‘The Bible of the Free Speech Movement’: Hal Draper’s *The Mind of Clark Kerr* revisited

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Introduction
The Free Speech Movement (FSM) at UC Berkeley launched a student revolt which would ‘spread from campus to campus around the world, jumping like electrical sparks from terminal to terminal’ (Harman, 1988:39). This paper excavates a small piece of the hidden intellectual history of the FSM. *The Mind of Clark Kerr*, a short political pamphlet written by Hal Draper to ‘generalise the issues for the embattled students’, was dubbed ‘the Bible of the Free Speech Movement’ yet its importance is invariably missed in accounts of the FSM. In this paper I examine the immediate political context and influence of the pamphlet which presented a critique of the multiversity and of its theoretician, the UC president Clark Kerr and trace the intellectual roots of Draper’s critique to his development of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism.

1. Contexts
Immediate Political Context and Influence
On October 1 1964 Hal Draper found himself making a speech in his stocking feet standing on top of a police car surrounded by hundreds of students engaged in a sit-down protest against the arrest of one of their fellows. An odd figure to find at the birth of the U.S. student movement, in 1964 Draper was a fifty year-old university librarian as far as most of the students were concerned. Only a few also knew him as an indefatigable socialist theoretician and marxist intellectual of the first rank. Draper had been a militant of the US anti-Stalinist left since the 1930’s as a young leader of the Student Strikes Against War in New York, as editor of the socialist publications *The New International* and *Labor Action* and as a leading member of the Workers Party (renamed Independent Socialist League) from 1940-1958. In 1964 Draper was an editor of the socialist journal *New Politics* and a co-founder of the Independent Socialist Club, which got off the ground at the same time as the FSM and linked together a small but energetic group of socialists on the Berkeley campus (Johnson, 2000a).

But two students who did know this political Draper were very close by. Jack Weinberg was inside the police car Draper was standing atop, having been arrested. Mario Savio had just
introduced Draper to the gathering crowd, jumping down to make way for him. Both students, who would become the two main leaders of the Free Speech Movement (FSM), had spent part of the previous night listening to Hal Draper give a speech at a meeting of the new Independent Socialist Club. Draper’s subject had been a book written by the President of UC Berkeley, Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*. The title Draper chose for his talk was ‘Behind the Ban: Clark Kerr’s View of the University as a Knowledge Factory’. The students who were to precipitate the protests which launched the FSM the following day have attested to the impact of Draper’s talk. Brian Turner, the first student to refuse the Dean’s request to remove his Friends of SNCC table from Sather Gate attended the talk and found it crystallised his thinking about the university (Heinrich, 1971:122). Jack Weinberg has recalled that the impromptu speech he made as he waited to be arrested was a resume of the talk Draper gave the night before:

I recall the night before Hal Draper had given a talk...on ‘Clark Kerr’s View of the University as Factory’...I was at this talk and Mario was also there...at the time I felt greatly influenced by the speech [so] I talked about the university factory. I was essentially trying to fit some of what was happening into that theoretical framework - explaining it in terms of the framework that had been exposited the night before. At the time I felt I was heavily dependent on the speech.

Weinberg’s speech was recorded by local radio:

I want to tell you about this knowledge factory, while were all sitting down here now. It seems that certain of the products are not coming out to standard specifications. And I feel the university is trying to purge these products so that they can once again produce for industry exactly what they specify (in Draper, 1965:40).

The police car which then drove into the middle of the plaza to arrest Weinberg never moved for the next thirty two hours. At a euphoric meeting of the ISC Draper suggested he write a pamphlet about Kerr and the multiversity and did so in one marathon writing session over the next forty eight hours (the original Forward was dated October 4). The ISC published the pamphlet immediately and according to ISC and FSM leader Joel Geier 1,500 copies were
sold on the corner of Bancroft on the first morning of its appearance: ‘We would do this little number. I’d shout “The Mind of Clark Kerr!” and Joanne Landy would yell “Does he have one? No!”’ (Geier, interview with author).³ Geier has recalled the impact of the pamphlet:

It was the bible of the FSM. It was the only thing that gave people some ideas about the sort of struggle that they were involved in (...) It appealed to what their feelings were but gave [them] a conception. All the speakers at rallies refer to ‘the university as factory’ and ‘the knowledge factory’ - everybody takes from it’ [Draper] becomes the ideologist of [the FSM] insofar as it has one and that is because of his pamphlet. *The Mind of Clark Kerr* is probably the most successful agitational pamphlet I’ve ever worked with’ (Geier, interview with author).

