tries to be personable. In spite of that, he wasn't made welcome by the departments of Literature, Communications, Visual Arts, Ethnic Studies, Third World Studies, and Women's Studies—i.e., those departments that have either fallen into P.C. hands or were purpose-built. His telephoned requests for interviews were like pebbles down a bottomless well. This is not to say that anyone was morally obliged to give

P.C.? What's that? When it's explained to him, David understands in a flash and says he's never run into it himself, but a former roommate at Third, another Taiwanese immigrant, mentioned that his writing prof always dumped on Reagan in class.

him the time of day, or that he had no chance to see and hear P.C. as she is taught.

George Lipsitz of the Ethnic Studies department wears Harris tweeds and pops caramels. He was careless enough to allow a perfect stranger to sit in on his smallish "Ethnic Images in Film" class, which of course includes clips and videos. "Ethnicity," Lipsitz reminded his students, "is a construct. . . . It does not inhere in the blood line." His first aim that day was to illustrate how Hollywood since time immemorial has "constructed"—that is, misrepresented and exploited—ethnicity, while the counterculture and rap, also known as hip-hop, have told it like it is. Lipsitz, however, is anything but colloquial. His fast-talking presentation was chock-a-block with polysyllabic jargon. "Intertextuality," for example, and "scopophilia," pleasure in looking. "He talks so fast," one of the girls whispered to another.

It was hard for the kids to write as fast as Lipsitz talked. All relaxed, however, all were rapt, all were scopophiliacs, whenever the teacher screened material on a pair of suspended TVs like those you see hanging in hospital rooms. There was some black-and-white Charlie Chan, some black-and-white Stepin Fetchit, some Technicolor *Medium Cool* by Haskell Wexler—"You are the ones who exploit and emasculate!" screams a black character to a white TV guy in that 1969 docudrama. "When the black cat shoots, then he really lives!" You could have heard a pin drop in that classroom.

But it was during the rap videos that these white kids, mainly females, sat there with their mouths open. First there was Kid Frost doing Chicano Rap—truculent, sexist, bilingual. Then Public Enemy fightin' the power—hypnotic, imbecile, appalling. At least it was appalling to your out-of-it reporter, who believes that he is not a great racist, who has always dug Tito Puente, Miles Davis, and B.B. King, and who once long, long ago gave a dollar to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. If any of the kids responded in the same way to the violently racist and exploitative stuff on the two monitors, they didn't show it. The professor, after all, was treating this not as symptomology, not as part of the problem, but as an entrance to the solution: truthful, vision-

ary, liberating material, artistically, socially, above all politically.

For there was his second aim, his message, finally made explicit: "A vision," said Lipsitz, "is not enough. You can't just imagine yourself free. There must be a real struggle over resources, power." Lipsitz was suspected by your reporter of having a good mind. He decided to ask him why he was abusing it. But he never got the chance. "I don't want to be caricatured like D'Souza caricatured some of my friends," was Lipsitz's stated reason for refusing to be interviewed. Encountering your reporter several times afterwards on campus, he wouldn't return his glad hello.

