

opinion

correspondent

back pages

Telegraph Avenue resembles a war zone. The street is littered with broken glass, rocks, bricks, and lengths of pipe. On every corner small clots of people battle the Berkeley police. The people surge forward -- then scatter as the police charge swinging their truncheons.

I run through a dense cloud of blue smoke, coughing and blinded by tears.

"Walk!" they shout as the police wade into the crowd.

I run.

I'm walking again; en masse after so many years. The sun is out and it's warm. This time I'm marching for human needs -- demonstrating against the Reagan administration's economic policies.

A motley of odd factions gather on 12th Ave. -- elder hipsters, old lefties, new lefties, part-time lefties, full-time lefties -- and ones like me -- leftover lefties.

"We'll form lines six across -- we'll march on the left side, then on the right side of the street," an organizer says over a loudspeaker.

The marchers silently queue up.

These are groups protesting nuclear weapons, supporting ERA, advocating abortion rights and denouncing the draft. I mingle. Something's not right. The air smells wrong.

A beat-up pick-up truck speeds by. The driver leans out the window and shouts, "Fuck off." That's more like it.

A speaker in an upstairs apartment blares rock through the boom of shotguns, the crack of small arms, and the occasional chatter of an automatic weapon.

"Everywhere I hear the sounds of marching, charging feet, boy."

"Cause summer's here and the time is right,

"for fighting in the street, boy."

The splash of shattered plate glass resounds the street -- crystal tag.

Tear gas rings the trees of Sproul Plaza.

The gas masked police, in a column three deep, slowly advances behind plastic shields.

A barrage of rocks and bottles rains on them.

"They say cut back, we say fight back," the marchers chant almost in unison.

It's sad to see the balding old men with haggard faces carrying the red banner of the Communist Party. It's like seeing your grandfather lying-in-state.

I amble along with the marchers noting how calm and congenial everyone is. Middle-age has slowed most of these people. They pull wagons with smiling kids inside. They push their bikes and walk the dog as they march and chant.

"Marge, have you seen Betty and the kids?"

"She's up front with the EEA, Bill."

Anachronistic day-glo freaks, in tie-dyed clothing, dance like psychotic dervishes under a LOVE banner.

A gray-haired woman elegantly climbs out of her Volkswagen. Her frowning teen-aged daughters, so preppie in designer jeans, tag along with mom as she blends with the marchers.

I run from the burning police car. A shotgun explodes. The man running next to me seems to gently rise, then crashes to the pavement and skids into the gutter.

I kneel beside him. His legs are flailing. He's still running.

The double O buckshot has shredded the tee shirt off his back. It's a mess of blood, cloth and tattered flesh.

"I can't believe it," he keeps saying.

Blood runs down my arm. I think it's his, until I stand and hear the drops smacking the street.

"Chalk... Chalk..."

I look back. The Alameda County Sheriff is grinning by the burning car. Some images you can never forget.

I'd forgotten how long marches can be. Everyone is suffering mid-march doldrums. The banners are drooping. The chants are weary sounds mouthed without emphasis.

"Bunch of jerks," a bearded man says to me, thumbing toward the marchers.

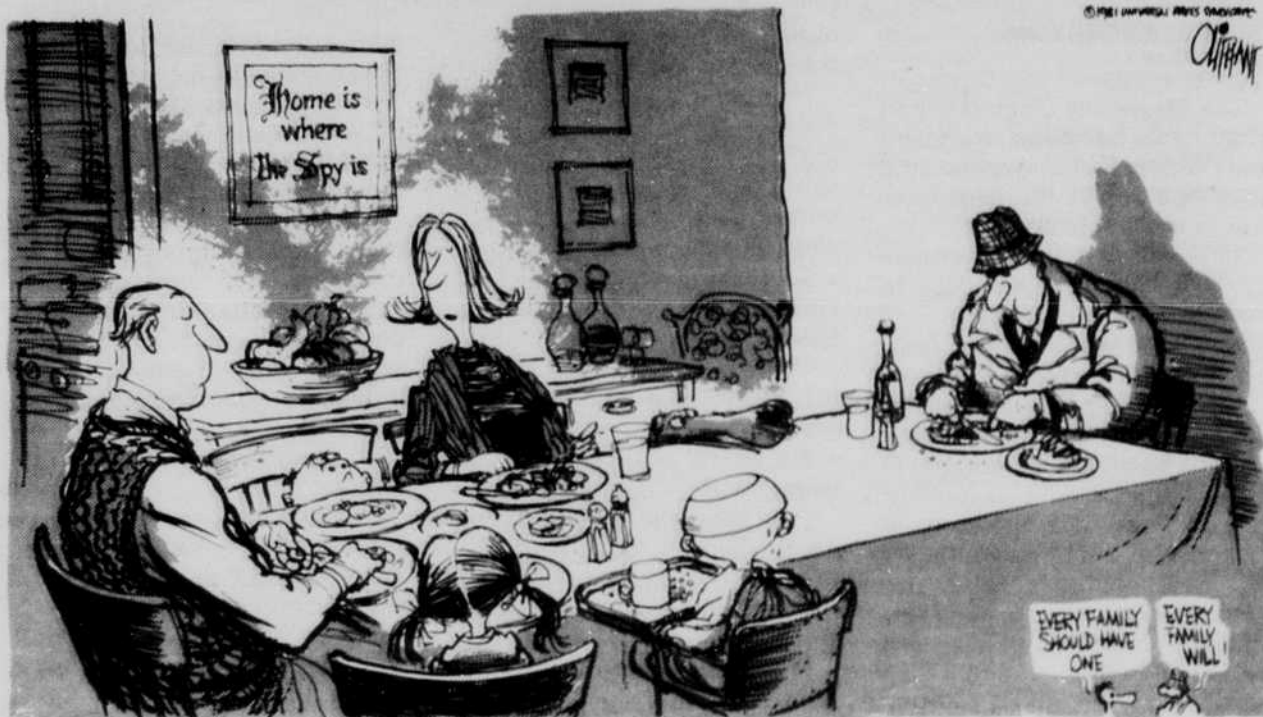
YAF clusters in a tiny group on a rise overlooking the rally site. They wave an American flag and sheepishly hold signs praising Pres. Ronald Reagan. Most of them have acne. I listen to an interview with the leader. I hear him tell a reporter his age. We're the same age.

