

8/16/18

# **THE MIND OF CLARK KERR**

His  
view  
of

the  
**UNIVERSITY  
FACTORY**

& the  
**"NEW  
SLAVERY"**

*by Hal Draper*

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

While gratified, and a little surprised, at the REP's request for permission to publish a new edition of a topical pamphlet, I must stress that The Mind of Clark Kerr was written for a specific occasion. It was published by the Independent Socialist Club at Berkeley immediately after the first confrontation in the Free Speech Movement's struggle, when on October 1-2, 1964, a sit-down around a police car first challenged the power of the Multiversity. The original Forward, which recapitulated these events - now related in much more detail in my Berkeley: The New Student Revolt (Grove Press, 1965) - was dated October 4.

The occasion was not as specific as most thought. It was the function of The Mind of Clark Kerr to generalize the issues for the embattled students. This generalization was made possible by Kerr, for he had already done the generalizing; the pamphlet merely exhibited and condensed his ideas for easier visibility. This helped to lift the issues more quickly from the particularities of student rights to the broader, more basic issue, which was the relationship between the university and society. The phrase about the 'university factory' became common coin (now, international currency) because it was not an accusation but, in fact, the content of Kerr's own description of the university reality today.

Kerr was therefore not simply another hapless administrator unluckily caught in the middle. If he became a symbol of what the students were revolting against, it was because he had made himself that symbol.

Symbol of what? The following pamphlet stresses several times: Kerr is the archetype of the liberal bureaucrat. The pamphlet repeated this several times because it is basic; yet it seems to be a hard point to get across. I know this from two sides.

On the one hand: not long ago, one of those ex-Communists-turned-social-democrat, writing in Dissent, quoted my statement:

'By adding a single sentence Kerr's book (on industrialism) would

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become the work of a proto-fascist ideologue.'

He then proceeded genially to discuss as if I were calling Kerr a proto-fascist. This seemed remarkable because my very next sentence (unquoted) said:

'But, of course, this he is not; he is a sort of liberal; he really does not approve, and so the single sentence is not there.'

This was not surprising coming from a man who was already an expert at this kind of quoting even before most of today's student militants were born.

But on the other hand: The fact is that there exists an unauthorized edition of this pamphlet, mimeographed by Canadian new-left students with many good intentions and even more errors and omissions, which was given the title: "Clark Kerr: The Liberal as Proto-Fascist"!

It goes hard, but this is clearly true: these 'friends' (God save me from my friends, etc.) have as little grasp as the Dissent writer of a revolutionary Marxist's analysis of the role of liberalism.

The role of the liberal is to do the job of buffering the status quo which the Right-Winger cannot do, and to do it with methods impossible to Max Rafferty. And to be effective, he must be a sincere liberal, not a mere faker. This is what seems hard to grasp.

I had occasion to stress this all over again right after the FSM fight, in January 1965, in the course of a debate with Prof. Nathan Glazer (transcript in New Politics, Winter 1965). The 'danger from the Right' had been invoked from the floor. I take the liberty of quoting my summary, a little compressed:

'He is right: there is a danger from the Right... But the question is: how do you meet the danger from the Right?...

'Mr. Kerr, from the beginning, said: If you (the FSM) push me or the Administration too fast, too hard, then the Right Wing is going to have my head on the chopping-block, too...

'But this isn't what happened. The FSM pressed... What they did - and this is a key to American politics - was to say:

'There is pressure on the Right against Kerr. Good: he is the man in the middle - he is not the villain of the piece - he is the man in the middle, who is accomplishing the hatchet work of the Right now, because they are pushing him, pressing on him. Therefore, the answer is: Let us push him in the opposite direction. Let us press him in the opposite direction. Let us fight as militantly, as forcefully, with as much energy and determination, to put pres-

sure on this man-in-the-middle by our means and for our ends as the Right-Wingers are doing.

'And it was this means, this tactic, that was successful in convincing Kerr that it was not only the pressure from the Right he had to yield to, but there was a new pressure, a pressure that had been missing in American politics...'

I think this approach is a key to many things. For one, it explained in advance why Kerr was later fired by that right wing, mainly as a scape-goat. Much more important, on the national scale it is also the key to understanding the relation between liberalism and the status quo.

The liberal always tells us, sincerely: 'Support me, even if I don't go as far as you would like, because otherwise the Right Wing will get you.' And the majority of you do support him (sincerely), with the best of intentions. It is only because you support him that he is able to do the job which the Right Wing cannot do, or rather cannot do as cheaply: viz. mediate opposition to the whole system and blunt potential struggles against the corporate ruling powers. When the liberal exhausts his credit or shows himself unable to do this job effectively, he can be thrown away like a squeezed lemon, and other methods may take over. It is in the nature of things, and an unbreakable ritual, that at this juncture the liberal will accuse the left of bringing on disaster (i.e. his own downfall) because they refused to be hogtied by his methods.