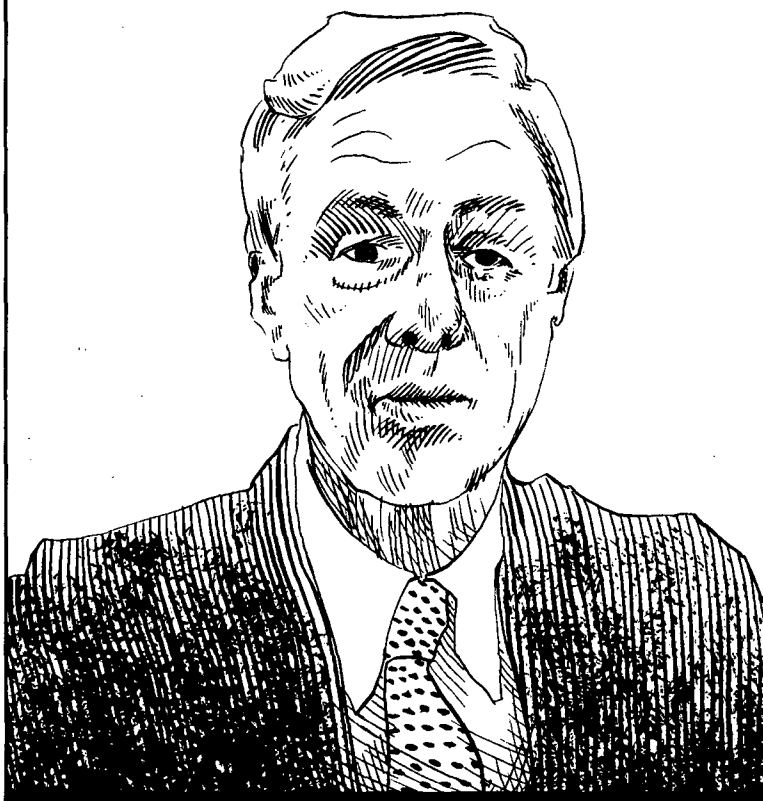
Never mind—the starkest P.C. lecture your reporter slipped into wasn't Lipsitz's but "Intro to Communications," with Vicente Rafael (Ph.D., Cornell). If

memory serves, Harvard in the old days lacked a Communications Department. This is one of those new provinces of the contemporary university that is "inter-disciplinary," meaning it has license to raid history, art history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, literature, and what-have-you. At UCSD, the department is home to some of the people who years ago were prevented by Watson from naming Third College after Emiliano Zapata and Patrice Lumumba and running it accordingly. The stated aim of the major in communications is not, God forbid, to train people for careers "in advertising, journalism, production, or public relations." It's rather to give them "a solid liberal

arts background" so they can proceed to graduate studies or "professional work in a number of communications-related fields"—for example, "teaching in the elementary and secondary schools" of California. Which might be all right if communications at UCSD didn't boil down to what it does.

Take Rafael. His topic the day his lecture was infiltrated was "the masculine gaze." Before telling the hundreds of dutifully note-taking boys and girls what that is, he reminded them that "all gender relations are relations of shifting, unequal power." Scribble, scribble. "*Everything*," he said with emphasis, "is implicated in the agendas, largely covert, of those power relationships. Is that clear?" It

Richard Atkinson



seemed to be, so on to the day's business. The masculine gaze is "a way of seeing" that has long dominated Western culture. It "objectifies" its "object," which is usually, though not necessarily, "an anatomical female." Point follows clear point.

Well-organized, Rafael is—but then so are virtually all of the teachers at UCSD, male and female, progressive, non-progressive, and totally apolitical. "The feminine gaze is always already colonized," he goes on, "by the masculine gaze—the feminine gaze is never sovereign." We first meet the "structure" of the masculine gaze in Europe, during the Renaissance, and this is no accident, for this is when the scientific method, capitalism, and the mechanical reproduction of images arose together. In fact, Rafael discloses, "the mechanical reproduction of images, that is, surveillance, can only happen in capitalist societies. For example, this university's records on you are modeled on police files." An "inhuman, monstrous" situation. No reason to despair, however. For there are other "ways of looking," namely "feminist ways," allowing us to "critique" the "structure," turn it against itself to redress the power balance. Feminist, not feminine. It should go without saying that not only "anatomical females" can look feministically, so to speak. Any questions?

Poor Dürer! Poor Rembrandt! Poor Cézanne! Poor Walter Benjamin, author of *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Dead men all, and unable to defend or explain their gazes! And what about the defenseless kids transcribing Rafael's *shtick*?

Well, in fact, as the minutes drag by there is less and less stenography, more and more glazing-over of young eyes, yawning, and even, here and there, yes, there can't be any doubt about it, grumbling. Any questions? A female ponytail: "Are you like saying that oil paintings before lithography didn't have this gaze? I mean, did it really start at a certain time in history?" It certainly did, the lecturer answers bravely and sincerely—it started with Descartes, and he writes the name on the blackboard. This wasn't something he planned to get into in this lecture, but it was

Descartes who separated the body from the soul, making the masculine gaze and surveillance as we know it possible. Five minutes Rafael goes on about Descartes, seven minutes. The question has thrown him. Rafael by now has become disorganized, is positively rambling. He knows it. "I'm not explaining this very well, but just trust me, OK?" A ripple of dubious laughter. Rafael is being sincere, he can't be accused of weaseling, and in spite of that there's something wrong. Some people are leaving early.

