

THE POLICE CAR DEMONSTRATION: A SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS

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The encirclement and holding of a police car for thirty-two hours on October 1 and 2 by Berkeley students was the first clear sign that the student protest, was of a different caliber both in depth of feeling and in base of support, from the minor protests that have occurred on other college campuses over various issues.

Three weeks after these events, I prepared a questionnaire that was eventually completed by 618 persons who had participated in the demonstration. I hoped to gain information which would make clearer the base of student support, the degree of commitment held by the students, and the motivation for their protest. The analysis of the questionnaire data was to provide one article for a large project, edited by Michael Rossman, that was to deal with campus political activity over the last fifteen years. Looking back, some of the major conclusions indicated by the questionnaire results now seem obvious. However, I shall try to present the salient information it provided and also offer some interpretations that have benefited by events that have occurred since the data were collected.

The questionnaires were completed by students between October 24 and October 27. This was a period when no demonstrations or rallies were held, and in terms of mass participation this was the least active period of the Free Speech Movement.¹ It was also the period when the newspapers were quite consistent in categorizing the demonstrators as a small, discontented, radical minority group.

The background information which led to the sit-in in October is contained elsewhere in this volume; however, some details concerning the demonstration of October 1-2 will help provide a background for the following discussion. The police car was surrounded by students at approximately 11:30 A.M., October 1, to protest the arrest and prevent the removal to police headquarters of Jack Weinberg, who was held inside the police car. Soon after, the police-car roof became a podium. From then on, almost continuously until the end of

and Patricia L. Kendall, *The Student-Physician*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957.

¹ Before the police-car demonstration a "United Front" composed of the campus political and social action groups led the fight against the administration's action. Immediately after the end of the October 1-2 demonstration the Free Speech Movement was formed.

the demonstration, arguments concerning the free-speech issue, the effects of the administration's actions, the morality and wisdom of the tactics, the past actions of the administration, and other such questions were discussed. Many of the issues that would become more important later on in the controversy were first aired on the police-car roof. From 1 to 7 P.M., October 1, there was also a sit-in on the second floor of Sproul Hall. The night of October 1, a crowd of hecklers surrounded the student sit-ins and threw lighted cigarettes into the crowd. The hecklers finally left after a minister's plea. The next day the sit-in continued. Over 500 police were called in, and under a threat that the police would otherwise arrest the demonstrators, the leaders of the demonstration signed an agreement with President Kerr.

For many of the students this demonstration provided a first and very intense introduction to political activity. The demonstration provided a highly emotional experience, and at various times it was an extremely tense and potentially dangerous situation. All of this should be borne in mind when we try to describe the demonstrators, their attitudes and motivation, and the effect the demonstration had on them.

The data are most conveniently summarized in two tables. The first table gives the important results from the total sample and, where available, comparative figures for the university student population as a whole. The figures for the university student population are from data collected by Robert Somers. The second table compares students who had participated previously in one or more demonstrations of any kind with those students who had never participated in a demonstration prior to the October 1-2 demonstration.

The manner in which the sample was drawn introduces a definite bias toward the more active and committed FSM supporters. The questionnaire was available at a table sponsored by FSM at the now famous Bancroft-Telegraph strip of land, and this may have had some influence in determining who did or did not pick up questionnaires. One would assume that the more interested and involved students would take the trouble to pick up, fill out, and return the rather lengthy questionnaire. If this assumption is correct, then the proportion of students who were politically active prior to the demonstration should be considerably higher in the sample than among the total population of demonstrators. There is also a probable bias toward the left of the political spectrum, since the more active students tend to be somewhat more leftist. Finally, the degree of commitment to the movement would probably be lower if all demonstrators were included. This bias in sampling toward the more politically active and committed students should thus be borne in mind when looking at the results.

TABLE 1
 DEMONSTRATORS COMPARED TO UNIVERSITY POPULATION

	<i>Demonstrators*</i>		<i>University Student Sample**</i>
	%		%
1. Sex			
Male	63		63
Female	37		37
2. Age			
17-18	19		
19-20	35		
21-22	26		
23 or over	21		
3. Years at Cal		Semesters at Cal	
0-1	36	First	32
1-3	48	2nd-3rd	27
3 or more	15	4th-5th	14
		6th-7th	12
		8 or more	15
4. Living group			
Home with parents	9		6
Fraternity or sorority	2		15
Dormitory	13		17
Co-op	5		6
Apartment	71		57
5. Income of parents		Family Income	
5,000 and under	8	Closest to 5,000 or under	15
5,000-10,000	27	" to 10,000	26
10,000-15,000	24	" to 15,000	19
15,000-25,000	22	" to 20,000	11
25,000 and over	16	" to 25,000 or over	16
6. Church attendance			
Once a month or more	13		29
Never or almost never	87		71
7. Political affiliation†			
Conservative Republican	2		10
Liberal Republican	6		20
Conservative Democrat	6		8
Liberal Democrat	43		28
Democratic Socialist	26	Independent	20
Revolutionary Socialist	10	Other	11

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Need to take stand on free speech issue	60	
Administration's handling of the affair‡	63	
17. Expression of some degree of dissatisfaction with courses, ex- ams, professors, etc.:	40	17

* The sample of demonstrators is based on 618 questionnaires: each question was answered by between 600 to 618 persons. Where the percentages do not add to 100 it is because a few did not answer the question, since percentages are all based on the total of 618.