Another FSM leader, Mike Parker, had pointed out that, ‘*The Mind of Clark Kerr*, was often called the Bible of the FSM and helped inspire Mario Savio’s speech on ‘the machine’ (Parker, 1997:49). Savio himself felt the pamphlet, and Draper’s intellectual guidance more generally, ‘contributed mightily to the movement’s understanding of the extent and depth of the injustice by which the “multiversity” runs’ (in Draper, 1965:7). From another point on the political spectrum the philosopher Sidney Hook was no less sure about Draper’s importance. ‘The fount of [the FSM’s] soapbox puerility’s is the fifty year old youth, Hal Draper, the gray Eminence of the Steering Committee of the FSM’. Hook said *The Mind of Clark Kerr* was the ‘source book of [the FSM’s] diatribes’ and that Draper was ‘the most important influence...the mind which nourishes’ the student leaders (in Miller and Gilmore, 1965:136-8). In fact Draper was not a tactical advisor to the FSM but it’s unofficial ideologist ‘reframing’ the university for the students in ways which enabled them to draw connections between their struggle for free speech and university reform and the fight for civil rights and to make sense of the contradictory behaviour of their liberal President in the heat of battle. Many years later Draper wrote that ‘To the best of my knowledge, the phrase ‘knowledge factory’ was first used in the talk I gave...but I used it as a consequence of the views put forward by Kerr...But the currency of the phrase that ensued on and around the campus stemmed solely from my use of it - especially when the pamphlet *The Mind of Clark Kerr* appeared’ (Draper, 1982:1) Certainly when Mario Savio spoke at the Sproul Hall sit-in he paraphrased *The Mind of Clark Kerr* during one part of his speech:
The conception of Clark Kerr...is that the university is part and parcel of this particular stage in the history of American society; it stands to serve the need of American industry; it is a factory that turns out a certain product needed by industry or government. Because speech does often have consequences which might alter this perversion of higher education, the university must put itself in a position of censorship (Savio 1964, in Draper, 1965:181).

Underlying Intellectual Context

Perry Anderson once wrote that the Trotskyist tradition ‘will have to be explored in all the diversity of its underground channels and streams. It may surprise future historians with its resources’ (1976:98). Draper’s critique of the multiversity can be traced to the one of the main tributaries of that tradition, the debate about the nature of the degenerating Soviet Union which split the U.S. Trotskyist movement in the 1930’s (Johnson, 2000b). In sharp opposition to Trotsky, Joseph Carter, along with other figures such as James Burnham and Max Shachtman, developed the theory that the Soviet Union was neither capitalist nor socialist nor any kind of ‘workers state’ on account of having nationalised property, but a new form of exploiting class society which they labelled bureaucratic collectivist. Hal Draper later defined the bureaucratic collectivist social system as:

a new social order which is neither capitalist nor socialist, but which is based on the control of both economy and government by an elite bureaucracy - forming a new exploitative ruling class - which runs the fused economic-political structure not for private-profit gains of any individuals or groups, but for its own collective aggrandisement in power, prestige, and revenue, by administrative planning-from-above’ (Draper 1992:58).

