

THE CENTER MAGAZINE



Telling One's Story by Barbara Myerhoff



**ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS CENTER
STUDY OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
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Robert Bason, Consultant for Membership Services

THE CENTER: University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106
Mailing Address: Box 4068, Santa Barbara, California 93103
Telephone: (805) 961-2611

THE CENTER MAGAZINE

A Publication of The Robert Maynard Hutchins Center
for the Study of Democratic Institutions

Editor — Donald McDonald

Editorial Associate — Patricia Garvin Cathcart

With this issue, we bid farewell to Barbara Smith, who has been the designer of *The Center Magazine* since November, 1975.

Ms. Smith continued and enhanced the magazine's design tradition begun by her predecessor, Lauri Provencher — a tradition which has earned for our publication high praise and great respect and a reputation as being among the best of the quality magazines being published in the United States today.

Barbara Smith's definition of professional included not only craft considerations, but also an intense personal concern for every facet of each issue of the *Magazine*. This concern was evident on more than one occasion when she directed queries our way concerning the sense or the grammar of a sometimes murky passage in an article or report.

Ms. Smith plans to expand her free-lance design work in Los Angeles — work which now promises to take her into a number of new publishing ventures. We wish her every success in the years ahead, and we record here our gratitude for both the finesse which she brought to her work and the fidelity with which she did that work.

Our new designer is Sarah Mollett, a native of Ohio who studied fine art and design at the University of Cincinnati and Miami University of Ohio. She is presently studying calligraphy under master calligrapher Roger Marcus.

Ms. Mollett is art assistant on the *Santa Barbara Times*, a new monthly magazine. She has also served as graphic artist with CRM Books, a college textbook publisher; *Politics Today*; *Los Angeles Magazine*; and Petersen Publishing Company, publisher of special-interest magazines. Ms. Mollett has her own design and calligraphy studio in Santa Barbara.

We welcome Sarah Mollett to *The Center Magazine*. We look forward.

— D. MCD.

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A Time for Renewal at the Center

by Walter H. Capps

It has been a time of complicated transition. And we're not through all of it yet. But some very good things have come into place. The Center has moved from Eucalyptus Hill into a newly refurbished building on the campus of the University of California — just a stone's throw from the shoreline of the Pacific Ocean. We have a talented, enthusiastic, and energetic staff. The university has been most generous. University Chancellor Robert Huttenback, the chairman of our board, has given the Center a great deal of his time and attention. Members of the newly constituted Fund for the Republic, as well as members of the former board of directors, have been encouraging and supportive. We are on the way toward renewal and revitalization.

Our goal will be what the Center's goal has always been: to work to clarify the basic issues within the democratic society. *The Center Magazine* is a reliable indicator of topics on which attention is and will be focused. The current issue takes up such matters as nuclear energy, the vitality of city life, problems of the aged, a society in transition, current political issues, environmental concerns, and the architectonic possibilities of "the new rhetoric." And during the month of January we had dialogue sessions on such topics as "Undergraduate Educational Reform: The Harvard Plan," "Attitudes Toward America by Americans Now Living in Asia," and "Background of the Current Crisis in Iran."

These dialogue sessions will continue as the Center's principal activity. To this end, we are planning to reconstitute the Fellows' program. At the same time, we will have a number of interest groups made up of specialists who will meet to do joint research and study on selected public affairs problems. In addition, we will soon announce major conferences now in the planning stages. We also wish to provide more opportunity for the general public to participate in some of our ventures. We recognize, too, that there are many good ways to communicate the results of our work. In short, the move to the campus has given us new incentives and resources for a fresh start.

Guiding the Center's work throughout is Robert Maynard Hutchins' conviction that "justice and freedom, discussion and criticism, intelligence and character are the indispensable ingredients of the democratic state. We can be rich and powerful with-

Walter Capps has been named Director of the Robert Maynard Hutchins Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions by the Center's Board of Directors.

out them, but not for long." This grasp of the dynamics of a political society brought the Center into existence and will continue to shape our own vision and work.

While our purposes are much the same as they were in the beginning, the circumstances today are remarkably different. After all, the Center was founded in 1959. The post-World War II situation in America greatly influenced its original agenda. Established, at least in part, to safeguard civil liberties and personal freedom, and to strengthen human



WALTER H. CAPPS

rights, the Center worked diligently to identify real and potential threats to the democratic state. Necessarily, it had to call into question the nation's primary institutions. It could not allow the debilitating and depersonalizing tendencies, then rampant, to continue unchecked. The same effort must be exerted today, of course, for the threats to the vitality of a democratic society are perennial and recurrent.

