

*E pluribus unum:*  
*The Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1964*  
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Free Speech Movement march through Sather Gate, Mona Hutchin on the extreme right (marchers' perspective) and Mario Savio on the extreme left. From Warshaw p.56, photo credit: Ron Enfield, Nov. 20, 1964

During the academic year of 1964-65, a political movement took place at the University of California (UC), Berkeley bringing together students and faculty from across the political spectrum — from communists to campaigners for right-wing Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Members of the movement united in their demand for free speech on campus and specifically, to be allowed to set up tables on campus to campaign for political causes. Their movement took place through demonstrations and sit-ins, ultimately achieving success in December 1964, when the academic senate voted unanimously to approve a resolution that there would henceforth be no restrictions on the content of speech or political advocacy on campus, except in regard to time, place and manner. Histories of the Free Speech Movement (FSM) have represented it as left wing and have therefore overlooked one of its essential features: it was a broad coalition operating largely by consensus among people with widely differing political views. By restoring the center-to-right wing side of the history of the FSM, we can first of all recognize this broad coalition's existence, then also understand it was possible because of a form of universalism among students.

A universal principle united the members of the Free Speech Movement. Former members of the FSM across the political spectrum recall most vividly that although they disagreed on political issues and candidates, they were of one mind about the universal principle of free speech. Their universalism led members of the movement to believe deeply in the possibility of consensus and so they resolved to act by consensus whenever possible, so that everyone would feel represented. This consensus about a universal principle contrasts, as we will see briefly at the end of this paper, with today's political world, where many on both the left and right view politics in terms of the expression of identities, rather than universal principles.

Although the Free Speech Movement took place over just a few months during the fall of 1964 and early winter of 1965, its roots reach back much further. For more than a decade, faculty and students had seen their freedom of expression constricted by the university's administration. For example, in 1949, during the U.S. government's large-scale effort to flush communists out of government positions, Robert Gordon Sproul, then president of the university, had asked the board of regents to design a loyalty oath for faculty. The oath stated that no members of the Communist Party could be faculty at the university. Many faculty members protested the oath, seeing it as a threat to academic freedom and to the liberty they were entitled to expect as employees of a public university.<sup>1</sup> Resentment of such infringements on speech and expression had been brewing among the faculty for 15 years before the explosion of autumn 1964.

Meanwhile, many students at UC Berkeley were also prepared for the explosion of autumn 1964 by earlier experiences. "My head was filled with thoughts of Freedom Summer," recalled Jo Freeman, a senior in political science and a member of the Young Democrats.<sup>2</sup> The summer before the school year began, many students had participated in the Mississippi Summer Project,

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 13-14; Cohen, "The Many Meanings of the FSM," in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 10; Martin Roysner, "Recollections of the Free Speech Movement," in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 141. Clark Kerr, later to be president of UC Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement, was among those who protested the loyalty oath. See Cohen, "The Many Meanings of the FSM," in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 118.

also known as Freedom Summer, a campaign to register African Americans in the South to vote. The campaign was organized by the umbrella of Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), which was made up of an alphabet soup of groups: SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference).<sup>3</sup>

Mario Savio, an undergraduate member of SNCC studying mathematics and philosophy, who soon emerged as the leading hero and public face of the Free Speech Movement, had taken part in the Freedom Summer.<sup>4</sup> Also, the previous spring, he and Freeman had both been involved in civil rights activism in Berkeley and Oakland, led by another person who would become a key figure in the FSM: Jack Weinberg, a mathematics major who had graduated from UC Berkeley the previous year and was the chair of campus CORE. Weinberg and CORE had coordinated campus participation in picketing organized by an umbrella group called the Ad Hoc Committee Against Discrimination. The picketers protested employment discrimination around businesses on Shattuck Avenue in downtown Berkeley and Oakland and in particular, the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco, where on March 4, 1964, 167 activists including Savio, Freeman and Weinberg had been arrested.<sup>5</sup> The students who arrived at UC Berkeley after the Freedom Summer and the previous spring of civil rights activism had been trained by the various organizing groups listed above in the methods of peaceful protest, passive resistance and civil disobedience. In one key regard, however, the FSM was an entirely different sort of movement from the Civil Rights Movement.

Even a partial list of student leaders of the FSM shows that they spanned the political spectrum. In addition to Savio, Weinberg and Freeman, student leaders included – reading from left to right – Bettina Aptheker, a junior history major and member of the campus Communist Party (CP); Dick Roman, a graduate student in sociology studying with the previously socialist but rightward-moving sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset and a member of the Young People’s Socialist League (YPSL); Suzanne Goldberg, a graduate student in philosophy connected with CORE and SNCC; Michael Rossman, a graduate student in mathematics; David Goines, an undergraduate in classics and member of the campus progressive political party SLATE; Art Goldberg (no relation to Suzanne), a graduate student in education and chair of SLATE; Jackie Goldberg, Art’s younger sister, who was an undergraduate studying social sciences and a member of SLATE and Women for Peace (later to become a Democratic member of the California State Assembly); Paul Cahill, a law student, member of the University Young Republicans (UYR) and president of the right-wing group University Society of Individualists (USI); Mona Hutchin, a junior in political science, libertarian member of UYR and vice president of USI; Warren Coats, a senior majoring in economics, also of UYR and USI; and Danny Rosenthal, another graduate student in mathematics and member of Cal Students for Goldwater (CSG).<sup>6</sup> We have traveled from communists to libertarians without missing a step.

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<sup>3</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 118-120.

<sup>4</sup> Cohen, *Freedom’s Orator*, 58, 66-70; Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 96-97.

<sup>5</sup> Rorabaugh, *Berkeley At War*, 72-73; Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 97; Waldo Martin, “Holding One Another,” in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 91.

<sup>6</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 653-665; Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 151; Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 170-173, 190. Although Goines says Roman was in the YD, Heirich says he was in YPSL. This is also what oral historian Lisa Rubens of the Free Speech Movement Oral History Project at the Bancroft Library told me, and it makes more sense

In first-hand accounts of the Free Speech Movement, activists repeatedly emphasize that they united with those of opposite political views and worked together in an effort to protect something they unanimously viewed as an American right. “For the first time ever,” Rossman observed, “all the political groups on the campus united in opposing what the administration was doing. . . . It was really a united front, very strange political bedfellows. Because after all, here was a constitutional issue.”<sup>7</sup> By “constitutional issue,” Rossman implies a contrast with “political issue;” the movement was not about politics, but rather about fundamental principles. Another participant observer recalled, “I’d marched in many lines, but this was one of the most extraordinary I had ever seen. There were ultra-conservative Ayn Rand objectivists marching side by side with liberal Democrats and Republicans and communists and socialists of every stripe.”<sup>8</sup> Such reminiscences show that the breadth of the coalition was itself a defining feature. The students were marching not just on behalf of free speech, but on behalf of political unity in the demand for it. Myra Jehlen, a left-wing leader in the graduate coordinating committee and graduate delegate to the steering committee, told me she believes this unity was possible because the FSM was non-violent and oriented around a fundamental principle that everyone regarded as universal — and also because students restricted their conversations in the movement to this principle and put their other political views to one side.<sup>9</sup> There seems to have been a consensus that universalism and unity defined the FSM.

From the start, movement members had not only a universal principle to unite behind, but also a common opponent to unite against: the university administration. On Sept. 14, 1964, Vice Chancellor Alex Sherriffs insisted that Katherine Towle, the dean of students, send a letter to all the heads of the student political organizations, telling them that as of Sept. 21 they would no longer be allowed to set up tables at the entrance to campus on Bancroft and Telegraph avenues “to support or advocate off-campus political or social action.”<sup>10</sup> This ban would cripple all the political groups. This being long before Facebook or Twitter, their main way of communicating and publicizing their events was by using these tables, talking to people passing by and distributing flyers. With Dean Towle’s letter, the university administration had unwittingly provided a common cause around which all the political groups on campus, whatever their political differences, could unite.

The student organizers of the various groups realized that there would be power in uniting and set about establishing a united front. “We thought it was particularly important that *all* the student political groups be represented in the united front,” recalled Jo Freeman.<sup>11</sup> Art Goldberg was especially eager to keep the three main conservative groups — the UYR, CSG and

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since Roman was the research assistant of Lipset, who had also been in YPSL and was also a socialist. So, I’ve decided to take Heirich’s word over Goines’s.

<sup>7</sup> Rossman, “Birth of the Free Speech Movement.”