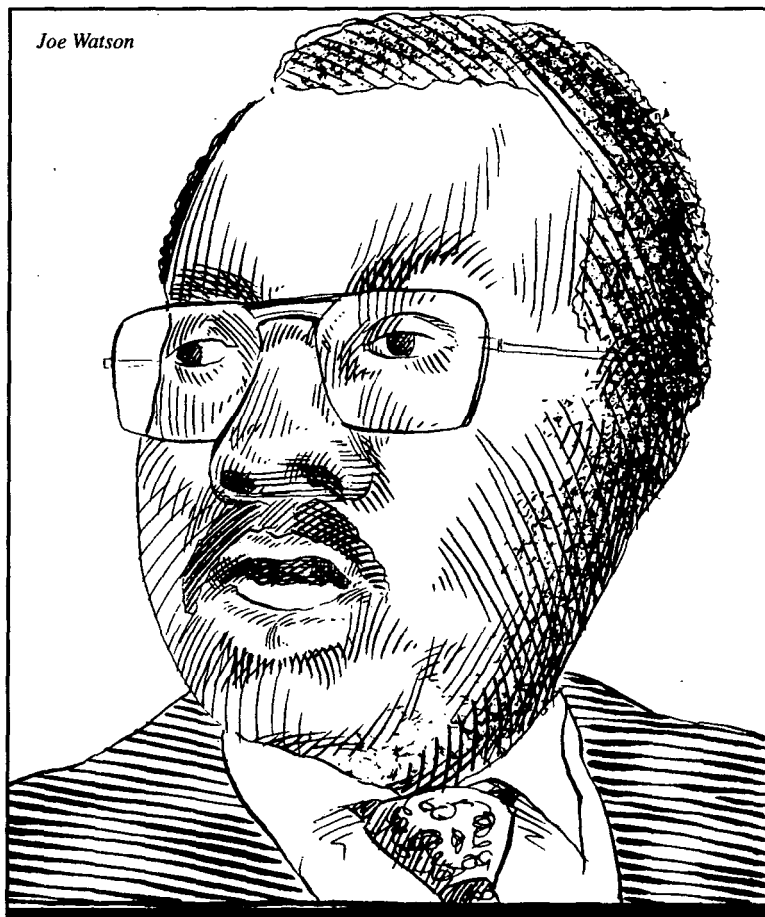
X. My Kind of Radical

You have tenured radicals at UCSD, and then you have tenured radicals. Peter Irons (Ph.D., Rutgers; LL.D., Harvard Law) is a professor in the Political Science department who, by his own description, holds down the department's "left end." There are many things about Irons that set him apart from his fellow progressives. First, the

fact that he instantly and with pleasure agreed to have coffee. Second, his language, 99.9 percent free of with-it cant. Third, his extramural work as a lawyer in the real world, even if that means representing the ACLU and a couple of atheists in a pending suit against the city of San Diego and a giant cross on Mt. Helix. Fourth, the fact that he's paid his dues, having gone to jail for thirty months in the sixties in preference to registering for the draft—a conviction vacated after he served his time. Sixth, he knows his subject, his political science, Hobbes, Locke, and the Constitution, inside-out. Robert Bork himself would probably give him that. And last, he really does seem to be fair.

"I have a deep respect for the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, which I carry with me all the time," he told his Standing Room Only class on the first day of the winter quarter, extracting a little black book from his pocket. "But I'm not politically conservative. I'm on the left. Does this mean you have to echo my opinions? No. They are simply points from which discussion may begin."

Without fail, every P.C. professor audited by your reporter delivered himself of such an opening-day statement.