The critical innovation of the theory was to break the automatic connection between anti-capitalism or collectivism and socialism. The bureaucratic collectivist ruling class which based itself on collective property was a ‘bidder for the historic role of successor to a doomed capitalism’ and the working class now faced two enemies, ‘a capitalism which is anti-Stalinist and a Stalinism which is anti-capitalist’ (1996, p.136-7). Both James Burnham and Hal Draper sought to extend the theory to include what they saw as the bureaucratic collectivisation of economy and society in the west. The two had worked together very briefly in 1938-9 while
national committee members of the Socialist Workers Party with joint responsibility for educational work. Burnham left the Workers Party in 1940 and famously developed the theory in the direction of his book *The Managerial Revolution* (1941). Draper rejected Burnham’s ideas that bureaucratic collectivism was an inevitable wave of the future and that socialism was therefore an unattainable utopia. But he did seek, like Burnham, to extend the theory "from a way to explain an aberration to a way to account for a wider process of bureaucratization in the world" (Draper, in Drucker interview, 1989). He took off in three directions: toward an understanding of the bureaucratic statification of capitalism in the west; toward an analysis of the consequent 'bureaucratic collectivisation of social democratic reformism and liberalism in the west; and toward an examination of the impact of bureaucratic collectivism as a 'source of great confusion in the socialist movement' (Johnson, 2000c; Draper 1966; 1992). Draper argued that while the socialist forces were weak and unable to lift society to democratic collectivism a global relapse of society was leading to the emergence of the ‘autonomised state’ along two channels: the bureaucratic collectivisation of capitalism in the west and Stalinism in the east, producing:

an over-all and all-pervasive tendency in economic and social development: the tendency toward the statification of economy, the bureaucratisation of social and economic life. It is a tendency thrown up by the intensified disintegration of world capitalism in our epoch, side by side with the bureaucratic-collectivist expansionism of the Russian system (1992:86).

In 1949 Draper wrote a programmatic document for the Independent Socialist League, 'Capitalism, Stalinism, and the Struggle for the World' (1949), in which ‘for the first time we used this understanding of the fully formed bureaucratic collectivisms of the Stalinist world to analyse the tendencies toward such a social formation which exist under the disintegrating capitalisms of our era outside the socialist world’ (Draper 1953). The 1949 document argued that post-war capitalism was dominated by the permanent arms economy and statification which was producing authoritarianism in government and the transformation of US liberalism. Drawing on the theory of the permanent war economy which economist Vance had developed for the WP-ISL Draper tried to explore the consequences of the resulting 'uneven' and 'partial' self-negation of capitalism for the character of US liberalism (for a discussion of Vance and the theory of the Permanent War Economy see Worcester, 1997).
Draper read various ideological trends within post-war capitalist societies as 'reflections or anticipations' of bureaucratic collectivisation. Charting the dominance of statist and neo-corporatist themes within American liberalism (1992:58-80; 132-144) and within post-war European social democratic reformism, most notably Croslandism (1992:88-105) in 1961 Draper wrote of, ‘The wider international trend is the burgeoning of bureaucratic-collectivist ideologies in a broad-spread infiltration of all bourgeois thought today’ (in 1992:58). In the US Draper mentioned such figures as E.S. Mason of Harvard, W.H. Ferry of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Scott Buchanan and A.A.Berle. Draper discussed the ‘theoreticians of convergence’ in a letter to George Rawick of November 13 1961, defining them loosely as ‘ideologists who look forward (with expectation or equanimity) to the coming new society which will be a mixture of capitalism and Stalinism, Stalinised capitalism or capitalised Stalinism, or bureaucratic collectivist, or what-have-you’. Draper mentions as examples ‘Berle, the Santa Barbara crowd [the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions], Myrdal, Schlesinger, Kerr...Deutscher or Sweezyites’ (Draper, 1961). So when Draper turned his attention to the ‘multiversity’ or ‘knowledge factory’ in The Mind of Clark Kerr, it was a regional study of an ongoing investigation into a global phenomenon. In fact in May 1962 Draper was invited to address a seminar at the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara by W.H.Ferry. During part of his presentation Draper set out the analysis of Kerr he would elaborate in The Mind of Clark Kerr two years later. Kerr’s book Industrialism and Industrial Man published in 1960 is discussed as one of a family of ideologies which tend to ‘accept and push the trend toward the self-collectivisation of capitalism from above as the end in itself’ through various mixes of state and corporate power. With Kerr the result is nothing less than ‘a version of an American bureaucratic collectivist regime’ and ‘an absolutely scarifying picture of an authoritarian society...a new slave order...as a prediction of the wave of the future’ to which, like Burnham, Kerr seems to take the amoral attitude “I don’t like this but this is how it will be”’. Kerr, Draper is at pains to point out, has no connection to Moscow and has brought this theory up from ‘absolutely native sources and native roots’. The ‘personal sentiments and preferences’ of the theorists involved in this family of bureaucratic ideologies are not decisive. It was the ‘objective nature of the ideology, the social thinking itself’ in which collectivisation is seen as the wave of the future which counted. Draper suggests that the ideology is a reflection ‘in the last analysis’ of the ‘stresses and needs and the ideological imperatives that are set up by a social order which
is running into the kinds of contradictions which can be resolved only in this direction’
(Draper, 1962)