The outcome of the FSM was otherwise: the proto-revolutionary tactics of the student militants were also the only effective pressure tactics under the circumstances. Marx commented long ago that it has often taken revolutionary struggles simply to gain reforms (to buy off the struggle), where reformist tactics only convince the powers-that-be that the supplicants can be safely ignored. In this sense, it is revolutionary struggle that is most realistic and practical -- always so in the long run. But that is a by-product: revolutionary struggles are not pressure-politics. They have two other and more important characteristics: (1) they show the way to other sections of the people, they set an example, they inspire and teach; and (2) though defeated or stopped, they create a residue of genuine revolutionists, out of the experience.

And what this country needs is not merely militants, not merely radicals, but cadres of experienced revolutionists.

As this is written, experience is also showing, all over Europe, that mass revolutionary struggles from below produce, or help to produce, a breed of revolutionists who are not easily coopted by any set of bureaucrats. I am



writing under the immediate impact of a veritable revolution-from-below in France (tamed by the parliamentary sellout of all the allegedly 'workers' parties') in which student struggles provided the fuse, and mass workers' movements in the workplaces provided the long-burning powder. The fire this time spread east and west. In Germany, Italy, Britain, Sweden, Belgium, universities have been occupied by battling student movements. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, students and workers in alliance have challenged the power of the ruling bureaucracies, and, like their comrades in the West, demanded genuine democratic control from below.

In all these cases, the potentially revolutionary struggles may be short-circuited by the Kerr-types: in the U.S., liberals; in West Europe, social-democrats (as well as the so-called Communists); in East Europe, 'liberalizing' bureaucrats. But we know this:

Not only is 'revolution on one campus' impossible, but more, it is not the students, wonderful as they are, who can remake society by themselves. True, student militancy is more volatile; its fuse is shorter; it has already accomplished unforgettable things; but it is only when the masses of the working class explode that all of society gets shaken from top to bottom. The mass revolts of the Black ghettos have rocked American complacency even more than the campus struggles. This is the kind of alliance that genuinely revolutionary students look to.

It may well be, if and when the revolutionary upsurge now rocking Europe dies down again, that these truths will once more be overshadowed. Students who once battled police may again campaign and vote for liberal 'lesser evils' who turn out to act indistinguishably from the 'greater evils'; all the elitist theorists will once again explain that the working class consists only of affluent clods, and that only the intelligentsia-elect are the true Messiahs. But this is exactly why we need genuine revolutionists -- not merely elitists who are 'alienated' or frustrated or resigned to be bought off as soon as they turn 30. To make a revolution-from-below, you need revolutionists-from-below, who consider that it is their job as leaders to help move masses into militant action, and not to substitute themselves for such masses-in-motion.

The Berkeley revolt blew minds, for one thing, because it was so obviously a mass upheaval from below. This is what scares the hell out of the pillars of society, whether it happens on the campuses, in the ghettos, or in the shops. For exactly the same reason it symbolizes the hope of the future.

June 8, 1968

Hal Draper

# THE MIND OF CLARK KERR

With his book *The Uses of the University* (Harvard, 1963), Clark Kerr, President of the University of California, became the outstanding theoretician and proponent of a particular view of the university. It is true that his foreword claims that the views put forward do not constitute "approval" or "defense" but only "analysis" and "description." He is only "describing" the Wave of the Future (he uses this term), and all realistic people must bow and accept it, like it or not.

Kerr, like many others, has perhaps forgotten that the very phrase comes from the 1940 book by Anne Lindbergh, *The Wave of the Future*, which presented the thesis that fascism or some type of totalitarianism was inevitably coming. She did not argue that this fascism be approved but only that it must be accepted. This was the identical approach also of Burnham's *Managerial Revolution*.

The new type of "multiversity," Kerr writes later, "is an imperative rather than a reasoned choice." You cannot argue with an imperative. It is not Kerr's methodology to say, "This is what I think should be done." He represents himself simply as the interpreter of inexorable "reality." He is, so to speak, the Administrator of History, merely informing us how to act in conformity with its Rules.

What is beyond question is that Kerr does present a "vision of the end," and that he tells us it *must* be accepted, just like any other ruling of the Administration. What is his vision?