Maybe it's required. Some added the friendly warning that if a student wished to argue, he had better be able to back up his dissent logically and with evidence, the implication being that parrots needn't do the same. Irons gave no such warning. The oath itself was redundant in his case, since the first ex-con perhaps ever to go to Harvard Law has a reputation among UCSD's non-progressives for meat-and-potatoes teaching and stout fairness, a reputation he mentions without prompting—"I've been favorably reviewed by the *California Review*, you know." All of which may lift him clean out of the P.C. camp.

Irons over coffee labels himself a Eugene V. Debs socialist, of all things. Your reporter would place him in the tradition of the muckraker radical intellectual, an all-American tradition compared with the Stalinoid, hand-me-down Continentalism of P.C., and one which in small doses can positively brace a university. Irons's book on the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, *Justice at War*, which he assigns for his "Law and Society" course and informs students they can buy at Groundworks, belongs in this tradition. The book scrupulously flays America for not living up to its own standards, without descending into anti-Americanism. "The American way," Irons quipped without bitterness in his lecture—"socialism for the rich, free enterprise for the poor."

The professor agrees with Berman that due to its hard sciences and technology birthright, neither UCSD's faculty nor its students "are very argumentative." The firemen Irons taught in night school in Boston gave him more arguments. Like Berman, he's a little sorry about that, and says he's grateful when the odd reactionary challenges him in mid-lecture. And like McGill, Irons thinks that free speech reigns at UCSD, though unlike the ex-chancellor he thinks it's the leftists who must risk a great deal to exercise it. Indeed, the impression your reporter took away after a month on campus is that free speech is basically safe at UCSD, though P.C. can force it into bizarre shapes: into the *Koala*, into indirect speech of a kind that gives sophomoric humor a bad name.

What of organized P.C. itself? Does it have a future as sunny as the California winter? At the risk of sounding optimistic, your reporter finally tended to agree with Berman. As fashionable as the perversion of learning for ideological ends has become, and as solidly as the P.C. professoriate has entrenched itself in some departments, in the long run P.C. may have trouble competing in the market. For cliques and fashions need departmental status to endure, and departments live and die, get their budgets or see them cut, according to the number of kids who sign up for their offerings. This is especially true in public institutions. Sufficient numbers will do so only if the work is ridiculously easy, the

material sticks to the ribs, or the degree in the major is a passport to a good job, something it has not been for gringo Greg.

Now the jargon of P.C. is easy to learn and no problem to spout. Yet it's a chore to listen to, and of the bored, fidgeting kids your reporter saw concentrated mainly in P.C. classes like Rafael's, there could be some who'll understand that the reason for their distress is that there's more, much more to the world than this doctrine says, that the "liberal education" being foisted on them is really a thin gruel of propaganda. Indeed, some of the kids may already be voting with their feet—there are loads of P.C. courses, but none is SRO like Irons's course. Passive as most UCSD students are most of the time, you sense that their restlessness whenever a rap video isn't distracting them worries their multiculturalist, Marxist, and feminist professors, and with good reason. The P.C. revolution, in a system where the customer is always right, may have an even shorter career than other revolutions, and thus might do less cumulative harm.

And so your sanguine reporter went to see Joe Watson.

XI. A Pre-Affirmative Action Baby

The vice-chancellor's office is catty-corner from Atkinson's in a very modest compound with a square of lawn in the middle. Watson always wears a dark suit, dark tie, whiter-than-white shirt on the job—no Kenyatta skull-cap, not even tasseled

Lipsitz was suspected by your reporter of having a good mind. He decided to ask him why he was abusing it. But he never got the chance. "I don't want to be caricatured like D'Souza caricatured some of my friends."

loafers. For a quarter-century this large, bespectacled man has been at UCSD, arriving having graduated from public school in Harlem, majored in chemistry at the City College of New York (when tuition was \$9 per year), and earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from UCLA. Watson is a pre-affirmative action baby, a working survivor living with the fact that certain blacks and whites put him down as a black cat's paw for the white powers-that-be. This has made his job even more chronically thankless than it must be anyway.