2. The critique of Kerr
While Draper read Kerr’s *Industrialism and Industrial Man* as an example of liberalism
‘reflecting and anticipating’ the bureaucratic collectivisation of the west, a clear case of the
overlaying of liberalism by ‘a newly embraced concept of bureaucratic managerialism as the
social model to be accepted’. *The Uses of the University* (1962) and it’s concept of the
multiversity represented an application to the university of the ‘broad-gauged world-view’
Kerr had worked out in *Industrialism and Industrial Man*. ‘The managerial revolution has
been going on also in the world of the university’ declared Kerr (1962).

Draper argued Kerr’s theory was ‘roughly a variant of Burnhamism’ (1964:7). It is certainly
true that Kerr described an irreversible wave of the future marked by the global convergence
of social systems as a result of industrialisation; an open acceptance that it might be better in
some places at some times for democracy to be replaced by military rule for the sake of the
needs of industrialisation; an omnipresent leviathan state, the rule of the managers who are the
new vanguard of History, and a ‘new slavery’ to technology and the imperatives of
industrialism recompensed only by a new bohemianism in private leisure. Indeed ‘the new
slavery and the new freedom go hand in hand’, said Kerr, ensuring the future society will have
a ‘split personality’ and the individual a ‘split life’. As Draper pointed out in Kerr’s utopia
alienation is raised ‘to clinical heights’, and a schizoid society is celebrated as the end of
history (1964:9).

If Geier is correct that *The Mind of Clark Kerr* appealed to the feelings of the students ‘but
gave them a conception’ and in that combination lay its appeal, then we can think of Draper’s
critique of Kerr as highlighting three absences in Kerr’s thought: a defensible conception of
society, a politics of meaning, and a prospect of participation or recognition.

*Critique (1) the search for ‘society’*
Draper’s critique begins with the contradiction, at the heart of Kerr’s thought, which most
concerned the students. While Kerr’s published theory called for a merger between university
and society, as UC President he sought to restrict student involvement in political and social action and rigidly separate the university from society, erecting boundary markers and policing them energetically. The FSM began when student social and political action in the form of collecting money and support for the civil rights struggle was banned. How to explain this contradiction? Draper demonstrated that while Kerr ‘refuses to face in his writings and perhaps in his head’ this contradiction it could be understood by deconstructing Kerr’s use of the word ‘society’ (1964:5). Draper had already explored this contradiction in Kerr’s thought a year earlier, in May 1963, in his weekly local KPFA radio talk. Draper examined Kerr’s support for government control over labor-management disputes and noted that Kerr conflated the ‘public interest’ with ‘the State, the government power’ (1963). This conflation was at the heart of the contradiction in Kerr’s thought. When Professors apologised for the growers bracero programme, or supported the chemical industry’s assault on Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, it represented a merger between the university and ‘society’ but when students organised a campus CORE to picket the Bank of America that was an ‘attack on society’.

Once this construction of ‘society’ by Kerr is grasped Draper pointed out:

> The contradiction disappears. It is not “society” that the multiversity must merge with: it is the “leadership groups in society”, which, to the mind of the Captain of the Bureaucracy, are identical with “society” (Draper, 1964:5-6).