<sup>8</sup> Hurwitt, “Present at Birth.”

<sup>9</sup> Jehlen interview.

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 144-45. Towle disagreed with the ban, even though her administrative role put her in the position of writing the letter, but felt unable to oppose it. See Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 110; and Cohen, “The Many Meanings of the FSM,” in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 23. According to Art and Jackie Goldberg, Towle in fact acted like the later Watergate “Deep Throat;” she was an administration informant to the FSM through Jackie Goldberg. FSM Oral History Project, Art and Jackie Goldberg interview transcript, 36. Sherriffs, meanwhile, turned out to be an FBI informant. See Rosenfeld, *Subversives*, 188-90, 203-204, 210-12, 227-28.

<sup>11</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 147.

California College Republicans (CCR) — in the united front, thinking this would make them more persuasive to the university administration. They therefore made all decisions by consensus, effectively giving any group veto power.<sup>12</sup> Over the next week, the united front protested the ban on political tables through petitions, rallies and picket lines, as well as by continuing to set up their tables as before. They also set up tables in a new area, farther onto campus, in front of a landmark arch called Sather Gate, at the inner edge of Sproul Plaza, the area in front of the administration building, Sproul Hall.<sup>13</sup> Throughout these actions, the students discovered an admiration for one another across political divisions. In several accounts, left-wing members of the movement remember Paul Cahill for his ability to maintain unity. Jackie Goldberg recalled him as her “own personal hero in these early meetings:”

He was so thoughtful, articulate and statesmanlike. I was astonished. For me it meant I could no longer look at all Republicans alike. That was a ‘blow.’ But Paul was committed to working for his candidate, Barry Goldwater, for president. And he believed that it was his perfect right to do so on the campus of the University of California. He was willing and able to articulate a position that kept many center- and right-wing folks in this early coalition.<sup>14</sup>

Cahill, a member of a group – the USI – whom many on the left regarded as “young fascists,”<sup>15</sup> commanded a great deal of surprised respect among the more left-wing FSM activists, as we will see. His sister, Sally Cahill Tanenbaum, told me that Cahill joined the movement out of a realization that “liberals and conservatives come together on a number of issues” and that he saw “freedom of speech ... as an area where they would naturally agree.” She recalled her brother as a “good listener” who could “listen to both sides and not get emotionally pulled.” He was deeply committed, she said, to the principle that “on almost any issue, there’s valid arguments really on both sides.”<sup>16</sup> Her description of her brother matches Jackie Goldberg’s memory that he “had a different argument for each person .... He was really brilliant.”<sup>17</sup> Cahill’s talent for working with each person to find common ground appears to have rested on his conviction that there existed a universal common ground underneath all political differences and perhaps also that this common ground was defined by the Constitution.

Another right-wing student leader who inspired admiration among the left-wing members was the libertarian Mona Hutchin. Suzanne Goldberg judged her “a decent person who had a lot of integrity. She had real conservative values, as opposed to — excuse me — bullshit values, like a lot of Republicans do.”<sup>18</sup> David Goines approved of the button he remembered Mona Hutchin

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<sup>12</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 147; Cohen, *Freedom’s Orator*, 128-29.

<sup>13</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 694; Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 107-122.

<sup>14</sup> Jackie Goldberg, “War is Declared!” in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 108.

<sup>15</sup> Rossman, “Birth of the Free Speech Movement.”

<sup>16</sup> Tannenbaum interview.

<sup>17</sup> FSM Digital Archive, Art and Jackie Goldberg transcript, 36. During the interview, Jackie Goldberg did not remember the name of the student in question, but a comparison with her observation about him in the Cohen and Zelnik volume makes it clear it was Paul Cahill.

<sup>18</sup> FSM Digital Archive, Suzanne Goldberg interview transcript, 23. The following year, on Feb. 2, 1965, Mona Hutchin was again in the news for protesting segregation of the sexes on San Francisco’s cable cars. Women were not allowed to stand on the running board (which is obviously the best place to ride). Hutchin took a position on the outside of Powell-Hyde Car #521 and refused to leave, leading to a lifting of the ban. See Echeverria, et al., *Images of Rail*, 105.

habitually wearing that said “I am a right-wing extremist,” explaining that it referred to a line from Barry Goldwater’s speech accepting the Republican presidential nomination: “Let me remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Let me further remind you that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.”<sup>19</sup> This sort of conservative extremism was one that Goldberg, Goines and other left-wing members of the FSM could endorse because it represented a constitutional principle.

Collaboration among students of different political orientations was possible because all assumed their movement was rooted in a common, universal document — the U.S. Constitution. Carl Riskin, a left-wing economics graduate student in the FSM, recalled collaborating with Charlie Vars, a more politically centrist fellow economics graduate student. Riskin, Vars and some others went to Sacramento on Dec. 4 to talk with people in Gov. Pat Brown’s office and represent the demands of the FSM. Riskin remembers that he and Vars acted the part of calm, scholarly graduate students, with Vars assuring the politicians that no one was trying to “molly-coddle” the undergraduates. They were not radicals, in other words, but sober, conservative scholars asking only for their constitutional rights. In this connection, Riskin also recalled a late-night coaching session for the student leaders with law professor Robert Cole, who taught them the constitutional principle of limiting only the “time, place and manner” but not the content of speech.<sup>20</sup>

There are many retrospective accounts of left-wing students such as Goines and Goldberg and they figure prominently in histories of the FSM. But I was curious to know how the right-wing student leaders, such as Cahill, Hutchin, Hackett or Coats, remembered the alliance and I found no accounts either by them or their fellow Young Republicans. I was able to find Coats through his blog and he kindly talked with me about how he understood the political unity of the movement. He confirmed the left-wing students’ recollection that the universalism of belief in constitutional rights unified the movement. “[B]ack then, all of us across the political spectrum respected and believed in free speech,” he told me, “[and] . . . that we all benefited from hearing one another’s views freely expressed.” Coats recalled middle-of-the-night strategy meetings of the FSM Steering Committee at 2 and 3 in the morning in Lipset’s office, to which Roman had a key, emphasizing that “it wasn’t a left-wing gathering, it wasn’t a right-wing gathering, it was five of us from both sides who shared a common commitment.”<sup>21</sup> Even though these meetings took place in the office of a socialist faculty member using the key of a socialist graduate student, the participants regarded them not as socialist, but constitutionalist.

Political unity was a central message at the united front’s all-night vigil that began at 9 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 23.<sup>22</sup> “They brought food, guitars, bongos, blankets and books,” according to the campus newspaper, the *Daily Californian*, “but there was little actual studying done.”<sup>23</sup> It was part activism, part party. When the students heard that the board of regents was meeting at University House, campus home of UC President Clark Kerr, they decided to march to the

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<sup>19</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 496-497.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Riskin interview; Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 417. See also Lipset and Wolin, *Berkeley Student Revolt*, 276, 372.

<sup>21</sup> Coats interview.

<sup>22</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 694; Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 108-114-15.

<sup>23</sup> Lubar, “Free Speech Vigil.”

meeting. Their plan was to have Art Goldberg and Paul Cahill represent them and seek an audience with Kerr and the regents. The students walked over in a peaceful single-file procession singing — as Robert O’Donnell, who was president of the UYR, recalled to me — a new verse to the Civil Rights Movement anthem, “We Shall Overcome” that they wrote themselves: “left and right together, we shall overcome.” But arriving at University House, they found only the regents’ secretary, Marjorie Woolman, still there. She agreed to wait while Goldberg and Cahill wrote a letter for her to present to the board of regents the next morning. They then returned to an uncomfortable night in front of Sproul Hall (except for Cahill, who had brought his mattress).<sup>24</sup>

The students’ solidarity survived as tensions with the administration continued to grow over the next week. They kept setting up their tables and protesting the ban, while the administration, though making small concessions, condemned the demonstrations, upheld the ban on political advocacy and suspended eight students: Mark Bravo, Sandor Fuchs, Art Goldberg, David Goines, Don Hatch, Mario Savio, Beth Stapleton and Brian Turner.<sup>25</sup> At noon on Wednesday, Oct. 1, tensions finally exploded. If UC Berkeley was a powder keg like Europe on the eve of World War I, the arrest of Jack Weinberg was like the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand: the match. When Weinberg was arrested for distributing leaflets for CORE on Sproul Plaza, students spontaneously sat down around a police car that had been driven into the middle of the plaza, keeping it there for 32 hours while different people climbed onto the car and gave speeches. The students again sang “We Shall Overcome,” but they also sang “The Star-Spangled Banner,” showing they were a broad coalition demonstrating on behalf of the U.S. Constitution, not against it.