In the first place, Kerr presents the university as an institution which is, and will be, increasingly indistinguishable from any other business enterprise in our industrial society. The reader is likely to think, at first, that this is only a metaphor: "the university's invisible product, knowledge," or "the university is being called upon to produce knowledge as never before." But Kerr means it literally:

"The production, distribution, and consumption of 'knowledge' in all its forms is said to account for 29 percent of gross national product . . . and 'knowledge production' is growing at about twice the rate of the rest of the economy. . . . What the railroads did for the second half of the last century and the automobile for the first half of this century may be done for the second half of this century by the knowledge industry: that is, to serve as the focal point for national growth."

Naturally, there is a kernel of truth in this language; but can Kerr mean literally that his "multiversity" must become increasingly like a factory and its professors reshaped as businessmen? Consider this:

"The university and segments of industry are becoming more alike. As the university becomes tied into the world of work, the professor—at least in the natural and some of the social sciences—takes on the characteristics of an entrepreneur. . . . The two worlds are merging physically and psychologically."

One might think that the writer of these lines would hardly have patience with a university president who sternly



forbade members of this university community to "mount" activity on campus which eventuated in political and social action off-campus—that is, a university president who issued a decree against the "merger." We shall resolve this contradiction later; but we must note that the book is chock-full of statements about the infeasibility of enforcing a boundary line between the university and the society with which it must merge.

### NO CLOISTER

The university, Kerr quotes, is "inside a general social fabric of a given era." He rejects with justified contempt the Cloister and Ivory Tower approach. He points out that American universities are more "intertwined with their surrounding societies" than the European:

"When 'the borders of the campus are the boundaries of our state,' the lines dividing what is internal from what is external become quite blurred; taking the campus to the state brings the state to the campus."

But do not think that Kerr is here thinking of (say) CORE picketing of the Bank of America, on the ground that if Finance takes its problems to the campus, then the campus will be moved (by inexorable History) to take up certain problems of Finance.

Indeed, Kerr even writes the following in this connection: "Today the campus is being drawn to the city hall and the state capitol as never before." This was true in the Bay Area especially in 1960: the campus was drawn to the San Francisco City Hall, and a platoon of police tried to liquidate History by washing them down the steps. But it is not likely that Kerr

was thinking of *this* brilliant confirmation of his thesis, for his next sentences are these:

"The politicians need new ideas to meet the new problems; the agencies need expert advice on how to handle the old. The professor can supply both."

He is thinking, of course, of the role of the university in providing intellectual servicers for the ruling powers—not students but professors, who are not barred from "mounting" *their* interventions into the political and social action of society.

"The campus and society are undergoing a somewhat reluctant and cautious merger, already well advanced. M.I.T. is at least as much related to industry and government as Iowa State ever was to agriculture."

### QUESTION OF CURRENCY

It is a *good* thing to be related to the industrial and grower interests and to the state in the notorious fashion of Iowa State and M.I.T., and Kerr reiterates and insists on the term "merger":

"The university is being called upon . . . to respond to the expanding claims of national service; to merge its activity with industry as never before; to adapt to and rechannel new intellectual currents."

To become "a truly American university," what are the "new intellectual currents" which we must adapt to? It turns out, at bottom, to involve a large amount of currency, indeed, but less intellectuality. The new current, the "vast transformation," the Wave of the Future to which the university must adapt is the impact of the new mass of government money (federal grants) pouring out of Wash-

ington "beginning with World War II," under the stimulation of the Cold War, the space race, Sputnik, the concurrently stimulated concern with health programs, etc. And: "The multiversity has demonstrated how adaptive it can be to new opportunities for creativity; how responsive to money . . ."

### STATIFICATION

Not just money: Big Money. Kerr has a very useful section, highly recommended for reading, on the essence of this "vast transformation." "The major universities were enlisted in national defense . . . as never before . . . 'the government contract became a new type of federalism.'" He is illuminating on what we should call the *statification* of the university in the Cold War. "Currently, federal support has become a major factor in the total performance of many universities . . ." There has been "a hundred-fold increase in twenty years" in higher education's revenue from government; and the two-thirds of this sum devoted to research projects in or affiliated to universities went to "relatively few" universities, accounting for 75% of all university expenditures on research and 15% of total university budgets.

These are stupendous figures, truly. This is what we get; what do we give away for it? Kerr draws the consequences—which, remember, we must all accept as inevitable:

"The federal agencies will exercise increasingly specific controls and the universities dependent on this new standard of living will accept these controls. The universities themselves will have to exercise more stringent controls by centralizing authority, particularly through the audit process. In a

few situations, self restraint has not been enough restraint; as one result, greater external restraint will be imposed in most situations."