For, essentially, he's the dean of students, the man or woman on any campus who is paid to tell them, sincerely, "You must do this, you can't do that." He's the surrogate daddy who must be killed. The man at ante-bellum Harvard who had this job was Skiddy von Stade. He was apt to be kidded in the *Lampoon*, but never, ever got the *Koala* treatment. The worst Skiddy had to deal with was the springtime riots—once the excuse was the end of diplomas printed in Latin, another time a plan to chop down sycamores along the Charles to widen Memorial Drive. These were benign frolics even when tear gas was fired by the cops. Watson's greatest trial so far came in 1973, when he had to announce that the new college of which he was provost wouldn't be called Lumumba-Zapata College. The fuss over that seems to have been no frolic.

→

"Most of the bitterness of that period has dissipated," claims Watson. "The ban on alcohol, the crack-down on the co-ops, may unfortunately displease some people, but the proper and orderly functioning of the university demand no less. The co-ops are meant to be a learning experience. Irregularities in their accounting practices have opened the university to the possibility of lawsuits." He needs to see the books and doesn't plan to let this problem smolder much longer—this is one of the lessons of the sixties: you nip things in the bud. As for alcohol, it and learning don't go together, that's well known, and he has no plans to change the policy, although he knows it's unpopular. The *Koala* especially is always going at him on this issue.

Watson-the-lightning-rod believes affirmative action in higher education is on the way out, giving it ten years at the most. He's not glad about this, nor is he sad. On and off campuses everywhere, he expects things to be difficult as affirmative action is phased out. "For a generation or more, we may have a UC population which includes almost no blacks or Hispanics. That would be disastrous in terms of community and social costs." The deliberate, basically upbeat Watson rarely uses words like "disastrous." Maybe he doesn't really mean it. For he predicts that whatever pain and anger color-blind admissions might beget, and as unjust as it might be, American non-whites will eventually be better off having to get into college on their own steam. But this will take a long time.

Was he offended by the item in the *Koala*? Poker-faced: "Not at all." Really? "Times change and standards change." Weren't they Fighting Words? "No, this is indirect speech," explains the vice-chancellor, handing back the anonymous poster. So he wasn't going to say or do anything? "We encourage good taste, but we prefer to err on the side of free speech."

XII. The Co-op Wars

Watson was to get an earful a couple of weeks later. Indeed, just as Lauren said it might, the co-ops problem got the student body riled, a portion of it anyway. It took a sensational move by the administration. At around 1:30 a.m., January 15, 1992, university police broke into the General Store Co-op, changed the locks, and left. The police action set off the burglar alarm, and at 4 a.m. some co-op types arrived, broke in, changed the locks back, and locked themselves in. They were booted out at 10:00 by the returning cops and Watson's assistant Tom Tucker, who for an hour searched the store for its books in vain. By this time, around 300 not-so-passive kids were mobbing the Old Student Center and smashing the General Store windows. The action would be televised on the local evening news. More was to come. "At 11 a.m.," in the words of the twice-weekly *UCSD Guardian*, "students

again broke into the store and regained control." It must have been a scene to remember, as it must have been the next day at the Hump, at the biggest campus rally in years, where between 500 and 1,000 people, according to the *Union*, were addressed or harangued by, among others, Prof. Irons.

Your reporter has to say "must have been." He was away on January 15-16, believing his research done, and missed the first two days of what some called "the '60s in the '90s." But a few of the sights and sounds on the seventeenth did take him back a few decades. "*UCSD Police State!*" screamed one of the new bedsheets hung from the Old Student Center. There were tables on the pavement between the Hump and the gym where you could sign a petition telling the administration to keep its hands to itself, and there were kids wearing Mao caps. The petition was doing well—more than 3,000 signatures already, meaning that the break-in had teed off even some of the apathetic moderates. As for the radicals, they seemed more glad than mad. Greg and Lauren weren't at the pre-confrontation rally for some reason, but Arnie and Andy were certainly there, with their friend Debbie, the Army brat, euphoric in bare feet and clean peasant dress. "*Whump!*" Arnie had his drum.

"JOE MUST GO! JOE MUST GO!" Meeting the protesters in his usual suit-and-tie on the lawn outside the vacationing Atkinson's office, Watson told them he was happy they'd come and would be even happier to answer their questions.

"Why are you screwing us?"

