

Mostly about People



By Wally Trabing

Anatomy Of A Campus Revolt

I am a pair of eyes and ears, standing on the rim of a crowd of some 300 students who are blocking the main entrance to the building where the UC Regents are meeting.

Nice sunny afternoon. Most students are seated cross-legged in the small quad; others stand on walls, at windows in nearby buildings; a few are in the trees.

I am here maybe an hour and my purpose is to record the mechanics of such a delegation; what it seems like to an on-looker.

I am over 30.

The feeling is expectancy and a few watts of emotion always are wedded with a semi-belligerent gathering.

First to strike the eye are the signs: "Huelga," "Spanish Grapes, Not People," "Get Out Of Vietnam," "Why Not a Malcolm X College?"

Next the eye catches the clowns (my emotionalism)—three men with their face smeared black near a red flag, students with tall, black chimney sweep hats, Negroes in black tams,

Over near the microphone is a really wild one in a costume made from what looks like the American flag. His hair looks like something out of a beauty parlor that exploded in the middle of his permanent.

These are the leaders or want-to-be leaders. It is part of the mechanics of protest, to attract attention, to show anti-establishmentism at a glance.

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Then I am conscious of the un-organization. The sitting quietly, the standing wiating. Someone calls out a phrase, a slogan. Necks turn. Someone puts a angry sentence together in yell form. The crowd responds with cheers or boos.

The interest is in degrees. There are factions of interest, but the nucleus is bound by a general theme of protest. There seems to be no head or tail to the thing.

I feel two feelings: The sincerity of the protesters around me and the vibrant one-track mindedness of the leaders in costume, waiting their opening to excite the crowd.

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Several speakers at the mike make pat statements, sprinkled with obscenities, that the Regents are doing nothing about their demands, presented only an hour ago.

Obscenity is another protest gimmick. It has shock value and grabs at the emotion. A mechanical trick.

It rouses crowd noise. One jumps up and shouts, "If they're in that building long enough they'll have to consider our demands. We have enough here to keep 'em in."

Cheers—but more laughter than agreement.

A dog becomes excited by the noise and starts to bark.

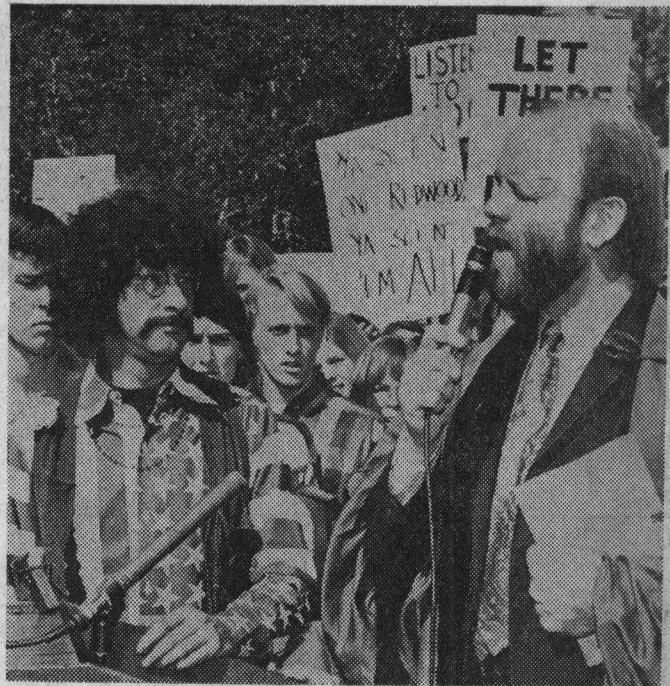
Dr. Page Smith, provost of Cowell College, speaks out of the crowd.

He agrees that great nations are forged in the fires of adversity but that changes should be worked out as a community. He encouraged them to act with solidarity and if reasonable discussion isn't possible, then follow step by step. Great applause.

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A dominate feeling emerges out of the attempt by the leaders to get something started. A wave of level-headedness among the majority.

There is a wave of boos when the obscenity trick is used; rejection by booing when the leaders make wild statements, aimed to inflame but stupid in content; cheers when something intelligent is said.



UCSC students yesterday afternoon put on a series of skits that were intended to ridicule the UC Board of Regents.



UCSC Assistant Professor of Philosophy Paul Lee, right, addresses students outside yesterday's Board of Regents meeting. Next to him, in bizarre garb, is Ralph Abraham, assistant professor of math at UCSC.

Some speakers are calm and wise. Some fight among themselves verbally as to the issue—not Vietnam, but Malcolm X college.

Many make stupid statements. A wise answer puts them down.

Then the majority votes to break it up, having demonstrated their strength.

A hard core remains to hound the Regents.

Today may be a different story, for such rabble-rousers are often effective.

But, while the greater mass of students went on with their classes with their professors teaching them, you will hear empty-headed wailing in the town about "them rioting students up there."