### THE LADY FROM KENT

Writing these lines took moral courage, for, as is obvious, this is precisely the charge which the Goldwaterites have thrown at federal money in education, against the indignant denial of the liberals. Kerr is saying that it is true and must be accepted, because, he says, the nation and the universities are "stronger" as a result. It is at this point that, to the distinguished audience listening to these lectures at Harvard, he made the following cogent point about the consequences of taking certain kinds of money, in the form of a limerick:

"There was a young lady from Kent  
Who said that she knew what it  
meant  
When men took her to dine,  
Gave her cocktails and wine;  
She knew what it meant—but she  
went."

And he follows with this comment: "I am not so sure that the universities and their presidents always knew what it meant; but one thing is certain—they went."

Now in turn I am not sure whether I can plainly state, in a booklet intended as reading for the whole family, just what Kerr seems to be calling his fellow presidents; but at least one thing is clear. In all this Kerr himself is *not* striking the pose of the innocent maiden who is in danger of being bowled over by a fast line and losing Virtue unawares.

In fact, we had better drop this Kerr line of metaphor altogether, because the image which he does try to



project is a different one. It is that of the toughminded bureaucrat.

Please do not think this term is a cussword or a brickbat; you will be selling Kerr short. He likes it.

### CAPTAIN BUREAUCRAT

Discussing the role of the university president today, as distinct from the old days of the campus autocrat, he writes:

"Instead of the not always so agreeable autocracy, there is now the usually benevolent bureaucracy, as in so much of the rest of the world. Instead of the Captain of Erudition or even David Riesman's 'staff sergeant,' there is the Captain of the Bureaucracy who is sometimes a galley slave on his own ship . . ."

And he is gratified that the "multiversity" has emerged from the phase of "intuitive imbalance" into that of "bureaucratic balance." Mainly he is intent on emphasizing that the Coming Men in the new university-factory are *not* the scholars (either humanist or scientist), *not* the teachers, *not* the faculty, but that its "practitioners" are "chiefly the administrators, who now number many of the faculty among them, and the leadership groups in society at large."

Administrators — and "leadership groups in society at large": it may be somewhat clearer now what Kerr means by "merging" the university with "society," i.e. with what part of "society." The multiversity, writes Kerr, is no longer to be thought of as an "organism," as Flexner did:

"It is more a mechanism—a series of processes producing a series of results—a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money."

Now another difference between an organism and a mechanism is that a mechanism is always controlled by a superior power outside. This points up the inaccuracy of Kerr's constant use of the term "merger": a mechanism does not "merge" with its controller. The kind of "merger" that Kerr is celebrating is the "merger" of a horse and rider.

### CHIP OR CHOP?

He quotes Nevins: the main strain for the growing multiversity is "not in finding the teachers, but expert administrators," and he propounds the theorem that the multiversity president is now "mostly a mediator." This brings us to Kerr's vision of himself, not as an individual but as the Multiversity President; and it is a poignant one. Especially if we read it right after the events of the Battle of Berkeley of October 1-2, 1964:

"The mediator, whether in government or industry or labor relations or domestic quarrels, is always subject to some abuse. He wins few clear-cut victories; he must aim more at avoiding the worst than seizing the best. He must find satisfaction in being *equally* distasteful to each of his constituencies . . ."

And so should the student constituency be harsh on him if it finds him distasteful in chopping a piece here and there off student rights? After all, they must think of how distasteful he is to some of the Regents who believe it is the will of inexorable History that all dissenters be thrown in the clink immediately; they must think of the abuse he invites when he explains (in effect): *No, we can't do it that way; we have to be liberal*—and proceeds to chip (not chop) off a liberal piece.

Isn't it realistic to understand that the difference between the "liberal" bureaucrat and the reactionary is the difference between Chip or Chop?

### THE CONTRADICTION

Does this make him seem two-faced? Kerr goes one better:

"It is sometimes said that the American multiversity president is a two-faced character. This is not so. . . . He is a many-faced character, in the sense that he must face in many directions at once while contriving to turn his back on no important group."

It will be readily agreed that this is a good trick if you can do it. It might even seem to explain the tricky course of the Berkeley campus administration in the days preceding the October 1 explosion, when it appeared to be adopting a different line every 24 hours to explain why student political activity had to be restricted. The deceptively easy conclusion is to equate Kerr's aspiration toward many-facedness with what old-fashioned people called simple hypocrisy. But this is misleading because it finds the locus of the trouble in Kerr, and this is not the point.