Well, he really wasn't doing that, he was only protecting the university and its students by making sure that irregular accounting and loan practices didn't create liability problems for the university with the co-ops' sundry creditors.

"Bullshit!"

"Joe must go!"

"No, we want to hear what he has to say!"

"Yeah, let him construct his reality!"

Laughter. It was three days before the vice-chancellor would march in the UCSD contingent in the Martin Luther King Day parade in downtown San Diego, and now he seemed to have no special problem keeping his temper with this almost-yet-not-quite ugly crowd.

A crowd with not a black or yellow face in it. He kept his temper when, after he claimed that the administration had always behaved in perfectly good faith, somebody burped. And he kept his cool when somebody yelled, "We and the faculty are the university—you're the staff, Joe!" Laughter, cheers.

Whump! Somebody rubbed in Superior Court Judge Milliken's order of the day before—responding to a motion from the co-ops' attorney, Lottie Cohen of L.A., Milliken had restrained the university from closing them, but also ordered the books handed over for audit. Watson says he's glad the

(continued on page 46)



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protesters feel positive about that. Maybe progress is possible. But the crowd isn't buying such weasing. "The broader issue is one of power—we're marching out of here now!"

The P-word lets the cat out of the bag. Although the break-in surprised and offended many kids, not just the progressives, it has not raised the UCSD curtain on a replay of the sixties, because "the broader issue" for most isn't student power at all but getting a degree and a job. "As if you needed another reason to hate the administration," said the *Koala*, "along comes this whopper." Or as Michael of the *California Review* said, "Outrageous. They should have sent Gordon Liddy." With the books being pored over by accountants and the whole case in the hands of lawyers, the Co-op War goes on, but so do classes and exams, uninterrupted.

The protesters sought to lump all their complaints into one package—the break-in, the beer ban, the UC-wide fee hikes—and wrap it up in neo-New Left rhetoric, in hopeful imitation of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley long ago. It doesn't fly, not here. These kids are too lethargic, or too wise, for that. Another few days on campus following the great excitement convinced your reporter that they're probably too wise. Dropping in on a few upper-division lectures in certain departments, just to see what effect things were having if any, he discovered that not all the action at the undergraduate level is one-way—not all classes feature great professors talking while mobs of students dumbly transcribe some of their words.

Take Philosophy 160 with the young, bald, bearded Michael Mendelsohn (Ph.D., UCSD). The class, again, is huge. And the teacher, in jeans, developing the topics of knowledge, the omniscience of God, and free will, adopts the usual friendly stance. In fact, he's a virtuoso at it.

"If I said that I knew that the Regents were in the next room swilling gin and watching dirty movies, you could say after going over to check that I didn't have *true* knowledge." Laughter. "If you say that God knew everything that

Mendelsohn would do before Mendelsohn was even born, what choice will I really have tonight when I have to decide between Alpo and Ken-L-Ration for dinner?" Loud, delighted laughter. The point, however, is not that Mendelsohn is an entertainer, but that every few minutes he's pleased to be interrupted by questions and comments demonstrating comprehension, and something more. A classic American adage has it that you get what you pay for. At UCSD, you get considerably more. The rest is up to you. Bitch though they do at the drop of a hat, most of the kids appreciate that fact.

XIII. Epilogue

As this issue was going to press, the usual suspects staged a demonstration. They paraded with torches around the campus, shouting "EDUCATION IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE. NO FEE HIKES!" And then, with a tacit okay by the administration, they spent the night in the undergraduate library on Revelle Plaza. Unlike at other UC

campuses lately, there were no police and no arrests, just a couple of TV crews. The next morning, the library was open for business, and a table was set up in the lobby for collecting signatures.

"Wanna sign the petition?"

There were those who, walked right by, and there were those who walked right by giving the Visual Arts major who was personing the table a none-too-friendly look. Most, however, gladly signed. They did so not because they bought the global agenda, nor because they thought that Governor Wilson or the Regents might change their minds, but because it would set a bad precedent to shell out more without protesting.

"Wanna sign the petition?"

"Whaddabout?" said a Caucasian male.

"Stop the fee hikes."