** The sample of students was 287 and percentages are based on this number. Where percentages do not add up to 100 it is because some did not answer the question.

† Percentages arrived at by extrapolation as first 200 questionnaires did not contain the liberal Democrat choice.

‡ Based only on those questionnaires which provided this as a choice; this factor was not in the original questionnaire, but was added later because many students wrote in this response.

TABLE 2

FIRST-TIME DEMONSTRATORS COMPARED TO EXPERIENCED DEMONSTRATORS

	<i>First-time demonstrators</i>	<i>Participants in one or more previous demonstrations</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Age		
17-18	23	15
19-20	36	33
21-22	23	28
23 or over	17	24
2. Living groups		
Home with parents	11	7
Fraternity or sorority	2	1
Dormitory	20	7
Co-op	4	5
Apartment	63	79
3. Church attendance		
One or more a month	17	10
Never or almost never attend	83	90
4. Parents' Income		
5,000 or under	7	9
5,000-10,000	23	31
15,000-25,000	27	21
25,000 or over	26	18

TABLE 2 (cont'd)

	<i>First-time demonstrators</i>	<i>Partici- pants in one or more previous demon- strations</i>
	%	%
5. Political affiliation		
Conservative Republican	3	0
Liberal Republican	10	2
Conservative Democrat	10	2
Liberal Democrat	48	39
Democratic Socialist	17	35
Revolutionary Socialist	3	18
6. Were one or more parents actively involved in politics during the period 1930-1950		
Yes	21	42
No	77	58
7. Are your parents presently involved in politics		
Yes	23	34
No	75	65
8. Did you sit in inside Sproul Hall, October 1		
Yes	35	47
No	64	52
9. Were you sitting in at the end of the demonstration		
Yes	68	72
No	32	28
10. Students expressing some degree of dissatisfaction with courses, examinations, professors, etc.	32	48
11. At the beginning of the demonstration were you willing to:		
Not demonstrate or demonstrate but not risk arrest or expulsion	59	39
Possibly risk arrest or expulsion	32	41
Risk arrest or expulsion	9	20
12. At the end of the demonstration had your position changed to*:		
Possibly risk arrest and expulsion	23	15
Risk arrest and expulsion	41	37
13. If negotiations break down and similar demonstrations are necessary would you:		
Risk arrest and expulsion	51	62
Demonstrate but not risk arrest or expulsion	44	37

* (Only 1% of those whose position changed had decreased their support of FSM)

14. Time spent in demonstration:		
Up to 12 hours	35	26
12-20 hours	28	23
20 or more hours	37	51
15. Since the demonstration have you been:		
Active (worked 3 or more hours for FSM)	18	20
Very active (worked 15 or more hours for FSM)	6	11
16. In the future will you be:		
Politically active in other areas	69	44
About the same	29	54
Less active	0	1

General Comments on Data

Generally the demonstrators seem to be more liberal politically and to live in less restrictive housing than the total University student population. This is not surprising; one would expect that the demonstrators would be comprised of this type of student. He generally falls into the academic intellectual and the non-conformist intellectual groups that sociologists Martin Trow and Burton Clark refer to in their typology of student subcultures. The other two groups of this typology are a collegiate "Joe College" group and the vocationally oriented student, both less likely to be intellectually or politically active.

Some of the differences between first-time demonstrators and those who had demonstrated previously may be explained in part by the ages of the two groups. The first-time demonstrators are younger and have had less time to become involved in demonstrations. As students get older at Berkeley they tend to move into apartments and out of more restrictive environments like dormitories.

When the activity records of the liberal Democrats and democratic Socialists are compared it is clear that most democratic Socialists are like liberal Democrats, while approximately 20 per cent of the democratic Socialists resemble the revolutionary Socialists in action terms. The revolutionary Socialists prior to, as well as during, the demonstration were considerably more active than those in other groups. For example, over 60 per cent of those students who had participated in seven or more previous demonstrations considered themselves revolutionary Socialists. This is the group of students that can most legitimately be called radical. There were approximately 300 students in campus political and social action groups at the beginning of the semester. The fact that 150 completed the questionnaire gives another indication of how

previously politically active students are over-represented in the questionnaire.