The locus is elsewhere. It is in a contradiction which Kerr refuses to face in his writings and perhaps in his head.

We have pointed out that there seemed to be a wide gap between Kerr's published theory about the "merger" of the university and "society," and his moves toward restricting student involvement in political and social action off-campus. On the one hand he tells us we must accept the integration of the university with the state and industry in this Cold War

(in fact, with what has been called the Military-Industrial Complex) and must erase the boundary lines; on the other hand, he tries to muzzle and rein student activity on campus which tends to step beyond the boundary line—which, as his administration puts it, "mounts" political and social action off-campus—while at the same time other "constituencies" in the university community are lauded for doing just that.

### ANOTHER FACTORY

This contradiction is not due to muddleheadedness. Behind it is a clear consistency, which appears as soon as we make explicit the assumption which permeates Kerr's book.

This is: The use of the university, or the role of the multiversity, is to have a relationship to the present power structure, in this businessman's society of ours, which is similar to that of any other industrial enterprise. There are railroads and steel mills and supermarkets and sausage factories—and there are also the Knowledge Factories, whose function is to service all the others and the State.

We are here to serve the Powers that rule society: this is the meaning of Kerr's reiterations that the university is merging with society. But now, suppose you have "nonconformists" and "extremists" who *also* want to move outside the obsolete boundary line, *but as dissident or radical critics and adversaries, not as intellectual flunkies?*

Obviously, this is not the same thing. The contradiction disappears. It is not "society" that the multiversity must merge with: it is the "*leadership groups in society*," which, to the mind



of the Captain of the Bureaucracy, are identical with "society." Kerr virtually says as much, in a revealing sneer at "nonconformists":

"A few of the 'nonconformists' have another kind of revolt [than one against the faculty] in mind. They seek, instead, to turn the university, on the Latin American or Japanese models, into a fortress from which they can sally forth with impunity to make their attacks on society."

### SOME SALLIES

A whole thesis on the Bureaucratic Mind could be derived from a dissection of this last sentence alone, but here we are interested only in one facet of the gem. As we know, it is honorific for the good professors of the University of California's Giannini Foundation and the Division of Agricultural Sciences to sally forth with their apologies for the growers' bracer program. And similar respectable activities are "mounted" not only with impunity but even with appropriate raises in salary and perquisites. But when CORE students sally forth to picket the Bank of America or, perhaps worse, Knowland's *Oakland Tribune*, this is an attack on—

The Giannini financial empire of the Bank of America? Or Knowland?

No: they are "attacks on society."

This gives "society" a local habitation and a name. Now non-Latin-Americans and non-Japanese can understand how reprehensible are the students who wish to attack *society*! We can also understand the worth of Kerr's claim, in his foreword, that he is not "defending" any view but merely handing down the Rules of History.

There is more to Kerr's theory of "society." It is given in a passage in which he deprecates the "guild view" of the university which is held by some faculty members, because it "stands for self-determination and for resistance against the administration and the trustees." In opposition to this deplorable Resistance view, he advances (*fasten your seat belts*) nothing less than—

"the socialist view, for service to society which the administration and the trustees represent."

"We are all socialists now," said a Tory long ago. "We are socialists," say the Russian despots now, the Nasser bureaucrats, the Indian nationalists, and some other demagogues. It is interesting to see these varied characters reach for the word "socialist" when they need a goodlooking label for their wares. But don't buy it. What Kerr is selling under the label is the old mildewed article: that "society" is represented by the capitalist Establishment, its bureaucrats, agents and braintrusts.

### OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD

It is true we have been told that the multiversity president must be many-faced, but at this point we must ask whether there isn't a limit. A man who conscientiously tries to face in *this* "many directions at once" faces an occupational hazard: the risk of eventually forgetting where the boundary line is between a soft-soaping mediator and an academic confidence-man. It is only a risk, to be sure, like silicosis for coalminers, but it is well to be forewarned.

*The Independent Socialist view is that students must not accept Kerr's vision of the university-factory, run*

by a Captain of the Bureaucracy as a parts-supply shop to the profit system and the Cold War complex. We do not think they will.

#### KERR'S 1984

Behind Kerr's vision of the university-factory is a broad-gauged world-view, a view of a Brave New World (his term) or Orwellian 1984 toward which all this is headed. What we have discussed so far is, according to him, only the "managerial revolution" of society at large as applied to the campus world. There is a larger picture, of which we have examined only one corner.

Kerr described the coming New Order in 1960 in *Industrialism and Industrial Man*.\*

It is a remarkable work, which failed to get the attention it deserves.