Mario Savio giving a hand to Charlie Powell, president of the student government, the Associated Students of the University of California. From *Warshaw*, p. 36, photo credit: Ron Enfield, Oct. 1, 1964.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert O’Donnell interview; Lubar, “Free Speech Vigil”; Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 115. Lubar says the right-wing representative was Coats but Heirich says it was Cahill; Coats himself says he does not recall having co-authored the letter (Coats interview), so it seems likelier that Heirich is right.

<sup>25</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 150.

Savio was the first to speak, asking permission of the police and then considerately removing his shoes before climbing onto the car.<sup>26</sup> He made various speeches over the course of the sit-in, at one point recounting a conversation with UC Chancellor Edward Strong regarding the constitutional right to free speech. “You know about the First and Fourteenth amendments,” he recalled having told Strong, explaining that they guarantee freedom of expression and equal protection of the laws. The campus restrictions on speech, Savio argued, violated both by limiting students’ right to express and hear ideas and by making an “arbitrary distinction” between students and non-students.<sup>27</sup> Don Hackett, a member of the Young Republicans, also made a speech from the car roof, describing the movement as deeply conservative, since they were protecting values that the founding fathers had written in the Constitution against “innovators” who were trying to undermine these values.<sup>28</sup> Hackett and Savio probably agreed on little else, but they shared their car-top stage on Sproul Plaza because they agreed on the importance of uniting in the struggle for a constitutional right.

Unity across the political spectrum was also a theme of the Oct. 2 pact, an agreement between the student leaders and Kerr, ending the police car sit-in. The pact laid out rules for continued negotiations, gave a deadline by which the university would announce the duration of the suspensions for the eight suspended students and included the university’s agreement not to press charges against Weinberg. It was signed by Kerr and nine student FSM leaders representing the entire political spectrum from Savio to Cahill. Only Danny Rosenthal of CSG refused to sign. He had a reputation for being a troublemaker and threatened to ruin the fragile agreement by complaining that the pact was discriminatory against conservatives — it allowed left-wing students to violate campus rules with impunity whereas conservatives were obliged by their own political culture to follow the rules. But Cahill came to the rescue, once again inspiring great admiration on all sides: “Paul Cahill, the very conservative representative of the UYRs, took him on,” Freeman recounted. “Danny represents only Danny, he said. The UYRs and the other conservative groups are with the united front.”<sup>29</sup> David Goines, with SLATE, called it “a real guts-ball move.”<sup>30</sup> Once the pact was signed, Savio climbed once more up onto the now flattened police car roof and read it out. “Let us agree by acclamation to this document,” he concluded. “I ask you to rise quietly and with dignity and go home.”<sup>31</sup> Both Cahill, in his rejection of Rosenthal’s distinction between conservatives and left-wing students, and Savio, in his call for an acceptance of the agreement by acclamation, ended the sit-in with a confirmation of the movement’s intact unity.

The United front came closest to collapsing at the very end of the movement, in late November and December, when the left-wing members wanted to occupy Sproul Hall and many of the

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<sup>26</sup> Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 122-139; Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 153-168; Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 695; Warshaw, *Trouble*, 33.

<sup>27</sup> Car Top Rally, Part 3, beginning at 27 min. 6 secs.

<sup>28</sup> Car Top Rally, Part 2, beginning at 43 min. 20 secs.

<sup>29</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 162-166, quote on p. 166. Freeman writes that soon after, Mario Savio and Jack Weinberg tried briefly to conduct a partial purge of moderates – centrists and Democrats – but ultimately it did not really take place. Jackie Goldberg left the Steering Committee but remained on the Executive Committee. Art Goldberg left the Steering Committee only for a few days and was then reinstated. Freeman herself remained the UYD representative to the Executive Committee. Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 170-71.

<sup>30</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 217.

<sup>31</sup> Warshaw, *Trouble*, 44.



right-wing members disagreed. Negotiations, demonstrations and sit-ins had continued throughout the fall and the administration, while making some concessions, had maintained that there would be certain limitations on political speech on campus and disciplinary actions against some students who had violated university rules during the fall. From the start, the right-wing groups had been reluctant to participate in civil disobedience. “The conservative groups fully agree with the purpose of the sit-ins in Sproul Hall,” Mona Hutchin had explained at the time of the police-car sit-in in October. “Individual members have expressed their sympathy by joining in the picketing on the steps of the hall and will continue to do so. However, our belief in lawful redress of grievances prevents us from joining the sit-in.” She concluded, though, by emphasizing, “Let no one mistake our intent. The united front still stands.”<sup>32</sup> By late November, the FSM leaders were divided, not on their core principle of free speech, but rather on how far they were willing to break the law in pursuit of it.

On Nov. 23 there was a sit-in during which the participants continued to debate the legitimacy of sit-ins. Finally, the steering committee rejected the sit-in by a 6-5 vote. Crucially, the members who had voted for the sit-in immediately began to defend the outcome of the vote against angry demonstrators. “Let us not override this decision, even though I voted against it,” pleaded Weinberg. “We must not split the movement. ... [A] lot of us came in here against our better judgment to support others. We cannot ask others to continue.” When he was shouted down, Bettina Aptheker took over. “We are a political movement!” she argued. “... If we’re gonna win, we gotta stick together!” Savio added, “I voted against leaving, but I urge you to abide by this, for there are good reasons on the other side.”<sup>33</sup> Even when there was a lack of consensus and the decisions had to be made by majority vote, the leaders on the losing side tried hard to make it seem as much like a consensus as possible by urging their followers to acknowledge the reasons on the other side.

By the time of the Dec. 2 rally on Sproul Plaza, the FSM was national news. Joan Baez came to sing for the demonstrators.<sup>34</sup> Savio gave his most famous, spontaneous speech from the steps of Sproul Hall, in which he implicitly referred to President Kerr’s description of universities as centers in a “knowledge industry” and extended the metaphor: if universities are centers of industrial production like factories, Savio said, the students must be the “raw materials,” being worked into a product to be bought and sold. He ended with a rousing cry for protest against the machine-like movement of an institution that should instead encourage freedom of thought and expression.<sup>35</sup>

Still, the political unity of the FSM was in grave danger despite Savio’s rhetorical brilliance. The leadership was again divided on the question of whether or not to occupy Sproul Hall. On Dec. 2, just before the occupation, the UYR, represented by Warren Coats, officially withdrew from the FSM. “What the FSM is asking,” Coats said at the time, “is that the administration cease to be an administration.” This was a reference to Savio’s demand in speeches that the administration restrict itself to “sweeping the sidewalks” and let the students make policy.<sup>36</sup> When I asked him about this decision, Coats explained that although he and the UYR continued to support the

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<sup>32</sup> Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 463.

<sup>33</sup> Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 261-263. See also Cohen, *Freedom’s Orator*, 167.

<sup>34</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 201.

<sup>35</sup> Cohen, *Freedom’s Orator*, 178-79; Kerr, *Uses*, 112.

<sup>36</sup> Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 274 and 473 n. 16.

demand for free speech, “I left at that point because I strongly, and my organization, disagreed with physically taking over the administration building.”<sup>37</sup> However, although they disagreed on tactics, they still agreed on principles. The UYR did not participate in the occupation but continued to support the movement in its demand for free speech. Furthermore, even though Warren Coats and the Young Republicans withdrew, the right-wing group USI, of which Paul Cahill was president, stayed in. Mona Hutchin, the vice president of USI, and perhaps Paul Cahill, were arrested along with the other protesters during the occupation of Sproul Hall on Dec. 3.<sup>38</sup>

The coalition had held out long enough to win its cause. On Dec. 8, the academic senate voted unanimously in favor of a resolution that, while the university would continue to subject “the time, place and manner of conducting political activity on the campus” to “reasonable regulations to prevent interference with the normal functions of the university,” henceforth “the content of speech or advocacy should not be restricted by the university.” Thousands of students were assembled outside Wheeler Hall, where the meeting took place, listening to the proceedings on loudspeakers.<sup>39</sup> Leaving the meeting, faculty members “passed through a crowd of several thousand cheering, applauding students, who formed an honor guard lining either side of the entrance. The ovation lasted until the last faculty member had left. A number of people were crying.”<sup>40</sup> Not only had they won a victory for a basic democratic principle, but they had done so by managing to maintain their unity in defense of it.