The question concerning demonstrating in the future was of course speculative, and when viewed in October the percentage who said they would risk arrest in the future (56) seemed quite high. When one considers that 800 people were arrested later on at the Sproul Hall sit-in, December 8, the results of the questionnaire appear to be validated.

A reading of the original questionnaires revealed that the one response provided to the question concerning motivational factors, "administration's handling of the issue," was often underscored or similarly emphasized. In response to the question "If your degree of commitment has increased since the demonstrations, what factors do you feel were responsible?"—77 per cent indicated that the administration's handling of the issue was a strong factor. This bears out what most people now feel—that unilateral action compounded the problem.

The students who were demonstrating for the first time are of particular interest. At the time, one might have argued that it was simply the excitement of the situation that caused such a large demonstration and that most students would cease their participation when excitement died down. In the light of subsequent events, it is obvious this explanation is inadequate. The FSM awakened or created a lasting response in many first-time demonstrators as indicated in Table 2. At the beginning of the demonstration the students who had demonstrated before showed a much greater degree of commitment and participation, but by the end of the demonstration the gap had narrowed considerably between them and first-time demonstrators. It is clear that the demonstration considerably increased the general level of commitment to the FSM among all participants.

Relating the perceptions of students concerning the likelihood of arrest, expulsion, or violence to their willingness to risk arrest or expulsion in the future reveals that those students who felt there was a fair or good chance of such occurrences were more likely to be willing to risk arrest or expulsion (see Table 3). In other words, those students who perceived the greatest risk from involvement in the demonstrations and yet continued to demonstrate were the most committed regarding future action. This itself is not surprising, since to demonstrate in the face of danger would require a greater commitment than to demonstrate where little danger was perceived. When one looks at the sequence of events throughout the controversy it appears that the number of actions involving risks for students were considerable. The police-car demonstration, the signing of petitions requesting

equal disciplinary treatment, the massive manning of the then illegal tables, and the December sit-in all had this quality. This would seem to indicate that one reason student commitment remained high throughout the controversy can be traced to the greater personal involvement that arises from participation in an event requiring continuing personal risk. Students by their participation made an implicit value judgment about the worth of the protest. To leave the FSM after such participation would either be to admit that one had made an incorrect judgment or to reveal a willingness to stay away from what one still believed to be an important and legitimate protest. An individual may very well change his mind about the value of a given decision, but such a change is usually based on new information which leads him to believe either that the situation has changed or that his original judgment was in error. In the Berkeley controversy, however, the administration's actions only served to give further evidence to the charges of bad faith and unwillingness to admit that there were issues involving free speech. Critics of the students have pointed to the blunders of the administration, and given these, it was unlikely that many students would change their initial judgments or withdraw their participation.

There is reason to believe that the questionnaire data do not provide an estimate of the general support for the FSM. Robert Somers' data, reported elsewhere in this book, show the political affiliation of those who supported both FSM goals and tactics to be: conservative Republicans 4 per cent, liberal Republicans 8 per cent, conservative Democrats 7 per cent,

TABLE 3

RELATION BETWEEN EXPECTATION OF PUNITIVE ACTION
AND WILLINGNESS TO RISK ARREST AND EXPULSION
IN FUTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

*% in each category willing to risk arrest and expulsion in
future demonstration**

Perception of degree of likelihood that each of the following would occur to respondent:**	<i>Expulsion</i>	<i>Arrest</i>	<i>Physical Violence</i>
No chance	39% (104)	15% (50)	38% (153)
Little chance	54% (295)	37% (139)	43% (226)
Fair chance	68% (121)	63% (198)	58% (150)
Good chance	73% (42)	75% (177)	76% (26)

* Original question: "If negotiations break down and further demonstrations are necessary would you: (1) risk arrest and expulsion, (2) demonstrate but not risk arrest and expulsion, (3) not demonstrate."

** Original question: "During the demonstration how likely did you think it was that one of the following incidents would happen to you:

liberal Democrats 41 per cent, independent 25 per cent, other 11 per cent, and don't know 2 per cent. The independents seem to include both those who would be classified by others as Democrats or Republicans as well as those who would have indicated their identifications as a Socialist of some kind if such a category had been provided. The "other" category also seems to contain some Socialists.

Peripheral Remarks

Most of what follows is not derived from the survey data. The questionnaire does not really measure psychological motivation. The data do support the contention that there were strongly felt verbalized positions on issues, and any attempt to explain the controversy without reference to them would be inadequate, to say the least. The information the questionnaire gives about motivation is assumed to have validity and is an unstated justification for parts of the argument that follow. The rest of the argument must stand or fall on its own merits.