The methodology we have already seen: Kerr is presenting the Wave of the Future, which must be accepted as the imperative of history. It is roughly a variant of Burnhamism, with "bureaucrats" and "managers" interchangeable. We have space here for only a summary of its leading ideas. While no element is new, the whole is presented with frankness unusual nowadays:

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\*Kerr is the chief author of this work, listed first, with joint authors J. T. Dunlop, Frederick Harbison and C. A. Myers (Harvard University Press). An Oxford paperback edition has appeared this year, with some parts shortened or condensed; a cursory examination indicates that some of the frank passages, but not all, have been left out. This discussion is based on the original work.

(1) The New Order will result (is resulting) from the presently ongoing convergence of the two dominant systems: a capitalism which is becoming more and more authoritarian and bureaucratic, along the road toward Russian totalitarianism; and a Russian Communist system which has softened up and become somewhat milder; the two merging somewhere in-between into an undifferentiated "Industrialism." The imperative is the force of industrialization; it is the road of progress.

(2) It is refreshing to note that Kerr wastes no space on ritualistic obeisances to democracy. There is no pretense, no lip-service. It simply is not in the picture. The reader must remember that this does not mean Kerr dislikes democracy, any more than Anne Lindbergh approved of fascism, or Von Papen of Hitler. In the shadow of the New Order, you do not approve, you merely have to accept.

#### STATISM

(3) *Statism*: the leviathan State has taken over; it has expanded everywhere. It is "omnipresent." (There is no mention of TV eyes in the glades, but "Big Brother" is in the book.) The State will never "wither away" as Marx utopianly predicted, Kerr assures us.

(4) *Full-blown bureaucratic (or managerial) elitism*: The progressive and socially decisive elements are only "the managers, private and public," with their technicians and professionals. "Turning Marx on his head, they are the 'vanguard' of the future." Kerr bluntly defines the elements he is addressing: "In particular, we hope to



speak to the intellectuals, the managers, the government officials and labor leaders [another species of bureaucrats, to Kerr] who today and tomorrow will run their countries . . .” There is no pretense of a role for “the people” other than as the working cattle who are to be herded by the manager-bureaucrats.

## ROAD AHEAD

With this theoretical equipment, Kerr comes to the last chapter, “The Road Ahead,” in which his perspective of “a new slavery” is sketched: Here is a quick run-down:

There is a convergence toward one-party-ism in form or fact. “The age of ideology fades.” “Industrial society must be administered; . . . The benevolent political bureaucracy and the benevolent economic oligarchy are matched with the tolerant mass.” “Parliamentary life may appear increasingly decadent and political parties merely additional bureaucracies . . . Not only all dictatorships but also all democracies are ‘guided’ [a term for authoritarian].” “The elites become less differentiated . . . all wear grey flannel suits.” Professional managers run the economy: “Economic enterprise is always basically authoritarian under the necessity of getting things done . . . Authority must be concentrated . . .” The managers “will be bureaucratic managers, if private, and managerial bureaucrats, if public.” “Class warfare will be forgotten and in its place will be the bureaucratic contest . . . memos will flow instead of blood.” An individual will identify as “the member of a guild,” not of a class or plant community. The individual will be neither an independent

man nor a human ant, but something between. As a worker, “he will be subjected to great conformity,” regimented by the productive process, and will accept this “as an immutable fact. The state, the manager, the occupational association are all disciplinary agents.”

There will be a certain “freedom” in a certain sense (if not democracy). “Politically he can be given some influence. Society has achieved consensus and it is perhaps less necessary for Big Brother to exercise political control. Nor in this Brave New World need genetic and chemical means be employed to avoid revolt. There will not be any revolt, anyway, except little bureaucratic revolts that can be handled piecemeal.” [Has anyone before actually written down such an orgiastic dream of the Bureaucrat’s Paradise?]

## SCHIZOID SOCIETY

Where will the freedom lie? Maybe, muses Kerr, “in the leisure of individuals.” “Along with the bureaucratic conservatism of economic and political life may well go a New Bohemianism in the other aspects of life and partly as a reaction to the confining nature of the productive side of society . . . The economic system may be highly ordered and the political system barren ideologically; but the social and recreational and cultural aspects of life diverse and changing . . . The new slavery to technology may bring a new dedication to diversity and individuality.”

Hence his comforting conclusion, offering a glimmer of cheer: “The new slavery and the new freedom go hand in hand.”

In this Kerrian future, the alienation of man is raised to clinical heights: if this society "can be said to have a split personality, then the individual in this society will lead a split life too . . ." (Since ideology has faded, the only "ism" will be schizoidism.)