> The use of the university, or the role of the multiversity, is to have a relationship to the present power structure, in this businessman’s society of ours, which is similar to that of any other industrial enterprise (...) We are here to serve the powers that rule society: that is the meaning of Kerr’s reiterations that the university is merging with society’ (Draper, 1964:5).

The character of the multiversity’s merger with ‘society’ is then used by Draper to explain the character of the multiversity itself. In Kerr’s conception the multiversity is not an organism but ‘a mechanism - a series of processes producing a series of results - a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money’ (Kerr, quoted in Draper, 1964:4). Draper points out that a mechanism, unlike an organism, needs an outside power, superior to it, to set the controls and that Kerr is clear on the identity of that outside power. The Federal government is a partner with whom, according to Kerr, the universities entered a ‘common-
law marriage’ sometime during World War Two and they have been together ever since (Kerr, 1962:50). Higher education received $1.5 billion from the federal government in 1960, a hundredfold increase in twenty years. The state’s role in higher education grew at an exponential rate between 1940 and 1964 (Lewontin, 1997:10-12, 21). The universities had become, claimed Kerr, ‘a prime instrument of national purpose’ and he even compared the university to a putting-out system with government agencies playing the role of the merchant-class (1962:60) It is easy to see why Draper thought the originality of Kerr lay not in his ideas but in his candour.

Draper and Kerr drew contrasting political conclusions from the socialisation of higher education in the post-war United States. Draper wrote of ‘the statification of the university in the Cold war’ as a mortal threat to liberty and called for resistance. (1964:3). Kerr observed that ‘Intellect has also become an instrument of national purpose, a component part of the “military-industrial complex”’ and accepted this as inevitable and irreversible (1960). Draper draws out the consequences. A ‘parts supply shop to the profit system and the Cold War complex’, a knowledge factory, can not tolerate dissent and even participation can be a problem for those who administer the factory (1964). Kerr thought the real justification for the modern multiversity was ‘History’ (by which he meant serving the wave of the future) and ‘consistency with the surrounding society’ by which he meant the leadership groups who dominated the status quo (1960:45). Small wonder that Kerr seemed to find only two roles for the intellectual in the knowledge factory: tool or danger. Draper commented that this ‘notorious dichotomy [is] celebrated in the literature of totalitarianism’ (1964:9).

**Critique (2) The search for meaning**

Draper also rejected Kerr’s posture as the ‘detached, uninvolved historian of the future’ as an ‘intellectual imposture’ and condemned his flight from moral responsibility. (1964:10). Kerr was ‘greasing the road’, as Draper put it, for the bureaucratic future, at times explicitly writing for those ‘who would guide this moment to its next stage’ (Kerr, 1960:7). Kerr’s dismissal of moral indignation ‘is itself a moral choice on Kerr’s part’ (Draper, 1964:12). Draper argued that a choice between ‘modes of being’ was at stake. Kerr’s mode he summed up as ‘servicing whatever is in the works anyway’. And as much as anything else it was this valorisation of instrumental rationality devoid of a vocabulary of meaning or purpose or morality that the students of Berkeley revolted against. From *The Mind of Clark Kerr* the
reader was reminded that the scientific question ‘what do I believe?’ isn’t enough. Each must ask of themselves the political question ‘how should I act?’ for in acting the future is shaped. It was a challenge thousands of students were looking to meet. The pamphlet had its impact not least, I think, because, as Sheldon Wolin, a faculty supporter of the FSM in 1964, has put it, the students radicalism ‘was not in their objectives but in their appetite for politics’ and was marked less by particular ideological commitments, which Draper carried very lightly in the pamphlet, than a ‘transformation from an apolitical to a political mode of being’ (1997:148). *The Mind of Clark Kerr* reflected and helped produce this new mode of being by tracing the roots of the multiversity-society relationship and by insisting on the possibility and the responsibility of each individual to take a moral stance on this ‘wave of the future’. Draper framed that choice as a matter of life or death, ‘life as an independent human being or death as a man’ (1964:12).