Since the arrest of the 800 sit-ins there has been a flood of articles concerning the cause and significance of the campus rebellion. The criticisms and interpretations of the controversy have been varied. The most serious criticism of the FSM has been made by those who admitted the existence of legitimate grievances, but who see the tactics used by the FSM constituting a danger to the democratic order.

However, those who make this criticism base it on important assumptions which are not made explicit and are not necessarily valid. They also fail to consider certain historical analogues and fail to note the implication of certain distinct differences between this student generation and earlier ones.

The first assumption is so sweeping it is hard to state. Critics, in particular Seymour Martin Lipset and Paul Seabury, seem to assume that all responsible people have the same ideas about the definitions of the democratic processes and the democratic order. Their assumption seems to be that one must and can use the established democratic procedures and to go beyond them constitutes a threat to the democratic order. The relation of democratic order and democratic processes to civil disobedience are not considered. What criteria, if any, justify civil disobedience? What was the situation at Berkeley in regard to these criteria? Were there other channels really open to the students? In an industrial society is it possible that civil disobedience may be increasingly necessary to aid in keeping the democratic processes functioning? These and similar questions should have been touched on by those who criticize the students so strongly.

The more explicit assumption is that the situation at Berkeley was not serious enough to warrant the tactics used by the

FSM. No doubt one might debate this endlessly. I would make two suggestions. First, it is always difficult for someone to make what amounts to historical pronouncements about a current event. It may be even more difficult if the writer has been personally close to the event. One simply does not have the advantage of a future historical perspective, and this should be borne in mind when unequivocal judgments are made. Secondly, the spontaneity and breadth of support indicate that there were some deeply felt issues bothering the students and faculty. The argument that the majority were merely manipulated by radicals or that radicals had been using the issues of capital punishment and peace marches simply to gain support misses the point. The point was that support *was* gathered by the free speech-civil rights issue. Radicals are always present and they always have issues with which to attack the status quo. The fact that they supported FSM does not make the issues invalid. Many have pointed to the administration's handling of the situation as a major cause for the growth of FSM support. I agree with that, but again this does not mean that the protest against the handling of the situation was illegitimate.

The categorical classification of the Berkeley situation as indicating a serious threat to democratic order seems to be a definite oversimplification. American history is rich in examples of the use of tactics which were condemned at the time but have seemed justified in retrospect. The tactics used have either been stopped when reform legislation or other needed responses were forthcoming or, as in the case of the strikes against management, have become institutionalized. What reason is there not to believe that the FSM's tactics will either fall into disuse upon response of concerned parties or evolve into an accepted and thus legitimate form of gaining a hearing for certain kinds of grievances that are not easily transmitted upward through the complex power structure of modern society. Clark Kerr in *The Uses of the University* has shown how complex the modern university has become. Certainly the tactic of civil disobedience as used by Martin Luther King is accepted by many, including Governor Brown, when it is used in the South.

Neither of these possibilities should be dismissed out of hand. They seem at least as likely the alternative predictions that the tactics will be used in such an indiscriminate manner as to result in a threat to the democratic order.

However, if the student is in fact a "true believer" radical, then he may go beyond the bounds of a flexible democratic system. Many, however, have criticized the students as being "true believer" radicals, suggesting such an orientation leads them to strain limits of even a flexible democratic system. Now critics of the students have pointed to the students hav-

ing a moral rather than a political orientation. The implications of this have not been developed. I am writing this at the beginning of registration week of the semester following the demonstrations. There have been dire predictions of FSM sabotage of registration or new demonstrations and demands. However, I predict that in fact FSM will not exist on the Berkeley campus this semester except possibly in connection with the arrested students' trials. The reason for this is the apolitical, non-ideological nature of the student protester. He is very concerned with wrongs that he sees in society, but one is unlikely to be a revolutionary unless one has a doctrine and firm faith that one has the answers which will create a utopian society. The student of today may be less politically knowledgeable than his counterpart in the 1930s but is likely to be more sophisticated in his beliefs about the possibility of solving the world's problems. Even the use of the term "revolutionary Socialist" used by the most ideological students today rather than the term "Communist" used in the 1930s indicates their lack of faith in any system which purports to be a cure-all. The students are issue-oriented and situation-oriented. The reason the civil-rights issue was so important to the students was because it meant the students were not fighting just for the abstract principle of free speech, but rather for speech that could have possible consequences. The moral orientation is one reason they were able to laugh at themselves (something commented on by many observers). The pressure of the "true believer" conformity has, I think, been exaggerated by those who perhaps remember different times and attitudes.

Hopefully all of this suggests that the FSM critics may be somewhat pessimistic in their assessment of the meaning of the Berkeley controversy. Even worse, they may have prejudiced many against legitimate student action which may occur for a variety of social causes in the future.