#### NO PROTEST?

There is a good deal more, but this sample will have to do. Now a natural question arises: Won't people fight *against* the coming of this monster-bureaucratic state, no matter how cogently it is alleged to be inevitable? Won't there be protest, opposition, struggle—from people who take seriously exhortations to stand up for democracy, given (say) at commencement exercises? What about all the people who are now supposed to be eager to defend the American Way of Life by sternly sacrificing to pay for H-bombs, Polaris missiles, and Livermore research programs?

Will there not be troublemakers who will say: *"Is it for this that we have to sacrifice? Is this why we have to fortify even the moon? Is this why we have to spend more for an Atlas missile than for all cancer research? Is it the right to this future that we are asked to defend by our statesmen, pundits, editors, and (on most occasions) even university presidents?"*

Nonsense, says Kerr. There will be no protest. That's *out*. (Can you now understand the *full* depths of the "disappointment" which he publicly professed to feel on October 2, after so many students ignored this rule of the Administrator of History?)

There will be no protest, Kerr wrote. From whom could it come?

The intellectuals? Here is how he deals with them:

"The intellectuals (including the university students) are a particularly volatile element . . . capable of extreme reactions to objective situations—more extreme than any group in society. They are by nature irresponsible, in the sense that they have no continuing commitment to any single institution or philosophical outlook and they are not fully answerable for consequences. They are, as a result, never fully trusted by anybody, including themselves."

In all likelihood, dear reader, you did not read this carefully enough. Did you notice that the entire tradition of humanistic and democratic educational philosophy has been contemptuously tossed into the famous garbage can of history? It teaches "irresponsibility"; you cannot trust people brought up that way . . .

#### TOOL OR DANGER

How does the Bureaucratic Manager or the Managerial Bureaucrat deal with these untrustworthy irresponsibles? Kerr is concerned about this problem because today we have a war of ideas, and ideas are spun by intellectuals:

"Consequently, it is important who best attracts or captures the intellectuals and who uses [sic] them most effectively, for they may be a tool as well as a source of danger."

There are the alternative roles of the intellectual in the Kerrian world: *tool* or *danger*. It is a notorious dichotomy, celebrated in the literature of totalitarianism. But we need not go abroad to translate it. If we apply the Kerr method of extrapolation, we get this: Everybody must be either on the



FBI informer rolls or on the Subversive List. . . . Remember that you do not have to approve this; you are expected only to accept it.

Will there be protest from the ranks of the workers' movements? No, says Kerr: *vieux jeu*. In the New Order, labor is controlled in institutions hierarchically set up. "One of the central traits is the inevitable and eternal separation of industrial men into managers and the managed." Not only inevitable: *eternal!* There are few men since St. Peter who have thrust their Vision so far. . . .

But Kerr's confidence in his no-protest prediction derives from undeniable models:

"Today men know more about how to control protest, as well as how to suppress it in its more organized forms—the Soviet Union has industrialized and China is industrializing without organized strikes. A controlled labor movement has become more common."

It is no part of our present task to pause on the scandalous puerility of this view of the history of protest in Russia and China, where literal millions of human beings had to be destroyed in the process of "controlling protest." We wish only to remind that on October 2, 1964, there was an army of almost one thousand police called onto campus—to "control protest" by students—by the man who wrote these lines in cold blood.

\* \* \*

#### DETACHED?

Obviously we are, in these few pages, able only to exhibit Kerr's views, not refute them; we do not pretend otherwise. Many of the elements therein are rife in academic elitist

circles in more or less attenuated form, more or less "underground," or else formulated in "minced" and allusive terms, instead of with Kerr's candor, which is the main contribution of his work.

But Kerr's candor is partly due to the device which we have already mentioned several times, and to which we must now return in a different way. This is his posture as the detached, uninvolved historian of the future, registering his vision of Eternity, and as far above approval-or-disapproval as the Recording Angel.

This posture is an intellectual imposture.

There is an extraordinarily serious question here of intellectual responsibility. *By adding a single sentence, Kerr's book would become the work of a proto-fascist ideologue.* But, of course, this he is not; he is a sort of liberal; he really does *not* approve, and so the single sentence is not there.

Yet he is not detached and uninvolved. There is another basis for judgment than approval-or-disapproval.

#### POLITICAL ACT

By 1932 the pressure of (what we now know to be) the impending assumption of power by Hitler in Germany was enormous. The Nazis and their conscious tools were, as is well known, yelling at full cry that their victory was in the cards, that heads would roll, and that all realistic people must jump on their bandwagon. What now should we think of a professor, *not* a Nazi tool, who at this juncture announced that, in his utterly scientific opinion, the triumph of the Nazis

was indeed written in the scrolls of history and must be accepted (not approved)?