The Free Speech Movement left a powerful legacy in a couple of ways: by serving as a model and inspiration for campus activism and by establishing the importance of free speech and freedom of political expression at a public university.<sup>41</sup> However, in one regard it did not leave a powerful legacy, in fact, with regard to the very aspect of the movement that the members themselves found most crucial: the FSM failed to serve as a model for coalition-building and political unity. In the immediate aftermath of the FSM, public perceptions associated the movement with left-wing activism rather than broad coalition-building, as politics on campus became more polarized.<sup>42</sup> Many people involved with the FSM became victims of a right-wing

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<sup>37</sup> Coats interview.

<sup>38</sup> Goines, *Free Speech Movement*, 530, 542. Cahill is listed as “newspaper listing only” and does not appear in court records. Cahill’s sister, Sally Cahill Tannenbaum, told me that she does not recall his having ever been arrested (Tannenbaum interview).

<sup>39</sup> Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 219-223; Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 301-315; quoted passage at the “Free Speech Movement Chronology,” FSM digital archive, at <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/FSM/chron.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Heirich, *Spiral of Conflict*, 315.

<sup>41</sup> Cohen, “The Many Meanings of the FSM,” in Cohen & Zelnik, 1-42; Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 279-86. Barbara Epstein, who was a student at Radcliffe during the FSM, recalled how the movement, even from a distance of 3,000 miles, galvanized students at Harvard and Radcliffe to demand the right to political speech on campus. FSM Digital Archive, Barbara Epstein transcript, 3-4. Tom DeVries, who covered the FSM for the Collegiate Press Service, remembered that the FSM spread from Berkeley “like fire.” FSM Digital Archive, Tom DeVries transcript, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, “The Many Meanings of the FSM,” in Cohen & Zelnik, 40. For example, Todd Gitlin described the FSM as “reddish” in 1987, which seems to reflect only half the political spectrum of the movement, from left to center, leaving out right-wing leaders such as Cahill, Coats and Hutchin. Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 164. W.J. Rorabaugh in 1989 described the movement’s leaders as having had a “Left orientation” and having been Jewish except for Savio. In his list of the most important leaders, Rorabaugh indeed includes mostly the leftist Jewish ones, apart from Savio. He mentions Hutchin in passing as having been “added” to the movement, but not Cahill or Coats. Finally, he wrote that “Democratic students favored the FSM; Republicans students did not.” This would have come as a surprise to the

backlash beginning especially when Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California in 1966, promising to “clean up the ‘mess’ at Berkeley.”<sup>43</sup> The FBI placed Mario Savio under surveillance and Reagan presided over a meeting of the board of regents at which they fired Clark Kerr, whom Reagan regarded as having been too soft on the FSM.<sup>44</sup> The FSM-style solidarity of left and right did not characterize the campus movement against the Vietnam War that grew out of the FSM, which was a left-wing movement in the midst of Cold War anticommunism.<sup>45</sup>

In the time since 1964, both the left and the right on campus have transformed in ways that have carried them away from universalist principles in general and the principle of free speech in particular. Many on the left began to question whether free speech and universal principles were of a higher political value than diversity of cultural and ethnic identities on campus<sup>46</sup> and to argue that speech should be limited so as to promote a sense of comfort and safety for diverse groups of people on campus. Meanwhile many on the right reacted by representing right-wing politics itself as a form of oppressed minority identity to be expressed through provocations in the form of hate speech or borderline hate speech. Such right-wing actors turned “freedom of speech” from a universal principle into a symbol of their own identity akin to a swastika or a burning cross.<sup>47</sup> With regard to freedom of speech, alumni of the FSM from opposite ends of the political spectrum have more in common with one another than with their counterparts among the present-day students. Coats, for example, rejects “safe zones and other restrictions on free speech” but at the same time says of right-wing provocateurs such as Ann Coulter, Milo Yiannopoulos and Ben Shapiro, all of whom were recently invited to speak by the UC Berkeley Young Republicans, “some of the people they invite, I never would, myself.” Still, for those students who protested the invitations, Coats told me, “I would expect them, in the tradition of Berkeley and free speech, to . . . raise critical questions, challenge what’s being said, have an intellectual dialogue . . . Why in the world did you go to the university in the first place, if not to have your thoughts challenged?”<sup>48</sup> Likewise, Jehlen, though on the opposite end of the FSM political spectrum from Coats, told me the exact same thing: she too greatly dislikes such speakers, but she continues to think it is essential that they be permitted to speak.<sup>49</sup>

While many students on both the left and the right have thus moved away from the notion of free speech as a universal principle, the university administration has upheld it, drawing on the memory and legacy of the FSM. In 2000, the university built the Free Speech Movement Café on campus and, at the same time, also established the FSM Digital Archive and Oral History Project

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UYRs, USIs and CSG’s among the leadership, all of whom saw themselves as representing their parties. *Berkeley At War*, 24-25, 34.

<sup>43</sup> See Rosenfeld, *Subversives*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, *Freedom’s Orator*, 233, 239, 251-52, 254; Freeman, *At Berkeley*, 270; Rorabaugh, “The FSM, Berkeley Politics and Ronald Reagan,” in Cohen & Zelnik, *Free Speech Movement*, 515. On the right-wing backlash against Kerr, see also Raskin, “The Berkeley Affair,” 89.

<sup>45</sup> Rorabaugh, *Berkeley At War*, Ch. 3. Warren Coats, for example, was not involved in the campus Anti-Vietnam War Movement and recalls having been ambivalent about it (Coats interview).

<sup>46</sup> Chemerinsky & Gillman, *Free Speech*, 5-9, 13-17.

<sup>47</sup> Chemerinsky & Gillman, *Free Speech*, 148-49.

<sup>48</sup> Coats interview. Robert O’Donnell also told me that there was “a willingness, indeed a desire, to engage in discussion with those with different views” and suggested that the loss of this might have to do with “identity politics” or the “tribalism to which social media seems to lead.” He concluded, “[a]ll I know is that I find it incredibly depressing.” O’Donnell interview.

<sup>49</sup> Jehlen interview.

at the Bancroft Library.<sup>50</sup> In response to the right-wing speakers invited by the campus Young Republicans in 2015-2017, mentioned above, who used hate speech as a provocation and also in response to student opposition to these speakers, Chancellor Carol Christ formed a task force on free speech. In 2018, the task force released its final report, concluding that the “University of California, Berkeley, in its commitment to adhere to the First Amendment, must continue to embrace its obligation to protect the fundamental right of free speech, including hate speech.”<sup>51</sup> Today, in other words, there has been a reversal from autumn 1964: the administration has taken on the mantle of the universal principle of free speech, defending it against student demonstrations. It is now the older generation and university establishment that believe in universal principles and the possibility of consensus. Still, however, their belief in these things is not political, but shared across the political spectrum.

The Free Speech Movement was not, as it has been presented by many people since, an action by radical left-wing students, but rather a coalition that represented students of all political views. They were united in fighting for what they perceived as a universally agreed upon constitutional right, regardless of personal politics, and stayed together by maintaining a consensus policy that made all members of the movement feel represented. If we recognize this, we recognize also an important connection between universalism and coalition-building: the first provides a basis for the second. This connection also raises the question of what the future of political coalition-building might be if there are no longer any universally embraced principles such as the principle of freedom of speech.

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<sup>50</sup> Free Speech Movement Oral History Project, at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/libraries/bancroft-library/oral-history-center/projects/fsm>, accessed 28 March 2019.

<sup>51</sup> *Report of the Chancellor's Commission*, 2.

## **Alphabet Soup Guide**

CCR – California College Republicans

COFO – Council of Federated Organizations

CORE – Congress of Racial Equality

CP – Communist Party

CSG – Cal Students for Goldwater

FSM – Free Speech Movement

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

SCLC – Southern Christian Leadership Conference

SLATE – This one is not an acronym! It is only disguised as one. It was the name of a UC Berkeley progressive political party.

SNCC – Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

USI – University Society of Individualists (aka libertarians)

UYD – University Young Democrats

UYR – University Young Republicans

YPSL – Young People's Socialist League

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**Interview with Warren Coats by Madeleine Riskin-Kutz, 03-23-2019, by phone. Mr. Coats now lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He was a member of the University Young Republicans in 1964 and represented the group in the Free Speech Movement.**

MRK: Hello Dr. Coates, this is Madeleine.

WC: You're right on time.

MRK: Yeah, thanks so much for talking with me.