**Critique (3) the search for recognition**

Draper’s pamphlet also spoke to the students need for something more than the instrumental rationality-plus-hedonism of Kerr’s utopia, a need which the multiversity could not compute: the need for participation, or for what Francis Fukuyama calls recognition. Ironically Kerr-the-philosopher saw the need. In *Industrialism and Industrial Man* Kerr wrote ‘Man everywhere wants progress and participation...for a time progress will be accepted in lieu of participation; but in the end industrial man wants both and will keep pressing for both’. Kerr defined participation as ‘choice of jobs, choice of consumer goods, a chance to influence the web of rules, even an opportunity to influence those who guide society itself’ (1960:287). More recently Francis Fukuyama has followed Hegel in arguing that ‘what truly satisfies human beings is not so much material prosperity as recognition of their status and dignity’. Fukuyama argues there is an anthropological substrate to the growth of democracy and freedom, which he calls a ‘thymotic pride in their own self-worth’ which leads human beings to ‘demand democratic governments that treat them like adults rather then children, recognising their autonomy as free individuals (1992: xviii, xix). This captures much of the dynamic of the Free Speech Movement. In a speech Mario Savio linked the civil rights movement and the free speech movement with the argument, ‘The same rights are at stake in both places - the right to participate as citizens in democratic society and the right to due process of law’ (Savio, 1964, in Draper, 1965:179). An FSM pamphlet entitled ‘We want a University’ stated ‘As a human being seeking to enrich himself, the student has no place in the Multiversity’ and
added a cry of anguish which would echo across the decade: ‘We must begin the demand of
the right to know; to know the realities of the present world-in-revolution, and to have an
opportunity to learn how to think clearly in an extended manner about that world. It is ours to
demand meaning; we must insist upon meaning!’ (in Draper 1965:196).

Draper argued that Kerr was unable to act on his own belief that participation was a human
need not just because of pressure from the corporate interests which clustered in and around
the Regents but because of the bureaucratisation of liberalism which took the form of a
profound ambiguity about democracy in Kerr’s own thought. Only when society had achieved
consensus and was well on the road to industrialism, said Kerr, might the elite grant ‘some
influence’ to the individual. Stealing from Weber as well as Burnham he argued that the
political party was anyway destined to degenerate into yet another bureaucracy. Leisure in
personal life, a new Bohemianism, rather than participation in public affairs was Kerr’s
answer to the new slavery to technology which industrialism would bring. As Draper put it
‘The bureaucratisation of Kerr’s thought has been held in balance with liberalism only in the
sense that he looks forward to a Bureaucratic Society which retains adventitious aspects of
liberalism in the interstices of the social system’ (1965:16). The contradiction between the
technocrat facilitating the wave of history and the man who knows that, really, a place for
participation will have to be found was the contradiction which exploded in 1964. The Mind
of Clark Kerr enabled the students to grasp this contradiction as they battled Kerr The Liberal.
As FSM leader Mike Parker has written the liberal college leaders were caught in glaring
contradictions from day one. But ‘to draw the lessons from these we had to provide an
alternative framework’ (Parker 1997:49). That was the contribution of The Mind of Clark
Kerr.

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1 In the 1970’s and 1980’s Draper concentrated on writing, most notably his magisterial four-volume work *Karl Marx’s Theory of Revolution*. In the judgement of Alan Wald, the intellectual historian, Draper established himself as ‘one of the foremost Marxist scholars in the world’ (Wald, 1987:304). He died in 1990.

2 Weinberg was technically not a student having dropped out in the November of 1963 to devote his energies to the civil rights movement (Draper, 1965:40).

3 In this and countless other encounters Draper’s arguments were carried by highly talented young students of the Independent Socialist Club, such as Mike Parker, Joanne Landy, Mike Shute, Joel Geier, Barbara Garson, Marvin Garson, Arthur Lipow and others. Marvin Garson was the author of the FSM pamphlet *The Regents* published in January 1965 which catalogued the links between the UC Regents and corporate California (excerpts reprinted in Draper, 1965: 215-221).

4 Draper later grounded the concept of the autonomised state in the writings of Marx and Engels (see *Karl Marx’s Theory of Revolution, Volume 1. State and Bureaucracy*).