This is itself a political act. It is also, of course, a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is a blow struck to bring the event predicted. But is it not also a scientific opinion? No, it is not, because there is no historical "science" so reliable as to make an opinion on this subject more than an estimate of probability and tendency. We have a right to make a value-judgment on political acts, even when they result from self-delusion (like most evil political acts, including those of the Nazis). There is no academic right to grease the road to fascism in the name of "scientific" detachment.

### THE JUGGERNAUT

Whenever the Juggernaut of Power starts rolling, there always are, and always will be, the servitors and retainers who will run before, crying: *It cometh! Bow down, bow down, before the God!* The men who perform this function have done more than made a choice of what to believe; they also have made a choice on how to act. We have the right to make a moral, as well as a social, judgment of the act, even apart from the accuracy of the announcement.

But there is a bit more involved in Kerr's book.

We present our views, says the introduction, to aid understanding of this moment in history—

"and possibly, as an assistance to some of those who would guide this moment to its next stage..."

With this statement the author strikes a different note. It is not detached and uninvolved; he is seeking to assist

the transformation toward the New Slavery. Is it because he really does approve after all? No. Is it because he is simply in the intellectual habit of servicing whatever is in the works anyway, because he has no other mode of being than that of the bureaucratic assistant of whatever Power is rolling? It may be a slip, but only in the sense that underneath the cap and gown peers out the retainer's livery.

There is another passage that gives pause. It is not merely the repeated statements, in the introduction, that he has changed his former views: "We unlearned many things . . ." "We changed our program . . ." "Many of our original convictions turned into nothing but once-held prejudices." The last remark is followed by this meditation on the critical question of state control of labor:

"'Free trade unions' under some conditions become no more than Communist unions sabotaging efforts at economic development. Should they be that free? Completely free trade unions are sometimes not possible or desirable at certain stages in the industrialization drive. . . . The 'free worker,' in our sense, cannot exist in some social systems; in others he might exist, but to his detriment. . . . The 'heavy hand of the state' over trade unions and enterprises may be the only substitute, at times, for the 'invisible hand' of market competition which we have so long preferred. And some generals, in some situations, may be by far the best leaders of an industrializing nation, all doctrine of civilian control of the military to the contrary."

### A MATTER OF INDIGNATION

Kerr is speaking here of changed views, not new cables from the Future



on recent changes in the nature of Eternity. His changed views concern, in a word, *democracy*. He continues:

"Thus we came to be much more conscious of the significance of time and place in the evaluation of some judgments, and of all slogans. [Slogans like democracy?] The whole world cannot be like the United States or the Soviet Union, or India, and one should not be morally indignant about it."

But may one be politically indignant about despotism at any time and place? or just indignant? Is this advice offered only to well-fed political scientists, or is it also relevant to the human beings who are starving and suffering under the despotisms which are declared inevitable? Or let us try this one on the platitude-machine: Since not everybody can be like Clark Kerr, why should Clark Kerr get morally indignant at the rebellious students who did not behave according to his lights?

#### THE MORAL CHOICE

Now, perhaps this injunction against moral (or other) indignation at despotism and authoritarianism is also to be regarded as a detached and uninvolved report on eternal verities. We do not think so. The issuance of this injunction against moral indignation is itself a moral choice on Kerr's part. The Compleat Bureaucrat does not approve of moral indignation

or of political protest and struggle, not because he is cruel and unfeeling, but simply because these phenomena do not file neatly; they cannot be efficiently punched onto IBM cards; they upset routine; they raise non-regulation questions; they cannot be budgeted for in advance; they are refractory to manipulation.

The Compleat Bureaucrat does not believe that protest and struggle really exist even when they explode under his nose: since all this has been ruled out by the historical imperative, he ascribes it to a "Maoist-Castroite" plot. He tries to meet it first by facing in many directions at once, and then, when this gyration naturally lands him on his face, by blowing the whistle for the cops.

Clark Kerr believes that the student's relationship to the Administration bureaucracy can be only that of a tool or a danger. This is also a self-fulfilling prophecy. A university president's very belief of this sort tends to *force* students into one or the other camp.

It is easy enough to become a tool. There are all kinds of tools, and they can come without head, teeth, or point. On the other hand, there is danger in becoming a danger. Which will it be?

Everyone must choose, and it is a matter of life or death: life as an independent human being, or death as a man.