WC: Well, my pleasure.

MRK: So, yesterday I met with Lisa Rubens. She is the oral historian at Bancroft Library. She did a collection of oral histories of people involved with the Free Speech Movement, and she gave me some advice about how to conduct our interview.

WC: Oh, okay.

MRK: She's hoping to maybe include it on the online archive so we thought it would be good for me to roughly follow her format. So, I'll begin by explaining the context and where you are, where I am, what I'm doing, etcetera.

WC: Okay.

MRK: Alright, so here we go. It's March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and Dr. Warren Coats is talking with me by phone from Bethesda, Maryland. I'm Madeleine Riskin-Kutz at the College Preparatory School in Oakland, and for my US history term paper I'm writing about the Free Speech Movement. Dr. Coates, thanks so much for talking with me.

WC: It's my pleasure.

MRK: The big question I'd like to address in my paper is how it was possible for people from across the political spectrum from groups such as the Young Republican Socialist League – sorry! – the Young People's Socialist League, to Young Republicans such as yourself, to find common cause in the struggle for free speech on campus. Today, it seems hard to imagine such a broad coalition being possible, but when I began doing research, I discovered that the right side of the political spectrum is pretty much absent from retrospective accounts and memoirs. That is, you and the other Republicans get mentioned and discussed in the third person, but there's nothing in the first person, no Republican members reflecting on their own experiences. So, I got very curious what you would say about the movement yourself, which is why I'm so happy to get to talk with you.

WC: Sure, and the answer to that question is really very simple. That back then all of us across the political spectrum respected and believed in free speech. That doesn't seem to be the case on campus, now, with safe zones and other restrictions on free speech. But then everybody – it was not a political issue, everyone believed that we all benefited from hearing one another's views

freely expressed, etcetera. And when the university administration took actions to restrict it in a way that we all objected to, everyone sort of came together and said, "Let's protest this." Things began to go in different directions from there, but we all agreed on the importance of protecting free speech.

MRK: So when did you get involved with the Free Speech Movement at first? I read that you composed a letter to the Board of Regents, with Art Goldberg on the free speech issue. So, is that when you first became involved or was there before?

WC: No, from the beginning. I was the President of University Young Republicans at the time and the Free Speech Movement sort of came.... First of all, when the administration banned our recruiting tables. We had card tables along Bancroft Blvd there and passed out our literature and recruited members, all the clubs did that. And the administration banned that. I guess it was actually violating city ordinances, because it wasn't university property proper. So everybody was immediately talking about, man, this is ridiculous. What can we do about this? We should talk to the administration and soon thereafter – and this is a long time ago, I don't remember, I may not have every detail – but soon thereafter, a few days after, some poor kid was arrested on campus and put into the back of a police car that the students immediately surrounded and would not allow to withdraw. So I was involved at that point. Mario Savio, and other people, and I spoke to rallies that were surrounding that police car and each gave our perspectives on – as I said before, everyone was absolutely in favor of open free speech, but we had different perspectives on what the way forward was from there.

And I have a very interesting story that might not be that well-known. Sometime along the line, I don't know how many days or weeks or I don't know how many hours had passed, but Bettina Aptheker and her Marxist friends began channeling the discussion in the direction that many of us, not just on the right, but on the left as well, found very disturbing. She seemed to be moving things towards a violent clash with the administration that we disagreed with. And there were five university club presidents: myself, the president of University Conservatives, the President of Young Democrats, the President of YPSIL, which is the Young People's Socialist League or alliance, I don't remember exactly which, and Young Socialists. So three left-wing, two right-wing groups. So presidents of those groups began meeting late at night, it seemed like it was always around 2AM or 2 or 3AM in Seymour Martin Lipset's office. He was a sociology professor, because his research assistant was the president of the Socialists, so he had a key to the office, so we had a place where we could meet and.... why were we meeting? We were meeting because we were very disturbed at what Bettina Aptheker seemed to be trying to bring about, which was a physical confrontation, which never happened, nobody went around smashing windows, and breaking up stuff and so on. The ultimate sit-in in the administration building was, as such things go, peaceful. Everyone just sat down and refused to leave until the police carried them off. But we had many meetings at two or three in the morning in Lipset's office to strategize of how will we preserve our commitment to free speech and bring about a dialogue with the administration for a more reasonable policy without all of this turning into more violence than has already occurred. There wasn't any really serious violence, it was just only surrounding that police car, so it couldn't withdraw. And I don't know whether that story is known by many people, but I think it's... It's particularly interesting because it wasn't a left-wing gathering, it wasn't a right wing gathering, it was five of us from both sides who shared a

common commitment, that this ought to be a peaceful dialogue with the administration to have a more reasonable policy. We, ultimately, were able to meet with Clark Kerr, and I don't recall the letter that you're referring to, but I guess we probably fashioned the letter to the Board of Governors of the university or whatever, they're called. I don't know, for some reason we never were interested in meeting with the Chancellor of the Berkeley campus. Clark Kerr was the president of the whole university system but we ultimately met with him and made our case that you guys have not done a very sensible thing in clamping down on all of this. We think there's a way of both satisfying the law and re-establishing our tradition of open, free speech that would satisfy everybody except Bettina Aptheker. So anyway, that's my story.

MRK: So what did you think of Clark Kerr at the time?

WC: Well, I only had that one meeting with him, so actually I really don't remember very well. I believe that either as a result of our meeting or because of their own reconsiderations, the administration modified its policy. But I don't want to go into those details because I don't remember them very well, and I don't want to be inaccurate.

MRK: So you mentioned, so you said Bettina Aptheker wanted to move it in a more violent direction. And so the people who were meeting with you in those late night meetings . . . Do you remember who they were?

WC: No, I just remember the organizations which was Young Democrats, Young Socialists, YPSIL, YRs, which I was president of, and Young Conservatives, and I don't remember who the people were.

MRK: Do you remember getting along well, with like Art Goldberg or Mario Savio?

WC: Oh, yeah, we were absolutely . . . we never... I spoke just after Mario Savio a few times from the steps of Sproul Hall, but I never actually talked to him directly, so I don't have a firm view of what I think about him, except that by Bettina Aptheker's view of the world, he was a moderate, he was pressing for peaceful resolution etcetera. So we were on the same side in that respect, but I had no personal dealings with him.

MRK: What about the other leaders? Did you get along well with them, like the Socialists and the more left-wing people than you?

WC: Well, the five of us who met, we all got along extremely well because we were all striving to achieve the same thing, and so that was, while exhausting from two to three every morning, not every morning, but a good number of mornings, but still it was very, very cooperative. So Jackie and Art Goldberg, I think Art was the name of her brother, he and I for some reason had lots of conversations together and got along very well. Obviously, we had very different political perspectives on what constituted a just and efficient government, etcetera, but we were pretty much on the same page about the Free Speech Movement. And so I had more conversations with him than anyone, and it turned out that I think both he and his sister, at least he also came to the University of Chicago from there, which is where I went, so I saw them again at Chicago.

MRK: That's funny! And what about the other Republican members of the Free Speech Movement, how were your relations with them, such as Paul Cahill or Danny Rosenthal?

WC: All very good... They've been lifelong friends.

MRK: Do you remember any speeches of theirs that you particularly agreed with or disagreed with? Because I remember Paul Cahill, I read, he joined the Society of Individuals, when the Young Republicans left the FSM. Could you tell me a little about that? What do you think about him and the Society of Individuals?

WC: ISI, let's see, I can't remember, but I belonged to that also. They changed the name from Society of Individualists to Institute for Studies or something. It's strange that I was president of YRs because I'm a policy-oriented person, not a party politic-oriented person, and YRs tends to be those people who like to read polls of who's supporting which candidates and what, and all that stuff bores me to tears. I'm interested in public policy, so it's sort of strange that I was president of the YRs because we just were not a very good fit. ISI was a much better fit. It's an intellectual organization that studies sort of the foundations of liberalism, liberalism with a small l, not the perversion that socialism is or was, etcetera. So, Paul is a life-long friend.

MRK: So the Society of Individuals, that was also a Republican group? And were there conflicts between it and the Young Republicans?

WC: I don't, in my memory, I don't remember anything about our YR meetings. And that suggests that there were no big controversies. My memories are of confronting the rest of the student body, the Young Democrats, and on that we worked very harmoniously, together in this group of five that I've described to you to try and find a peaceful... None of us was happy with what the administration had ruled and we all wanted to see that changed but we were adamant to find an agreeable and peaceful way of doing that, that the administration would find legal and that would still uphold the traditions of the university for free speech,

MRK: So that's in contrast with Bettina Aptheker wanting to do more violent forms of protest?