Yet, this is 1980, not 1959. One gets some sense of the difference when one recalls that the Center was founded while Dwight Eisenhower was President of the United States. Its fundamental goals

were established years before there was much talk about a counter-culture. Twenty years ago the nation had not been through the agony of a war it had no real opportunity to win. Our history had known no such Presidency as that of Richard M. Nixon. And 1959 was not a year in which very much thought was given to the progressive emancipation of minority peoples. Nor were there any tested and tutored ways of dealing with cross-cultural encounters, with the ways in which deep-seated religious orientations affect relations between cultures and nations, such as we are witnessing today in Iran. Then, in 1959, the society had embarked upon a prolonged period of plenty; today it is an era of scarcity, particularly with respect to rapidly diminishing nonrenewable resources. There had been in 1959 no large awakening of environmental and ecological sensitivities.

Put all of it together and one recognizes that we have lived through about as much upheaval in the past two decades as it is possible to assimilate. Indeed, we have not yet assimilated it; we could not have assimilated it. For, while working virtually behind schedule to sort out the economic and political ramifications, we haven't yet turned to face fully the philosophical, moral, and ethical issues.

Hence, from every side we are encouraged to re-establish the dialogue. This means increasing the rigor and quality of the dialogue among the persons who sit at the Center's table. It means re-establishing a dialogue among the various segments and interests of a sometimes confused, severely fragmented, yet still hopeful society. It also involves discerning the working assumptions of the public dialogue. And through it all we must work to re-establish the link between present human needs and those tested moral and intellectual traditions in which the "indispensable ingredients of the democratic state" can be rediscovered.

We believe that this is what Robert Maynard Hutchins would have us do were he here to guide the endeavor. In carrying on in his memory, we also wish to claim his vision. And in carrying it out within the context of the university, which was Robert Hutchins' natural intellectual habitat, we know our endeavor will be supported by a passionate search for truth. Indeed, in this respect, we shall take the best from what the university is able to give us, and we shall treat it as data — not yet as finished products — to be more rigorously interpreted. We shall continue to find our resources elsewhere, too — in public policy-making, in the workings of the professions, indeed wherever creativity

and the imagination are allowed to range free. And we shall resist turning the Center's program into exclusively academic work.

The Center has always been good at analysis. It is time now to become also prescriptive; it is time to put some of the pieces together again. The Center has prided itself on being an effective "early warning system" to identify threats to the democratic state before they become more generally perceptible. It is time now also to distinguish between threats and eloquent calls for transformation.

Robert Hutchins once said that the work of the Center was so necessary to society's vitality that there should be a Center in every community. Not every community has a Center, of course. Indeed, after twenty years, there is still only one Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

It is properly named now. It has access to the proper combination of resources. And while we are finding our way and testing our approaches, we ask for your continued support. For our part, we shall work hard to merit your esteem.

Clearing Up a Misunderstanding

A serious misunderstanding has grown up among not a few of the contributing members of the Robert Maynard Hutchins Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. This has led to their cutting back the amount of their annual contribution to the Center. Some have even canceled their membership.

The misunderstanding is twofold: some members think that by moving to the campus of the University of California at Santa Barbara, the Center is receiving the university's financial support and, that, in doing so, it has bargained away its autonomy and independence and is now under the control of a government institution and the legislators of the State of California.

The fact is that the Center receives no monies from the University of California.

The fact is that *all* decisions regarding the governance of the Center are the responsibility of the board of directors of the Fund for the Republic, an independent legal entity. Members' contributions to the Center continue to be tax-deductible.

By moving to the campus of the University of California here in Santa Barbara, we gain the not inconsiderable advantage of being able to work more closely with authorities and experts on the kinds of public affairs problems to which the Center has always addressed itself in its dialogue program. Through the years, the Center has made great use of university experts from all nine U.C. campuses. Now access to this rich resource is infinitely easier. Also, our overhead costs have been cut drastically from what they were on Eucalyptus Hill.

I can't help commenting on the irony in the effects of the misunderstanding about our relationship with the university. To the extent that our traditional sources of membership support are diminished because of those misunderstandings, our future as a truly autonomous Center of "independent thought and criticism" is made that much more precarious.

— W.H.C.