I fought and eluded capture into the night -- fighting for a square of land that became a parking lot.

The following morning Gov. Reagan said, "If there's going to be a bloodbath, let's get it on."

I'm so many miles from those days; and long past home.

Yes -- "still crazy after all these years," to quote Paul Simon. Yes -- still crazy -- and still accurate with a brick.



'YOU EAT UP YOUR VEGETABLES OR I'LL TELL OUR FAMILY CIA SPY TO PUT YOU ON REPORT.'

gabriel boehmer

editor's note

On this campus today there is a sense among students that we are passengers on a sinking ship, a Titanic if you will, called the University of Oregon.

This fatalism fuels a kind of justified hedonism -- a belief that if we are doomed to ride on the Titanic, we might as well make the trip as pleasant as possible, go first class, because we assume there is nothing better.

It's the lifeboat ethic.

Students, looking out for themselves, are investing their educations in glorified trade schools that promise an instant payoff upon graduation rather than in the liberal arts where occupational opportunities are more limited.

While University students lose sleep nights wondering if their academic department will still be there in the morning, they are aware also that the financial malaise of higher education is not limited to this university.

While the best of faculty and administration can escape to the private sector or to other colleges and universities that are still afloat, many students have no other option than to attend a state-supported institution.

The mystique of the Ivory Tower has vanished.

Despite enrollment limitations at some state schools forced by budget reductions, more students than ever are attending college this fall -- about 12.3 million, a 1.6 percent increase from a year ago.

Despite reductions in financial assistance for students, college is now more available to the public than ever before. Community colleges and part-time students account for the largest share of the enrollment growth.

The mass marketing of higher education has made college more like Woolworth's than Bloomingdale's.

The diploma is devaluating as fast as the dollar. Today's graduates learn that a diploma isn't a ticket to prestige, the job of their dreams or an attractive income.

Public confidence in higher education declines as more attention is focused on the decline of basic skills -- holding colleges and universities more accountable for the quality of their graduates.

But as colleges admit a more diverse student population, in background and ability, they must offer an even wider range of educational opportunities to match the students' needs -- a seemingly impossible stunt when government is reducing support for higher education.

The traditional college curriculum is changing rapidly to adjust to this new "consumerism" in higher education. The buzzword *Liberal Arts* has been replaced on college campuses by *Vocation*.

Through its popularization, higher education has been put on the Titanic with other social service programs. Should we be surprised?

letters

Trickle down

I think it's getting clearer and clearer that there is something very wrong with Pres. Ronald Reagan and his whole approach to running this country.

You could see from the beginning that his best friends were the large corporations and the super-rich, so it wasn't too surprising when he gave those people big tax cuts.

It's becoming obvious now, though, that the program of Reagan and his corporate companions is actually intended to lower the standard of living of most Americans. Working people and low-income people (and often those are the same) are expected to put up with

lower wages, layoffs, reduced social services and a worse quality of life. Why? So that the funds which would have gone for wages and social programs can instead be diverted to the military and big business profits.

The rest of us are supposed to wait for the benefits to "trickle down" to us from the wealthy corporations. Well friends, I can see something trickling down all right, but it's not money. And you'd best get a shovel if you want to do anything useful with it.

This administration is supposed to be all for "national security." But genuine security for the American people can't come from an arms race or military intervention. Instead, it

comes from a society that meets our basic needs.

Bob Guidin
Mayfair Lane, Eugene

letters policy

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