WC: Yeah, exactly.

MRK: So, what would you say is the current attitude of Republicans like yourself who were involved in the Free Speech Movement? What do you think about the issue of free speech on campus, today? I don't know if you're aware that the Young Republicans of Berkeley, now Berkeley, have invited people such as Ann Coulter, Milo Yiannopoulos and Ben Shapiro, and they deliberately test the limits of free speech, it seems. What would you say about that?

WC: Well, let me respond in two ways. Some of those people I wouldn't invite to my house, or anything else, but I think, having said that, I think it was good and enriching for our student experience to hear various points of view. You know, I listened to Marxists give their point of view, Democrats, which had a much milder, more centrist point of view. That was a part of our

education and the reason we were all committed to free speech in part is that we considered that an important part of our education, not always hearing what we already agreed with, so I think it's good for the YRs to do that. As I said, there are some of the people they invite, I never would, myself, but that's up to them. But for the students who disagree to interfere, it's really very disappointing.

I would expect them, in the tradition of Berkeley and free speech, to attend if they were interested and raise critical questions, challenge what's being said, have an intellectual dialogue, but unfortunately, that doesn't happen as much as it used to, or at least it seems that the respect for the diversity of opinion and critical dialogue has been displaced with safe spaces, not hurting anybody's feelings, or stuff like that. Why in the world did you go to the university in the first place, if not to have your thoughts challenged?

MRK: Yeah, so I just wanted to go back briefly to the night of the Sproul Hall sit-in when the Young Republicans left the United Front. I saw you quoted as saying that the Free Speech Movement was asking the university administration not to be an administration. So is that why you decided to leave at that point? And did you have involvement with it afterwards?

WC: I left at that point because I strongly, and my organization, disagreed with physically taking over the administration building, although it was done in, as such things go, it was done in a relatively peaceful way, thank God. But I strongly disagreed with and disapproved of those kinds of tactics in dealing with the administration so I felt I could no longer represent the YRs on the Free Speech Movement Council, of which all presidents were members of the Free Speech Council. So I withdrew from it.

MRK: Before that, had you been involved in the Republican Convention, prior to the Free Speech Movement? Did you campaign for Barry Goldwater or Knowland? And what were your thoughts on Knowland, his efforts to remove anti-war petitioning at Sather Gate?

WC: I never participated in any of the national Republican conventions and as I said, I'm not an overly political type. I did do some door-to-door campaigning for some candidates that I liked, but I have to say, I ... I had turned 21, which is the voting age or was then, it should still be, when Goldwater ran. And I spent a year in Germany as an exchange student my senior year of high school. When I came back, a friend gave me Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*. Where I lived in Germany for a year I was right on the Iron Curtain; it was literally walking distance to the 10 Meter Stripe as it was called, which was the boundary between East and West Germany at the time. And some of my classmates in the village Gymnasium were refugees from East Germany. So I got quite a flavor of the difference between free and not-free societies essentially, planned non-market societies. And so when I got Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*, I read it and I thought, this pulls together all that I've been seeing, all that I've been thinking. So I was extremely impressed, very, very favorable for Goldwater, just thrilled that the first time I'm voting for president I could vote for him. So I was a part of a very loose knit group that really didn't do a whole lot on campus of Students for Goldwater. So I'm a great Goldwater fan. I've never voted for a President since that I've felt so good about... And certainly not the current one. I've changed my party affiliation actually.

MRK: Oh really?

WC: To Libertarian.

MRK: So you mentioned you grew up right – or no – that you were right in the area of the Iron Curtain for a year? Did you have friends who were German Communists and did that help or did that have any effect on how you viewed Communists more generally, left-wing people? during the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley?

WC: No. My year, my senior year of high school as an exchange student in Germany I never, I went to East Berlin, which was, believe it or not, *before* the Wall went up, that's how long ago it was, and saw the devastation and destruction in East Berlin while the West Side of Berlin had been rebuilt to a large extent. But all of my personal contacts in Germany were either with West Germans or with refugees who had fled the East, so obviously none of them had any sympathy for Communism or the dictatorial regime in East Germany.

MRK: So you said you changed your party to Libertarian, so do you disagree or agree with how Republicans treat free speech today? Like, I asked you about what you thought about free speech on campus today and how Young Republicans are inviting people. In general, in the United States, how do you think Republicans are treating free speech today?

WC: I, I think Republicans in general, and I always hesitate to use such broad labels because both parties have a diversity of people in them but overwhelmingly my impression is the Republican Party is preserving the tradition of free speech that existed at Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement. I.e., they still favor it, they don't want to protect and shelter students from hearing unpleasant or rude things, which is a complete violation of the whole spirit of free speech that seems to be coming from the left.

MRK: Yeah, I've noticed the birth of identity politics. When do you remember first hearing about identity politics as a new thing of the Left? And what were your thoughts on it?

WC: Well, I don't remember when I first heard, but this is relatively new, the last 10 years, I would say, where you began to hear of speakers being cancelled and run off campus and other totally anti-free speech behavior by students and the whole idea. Well, actually fairly not all that long or three or four or five years ago, the two husband and wife professors at Yale who were basically run out of the school, I believe they ultimately had to resign, I don't remember their names, but the woman sent an email to students about Halloween costumes and... I was shocked on a... The way I see this issue, it's a matter of courtesy. Are we raised and educated to be polite and respectful of other people's feelings? In which case, we exercise judgment about how we say things and what we say and whether it's hurtful or not, and hopefully no good person wants to be deliberately hurtful, but for the university to lay down, you can only exercise free speech in this little quadrant over here and you can't use these words, and those words, that's like Nazi Germany, that's absolutely shocking to me. It's the difference between top-down coercion from the government of what the people in government think is good behavior, and they're going to make sure everybody behaves well by their standard versus a free society where individuals are

hopefully taught what courtesy and respect for your fellow citizens looks like and sounds like. Those are two very different societies.

MRK: What would you say the leftwing leaders of the FSM, if you're still in contact with some of them, and if not, what they would think about this issue on campus today of people chasing speakers off campus?

WC: Yeah, I'm not in touch with any of them. And so, I wouldn't want to speculate what they might think. I would hope, thinking of Art Goldberg, and people like that who were very leftwing, but very pro-free speech, so I would hope they continue to support free speech.

MRK: Thank you. I wanted to just go back to somewhat before and also somewhat after the Free Speech Movement, so I know it followed the Civil Rights Movement, and it fed into the movement against the war in Vietnam, and I was wondering what you thought about those other two movements on either side. Were you involved in either one?

WC: No. Obviously, I was supportive of the Civil Rights Movement, but not actively involved and I was more conflicted at the time about the Vietnam War, which in retrospect I think was a tragedy, serious deception by the American government and totally ludicrous undertaking. At the time, I was more confused let's say, but the Vietnam War was... Well, the Civil Rights Movement was obviously a big and important event in the country, but it was less compelling in a way, at Berkeley. I would say without a great deal of certainty but compared to the Vietnam War, because civil rights ... there were no serious infringement of civil rights in California at Berkeley, so it wasn't as serious as it would have been in the South for example, where it was a day-to-day serious issue, but it was certainly strongly supported. But I think the Vietnam War was a bigger disruptor. There were more people on the other side of that at Berkeley, at that time.

MRK: So were you still on campus during the anti-war movement afterwards?

WC: So the Free Speech Movement year was my last year at Berkeley, but then I was at the University of Chicago for the next four years.

MRK: So, did you see anything from, either from the Free Speech Movement or from the antiwar movement?

WC: Well, the anti-war movement at Chicago, there were demonstrations and so on, but Chicago's a very intellectual place. So people believe that you influence through persuasion and dialogue, etcetera, ... which suits me just fine.

MRK: So did you see a difference in student body at Chicago from Berkeley? Was it more rightwing, or .... In general, what would you say were the differences between people's beliefs at the time in Chicago and in Berkeley?

WC: Well, first of all, I doubt that it's possible to broadly characterize the student bodies in either place that way. I was going from undergraduate to graduate and that's a huge difference, no matter where I was going to. So, at Chicago, I was in graduate school, so I was surrounded by very serious students working very hard to master what they came there to master, so ... what their political persuasions and interests were was very secondary and hard to even know.

MRK: So what are other questions that I should be asking you? What am I not asking?