"You're on. We're getting good value for the dollar now, but who knows?"

He added his John Hancock and went in to hit the books. □



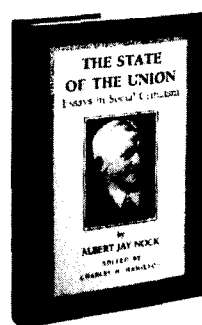
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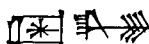
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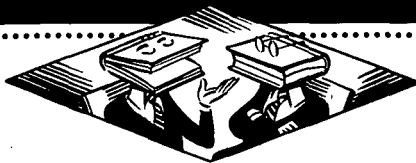
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Liberals: A Tribute

by P.J. O'Rourke

My next book is a collection of articles about—if I may be excused for venturing upon a large theme—the battle against evil. Not that I meant to do anything so grand. I was just writing magazine pieces, trying to make a living, and evil is good copy.

I take on various types of evil. Some are simple. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is a case of bad men doing wrong things for wicked reasons. This is the full-sized or standard pure-bred evil and is easily recognized even by moral neophytes. Other malignities—drugs in America, famine in Africa, and everything in the Middle East—are more complex. When doing battle against those evils, people sometimes have trouble deciding whom to shoot. And in my new book there is at least one evil, involving the kill-happy Irish, that is being fought whether it exists or not.

Anyway, it's a book about evil: evil ends, evil means, evil effects and causes. In a compilation of modern journalism there's nothing surprising about that. What did surprise me, on rereading those articles, is how much of the evil was authored or abetted by liberals.

Now, liberals are people I had been accustomed to thinking of as daffy, not villainous. Getting their toes caught in

their sandal straps, bumping their heads on wind chimes—how much trouble could they cause, even in a full-blown cultural-diversity frenzy? (I mean, if Europeans didn't discover North America, how'd we all get here?) But every iniquity documented in my book is traceable to bad thinking or bad government. And liberals have been vigorous cheerleaders for both.

“Liberal” is, of course, one of those fine English words, like lady, gay, and welfare, that has been spoiled by special pleading. When I say *liberals* I certainly don't mean open-handed or tolerant persons or even Big Government Democrats. I mean people who are excited that one percent of the profits from Ben & Jerry's ice cream goes to promote World Peace.

The principal feature of contemporary American liberalism is sanctimoniousness. By loudly denouncing all bad things—war and hunger and date rape—liberals testify to their own terrific goodness. More important, they promote

themselves to membership in a self-selecting elite of those who care deeply about such things. People who care a lot are naturally superior to those of us who don't care any more than we have to. By virtue of this superiority, the caring have a moral right to lead the nation. It's a kind of natural aristocracy, and the wonderful thing about this aristocracy is that you don't have to be brave, smart, strong, or even lucky to join it. You just have to be liberal.¹ Kidnapping the moral high ground also serves to inflate liberal ranks. People who are in fact just kind-hearted are told that because they care they must be liberals, too.

Liberals hate wealth, they say, on grounds of economic injustice—as though prosperity were a pizza, and if I have too many slices, you're left with nothing but a Domino's box to feed your family. Even Castro and Kim Il Sung know this to be nonsense. Any rich man does more for society than all the jerks pasting VISUALIZE WORLD PEACE bumper stickers on their cars. The worst leech of a mergers-and-acquisitions lawyer making \$500,000 a year will, even if he cheats on his taxes, put \$100,000 into the public coffers. That's \$100,000 worth of education, charity, or

¹It was that talented idiot Percy Bysshe Shelley who first posited this soggy oligarchy when he said, “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” Modern liberals are no poets, however, and are hardly satisfied with legislating in the unacknowledged manner. Today's liberals love politics as much as they love disappearing rain forests, homelessness, and hate crimes, because politics is one more way to achieve power without merit or risk.



P. J. O'Rourke is the author of *Parliament of Whores*. This essay is adapted with permission from his forthcoming book, *Give War a Chance: Eyewitness Accounts of Mankind's Struggle Against Tyranny, Injustice and Alcohol-Free Beer*, to be published in April by Atlantic Monthly Press.