WC: Well, I think you've pretty much exhausted my memory of it so I can't think of what else you might ask.

MRK: Alright, well thank you so much for your time! It was so helpful.

WC: You're quite welcome. It was nice to think back and try to remember all of that, so I am glad you tracked me down.



**Interview with Sally Cahill Tannenbaum about her brother Paul Cahill by Madeleine Riskin-Kutz, 03-28-2019, by phone. Paul Cahill was a law student, member of the University Young Republicans and President of the University Society of Individualists (USI) in 1964 and represented these groups in the Free Speech Movement. He died in 2016.**

MRK: [00:02](#) Alright. So I want to just start by asking you, did your brother ever talk to you about the Free Speech Movement while it was happening?

SCT: [00:11](#) I was eight years younger than my brother, so I was still in high school, but I went down to Berkeley a couple of times, several times actually, when he was a law student, had just started law school at Berkeley. He had gone to Saint Mary's College as an undergraduate. So I came down to the Berkeley campus a number of times, in high school and yeah, he did. It wasn't just the Free Speech Movement. He was active in things. And when I came down -- I was talking to Ed Conley last night because he called me after he had talked to your father and I told Ed, I came down a number of times and it was, for me, it was really exciting because Telegraph Avenue, it was very different. I came from a little tiny high school and it was pretty active, crazy acting, but I, that's the part I remember about the Free Speech Movement is going to Sproul Hall, that area, and Paul talking about there were tables out there and talking about politics. He was active in the Young Republicans at the time and he was also one of the people that was supporting, they called it the United front, but it was kind of everybody wanted to have the freedom to kind of talk about politics out there, to have tables and stuff. But what I remember about the Free Speech Movement was that he took me to a party and again, I was pretty young. I was probably 14 or 15 at the time. And here was a party for a guy who had used the f-word and he had been arrested and so there was a party, he got out of jail.

SCT: [02:03](#) And so it was part of the Free Speech Movement because that's why he got arrested because he used that word over the microphone and I don't know if he was the only one arrested, but the party was for him. And so we went to this party and they were celebrating his getting out of jail. So it was still at the time of the Free Speech Movement that he got out of jail. And that's why he was arrested. And I know that he talked about Mario Savio, because a lot of it was in the news too, it was being covered on TV a little bit. It was pretty volatile times. And then after that, I actually contacted someone who knew him. I know a couple people that knew him during those years.

- SCT: [02:47](#) So I talked to my sister. I have an older sister, Cathy. Cathy doesn't remember much about it, but she gave me a couple of ideas of some people that maybe I could put you in touch with. But one of the things that happened is that he moved from the Young Republicans. He was very libertarian. I don't know if you know what Libertarians are, but Paul became a strong libertarian and he had read Ayn Rand's books, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, and that's when he became a libertarian. So he went from a Young Republican to a libertarian, and the one person I contacted overnight is a woman that knew him, but she knew him the year after the Free Speech Movement. So she said, I really didn't know him when he was active in that.
- SCT: [03:42](#) She said it was the next year. And she said, "when I met him, he was kind of moving into being a libertarian thing," and I said, yeah, that's, what I remember a lot, the whole libertarian thing. And he was very active in Goldwater's campaign too. And so, I remember he had a booth at the fair in my small county of Humboldt County. He put on a booth for Barry Goldwater and he was he was an alternate to the Republican convention that nominated Barry Goldwater. And my father wasn't too excited about that because my father was a Democrat and he thought Paul should be at law school, not being an alternate, he should be attending law school. Then he became very active in the Reagan campaign. And as Ed, I think, told you, I ended up doing my master's thesis about Reagan and his rhetoric.
- SCT: [04:46](#) I was a professor in communication. And so I, I worked with a Reagan, Reagan's head speech writer and met and interviewed Reagan and stuff. So you know, that whole transition. So most of what I remember is really more about Paul and the conservative movement more than the Free Speech Movement. I know he was involved in it. I know he supported it because he saw it as, all different groups could, would be allowed to have, to distribute information about their politics. And he saw it as really critical to education. He was a big supporter of William Buckley and he often said to me, you know, Libertarians and, and Buckley who was National Review, he was a big leader of the conservative movement, but he was kind of a libertarian conservative.
- SCT: [05:46](#) And he said, in many ways the liberals and conservatives come together on a number of issues. And, and I think freedom of speech was one of those issues that he saw as an area where they would naturally agree in not limiting the ability to give out information on your position, so to speak. If you talked to a libertarian, a libertarian really doesn't want a lot of government

interference. And so, you know, you can find people on the right and on the left that agree on a lot of issues. And I think there's some areas where they kind of overlap and a very interesting way and I think that's what was happening at that time.

MRK: [06:38](#) So you mentioned that he switched from Young Republican to Libertarian. I know he was a part of a club called USI. Do you know if when he switched into being more libertarian, he switched from the Young Republicans club to USI?

SCT: [07:00](#) I don't think it was an official thing, but he was a head of the Young Republicans at Berkeley, and then later just started doing more libertarian things, Just like, Reagan was a Republican was a Democrat who changed to become a Republican, but he always saw himself as a libertarian Republican. So basically the limiting of the power of government, not wanting a lot of government agencies and government control over individual lives. There's different kinds of different kinds of conservatives and certainly today the party is a different kind of conservative party than it was under Reagan. And I think my brother would align more with Reagan on many most issues, than he would in the Conservative Party today.

MRK: [07:58](#) So I'm interested by what you were saying about the switch to libertarianism because, on the night of December 2nd, the overnight occupation of Sproul Hall, which was kind of the culmination of the Movement. Warren Coats, who is the leader of the Young Republicans. And I talked to him a little a couple of days ago. He left the movement at that moment. He said that it was because they were trying to ask the administration to stop being an administration and he didn't agree with that. But I believe that your brother stayed in as part of USI and do you know anything about the decision, that decision that he made?

SCT: [08:37](#) I do not know. I do not know.

MRK: [08:40](#) He was at the overnight occupation because his name is listed in the Oakland Tribune.

SCT: [08:46](#) I don't know that. I don't believe he ever got arrested. But I did ask Ed about this. He was on the UnAmerican activities list or something, he said. I know he was listed there. He went onto work for Reagan in both Sacramento and in Washington DC, so somehow that didn't limit his advancement politically, but, when I say that he changed, he kind of morphed, it didn't happen like overnight. Right. But he was a strong Young Republican and when I was going to college years later, I went

to school at UC Santa Barbara and, had friends in the Young Republicans, and I know at that time, Paul was no longer Young Republican. He just aligned a little more with libertarians at that time but I don't know that it was an official thing. I think he just, slowly over time . . . It's very interesting to see the party has changed so dramatically in the last couple of years and I don't, I don't know where he'd be on this.

- SCT: [10:03](#) I think he'd have a hard time right now, you know?
- MRK: [10:09](#) Did his ideas change about the Free Speech Movement over time also?
- SCT: [10:13](#) No, I don't think so. I think Paul always believed that. I mean, he was, he was one, you know, um, one of the things you talked it, He was really articulate and he didn't get emotional in general. I mean, he could stay really rational. I always said to him, you would have been the best debater because he could, listen to both sides and not get emotionally pulled, he could stay pretty rational. He was a pretty rational guy. And, I think that was one of his assets and when he would talk, he was pretty convincing. I went to Taiwan with him in 1975 and for a whole summer program, it was a National Review program and he was our spokesman and he just was really good at laying things out and trying to stay as logical as possible. And I think he really credited himself that way. And I think that was one of his, he could be around people that were polar opposites and getting really erired up. And he could just stay really calm and it would calm the whole conversation, which was important.
- MRK: [11:38](#) Did he have, did he have other experience afterwards working with people of opposite political views?
- SCT: [11:45](#) Well, he was always active politically and I don't know, in a formal way. He worked for the public utilities commissioner, Commissioner Simon. He was an attorney with them. And then he went up to work in Sacramento for Reagan, and then got appointed back in Washington DC. He worked for the Environmental Protection Agency, and then he went over to the Department of Energy. So he worked for him. And I think when HW Bush went in, he worked for Bush for a very short time, but he came back to California because he wasn't as enthusiastic about Bush because he was definitely a Reagan Republican.
- MRK: [12:34](#) Why is that do you think?

- SCT: [12:40](#) I think Reagan was more libertarian, and I think that was, that was the appeal.
- MRK: [12:51](#) So you said that he was very good at keeping calm during political discussions. Many left-wing people actually in the books that I've read and in the oral histories, often left-wing people describe him as heroic in keeping the coalition together. So Jackie Goldberg said that he was her personal hero. Do you think that's part of how he managed to do that or were there other things?
- SCT: [13:28](#) It's too bad he isn't here for you to talk to him because I think he was very smart. He was very reasonable, he would really listen. He was a really good listener and he was able to try and get you to not be emotional because I tend to get a little emotional and we would have discussions about different political things and mostly politics. And I would get all fired up and he would, he would just stay calm and then with time would try to sway me without getting all fired up about it. And he used to say Sally, when I later became a debate coach, I realized what an asset that was, that he really was listening to both sides and he really did understand that an almost any issue, there's valid arguments really on both sides.
- SCT: [14:18](#) There are valid arguments and you're weighing which ones and you're weighing the costs of those arguments. Like there's positives too, a lot of government control because. . . but there's also a lot of negatives. And so he would weigh them and it, and he tried to get you to look at it that way too. And I think most people that [?] I think liked him. I mean, he was a very likable guy. He was a good and honest guy. He was really honest. He wasn't malicious, he wasn't backstabbing, he was very candid with people. He didn't get too fired up. So I think people did like him and he was really smart. He was really smart and he had this ability to just remember really detailed information. So, it was really hard to argue with him because he could just pull out really specific things. Literally it would just drive me crazy because it's hard to argue with someone like that. But I appreciated that about him. And he'd find a flaw in your argument. I'd always say, I should never argue with you because, you know, and it was just kind of a joke, but it was, there was some truth to it too.
- MRK: [15:36](#) Yeah. It's a skill that a lot of politicians these days should probably acquire.
- SCT: [15:40](#) Yes. I have to think he'd be a little appalled, I think at some of what's happened.

MRK: [15:50](#) Dr. Coats, whom I talked to a couple of days ago was, is definitely appalled with the Conservative Party right now.

SCT: [15:57](#) Yeah, it's pretty hypocritical too. I mean, it's just shocking. I used to teach political campaigns and I'm just watching some of these people. I was watching today, McCarthy and Nunes making accusations against the Democrats and I went, oh my God, they're such hypocrites. I mean, they've done the same thing. It's just really unbelievable to me. But, I think the lack of civility is really hard for me, so I'm sure he would feel the same way. One of the things that I think he admired about Reagan, in fact, when my thesis when I was working on my thesis, Reagan's head speechwriter in Sacramento, Jerry Martin and Martin would say that Reagan could take, kind of an unpopular philosophy because Goldwater was not as popular at the time, he seemed strident and Reagan was able to take something, the same message, but he would just say it differently. And his personality, he was able to win over people. And I think that was something that happened with the conservative movement. He was able to make it more palatable, more understandable, and less strident-sounding so, I think my brother felt the same way.

MRK: [17:19](#) Why do you think he was drawn to Goldwater?

SCT: I think it was those Ayn Rand books, I really do. The whole libertarian movement happened just about that time. That would be 1964. So Reagan actually when he was,, during the Goldwater campaign was [?] and he was still a Democrat when he did that. And I just have to think it was the whole free enterprise kind of thing. The whole free enterprise movement, you know, pick yourself up by the bootstraps. You don't need government help and didn't want government, he wasn't, pro welfare too much, and so I just suspect that that's why Goldwater appealed to him?

MRK: [18:18](#) So you mentioned that your father is Democratic.

SCT: [18:22](#) Yes.

MRK: [18:23](#) Was your family in general Democratic and it was just he who switched to being Republican?

SCT: [18:33](#) Yeah. Well, what happened is my father was what we always called a Roosevelt Democrat, FDR Democrat. My mom was a

Democrat and my father once said, everyone sends their kid to Berkeley and their son becomes an extreme liberal. And he goes, I send my ....

- MRK: [19:34](#) [lost connection]
- SCT: [19:35](#) My dad wasn't too excited. There were a lot of fights. My father was Irish Catholic and the arguments about politics especially, but that's also part of our family dynamics were very political and, rest of the kids weren't as involved. We didn't get as involved in politics.
- MRK: [20:07](#) Did he talk to you about the other leaders of the movement either on the left or the right, like on the right there would be Warren Coats or Mona Hutchins or Dan Rosenthal. And on the left Art Goldberg, Mario Savio, Jack Weinberg, Bettina Aptheker who was a communist.
- SCT: [20:22](#) Some of them, I've heard the names of them, but I don't remember Paul necessarily talking about them a lot to me. It's been too long for me to really remember that. I don't remember meeting them. I do remember going on campus and he would introduce me to people. But it was just too long ago for me to remember the names of the people.
- MRK: [20:46](#) But he didn't mention them after the movement?
- SCT: [20:53](#) No, he had mutual respect for people that were involved in any side because they were involved. I think he admired that people took a stand and got involved in issues. That was important to him. So it didn't always upset him that somebody had a polar opposite viewpoint. That they we had enough gumption to get involved and care about things. I certainly heard about Mario Savio, but I might have heard that more from television than from Paul.
- SCT: [21:34](#) And Rosenthal. I mean, that name rings a bell, but that doesn't mean I met him or anything.
- MRK: [21:39](#) Doctor Coats told me that he and you and your brother were friends after the movement. . . .
- SCT: [21:47](#) Oh, that's interesting. That's interesting.
- MRK: [21:53](#) I was especially curious about the December 2nd overnight occupation at Sproul Hall because his name was listed in the Oakland Tribune as having been arrested, but the court

documents don't mention him. I read this in a book, but it's kind of unsure whether or not he was actually arrested, whether or not he was actually at the night. Did he tell you about it?

- SCT: [22:26](#) No, I don't remember that. I don't, that doesn't mean it didn't happen. It just means I don't remember. I think, if he had told me that he'd been arrested, I would have known it, I would have remembered that.
- MRK: [22:45](#) Is there anything else that I haven't asked you that I should ask you?
- SCT: [22:54](#) No, but I'm going to email a woman whose husband has since passed away, but she was really good friends with my brother and she married a really good friend of my brother's who was also in law school. And I'm going to ask her if she knows anything and if she does, I will send her your email. Her name is Peggy Miles and like I said, her husband John was very close to Paul and both at Saint Mary's and then at law school. I think he might've gone to San Francisco to law school. But I'm not sure of that, but I'll find out and I'll ask her if she knows about anything in that time period. I was trying to think of somebody else or she knew at that time, you know, but I, I don't, you know, I don't have contact with anybody else that I can think of besides him. So I'll check all of her and then if I do, she'll get in touch with you.
- MRK: [23:57](#) Well, thank you so much.
- SCT: [23:59](#) Well, good luck, so you're a high school student, Huh?
- MRK: [24:02](#) Yes, I'm a junior in high school.
- Speaker 5: [24:04](#) Yeah.
- SCT: [24:05](#) Well you sure sound pretty darn sharp for a high school girl. I mean, I'm not trying to stereotype high school kids, but you sound very astute. So what is this for? Is this for a political science class?
- MRK: [24:17](#) Yeah. So my, US history class, we have a second semester term paper and we're allowed to write about anything that that has to do with American history and took place before 1990. So I picked the Free Speech Movement in part because it happened right here and I have access to so many sources here in Berkeley and in part B. My grandmother was was one of the leaders of the movement.



SCT: [24:55](#) Oh, is that right? What was her name?

MRK: [24:57](#) Myra Jehlen.

SCT: [25:00](#) Okay. That's very exciting. That's very cool.

MRK: [25:04](#) Yeah, it is.

SCT: [25:06](#) Is she still around?

MRK: [25:07](#) Yes, she is. I talked to her the other day about it.

SCT: [25:11](#) Oh, that's so cool. That's really great. Yeah, a neat experience. I think it's great you picked the topic. I mean, it's certainly an important one.

MRK: [25:20](#) Yeah. It's, it's fascinating. I knew, I knew a little bit about it. Like I knew the series, I knew who Mario Savio was. My mother had shown me a video of his speech, but I've, I've learned so much just studying it and researching it.

SCT: [25:36](#) You know, when you get all done, shoot me a little note. I'd love to see it.

MRK: [25:41](#) Yes, I would love to. Yeah.

SCT: [25:43](#) Okay, so send it to me and again, Madeleine. If I, if I can contact anybody else that has any informational, I would do it right away. I would have to contact her, but the word. All right. Thank you so much. Okay. And best of luck.