COLUMBIA250

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DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE VENTURES

OUR PAST ENGAGED: FOUR TURNING POINTS IN COLUMBIA'S HISTORY

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ROBERT McCAUGHEY
COLUMBIA '68:
A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF STUDENT POWER

Welcome and Introduction

Eric Foner: Hello everybody. And welcome to the fourth of the four panels' lectures, "Our Past Engaged: Four Turning Points in Columbia's Recent History." I notice that we have a group of guests here. I'm not sure what they are planning or hoping to do, but as long as they are peaceful and quiet and do not disrupt the proceedings, if they want to sit there it's fine with me. On the other hand, I hope and expect that the discussion will go on in the way that we expect here at the University, in a reasoned and academic manner.

I was also asked to announce that the previous lectures in this series, as well as much supporting material about the 250th anniversary of Columbia University, is available on the Columbia 250 Web site, which can be accessed through the Columbia Web site—the home page—which you all probably know about.

So I'm Eric Foner from the history department, and I've been asked to be the moderator. I'm very happy to be here tonight. And the first thing that I want to do is to identify Professor Robert McCaughey, who is the speaker tonight, but also to indicate that he has really been the one who has organized these sessions. He's written a most remarkable, wonderful book on the history of Columbia, *Stand Columbia*, and he has been the person who introduced the previous three speakers. But since he can't introduce himself that's my job tonight. But I want to take the opportunity first to thank him for all the work he has done in getting these sessions and the entire Columbia 250th commemoration underway and so successful. So thank you very much, Bob McCaughey.

So tonight I will mention all of the participants right away, and then we will go in this order. Professor Robert McCaughey, as I said, will give the main speech—apart from being the author of the history of Columbia, the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of History at Barnard College. This is a category sort of like when I taught in England, the category the cleverest or the smartest person in England, a category which has many members. And it seems like there are many Ann Whitney Olin Professors of History at Barnard, or at least two. Rosalind Rosenberg, who spoke here recently, is another. And Professor McCaughey has a PhD from Harvard. He has taught on Morningside Heights since 1969. He served for seven years as the dean of the faculty at Barnard, and he's written several books on the social history of American intellectual communities, and, most recently, as I said, *Stand Columbia*.

The commentators or respondents will be Lewis Cole, professor of film at the School of the Arts here, coauthor of several screenplays and books, and was an undergraduate here who graduated in 1968 and played a significant role in the events of 1968. I won't detail his role, he can tell us about it if he wants. Professor Theodore de Bary, next, is a graduate of Columbia from 1941, and a PhD in '53; a renowned scholar of Chinese culture, long-time teacher at the University, long-time chair of the department of Chinese and Japanese and EALAC, East Asian Languages and Cultures . . . its successor, the organizer, originator, of the Asian Civilizations program here, to which he and his wife endowed a chair. And in 1968 he was on the campus and in the fall was elected to serve on the Executive Committee of the Faculty, later was the provost of the University.

And finally Jax Russo, or Jacqueline or Jax Russo, is a student here, a graduating senior at Columbia. I think it's fair to say that she was not born when 1968 events took place. She's a history major, a University senator, and the creator of the Columbia University Law Advising Program. And after graduating she will be heading off to the University of Maryland Law School next fall.

So with no further ado let me introduce the speaker tonight, Professor Robert McCaughey.

The Place of Columbia 1968

Robert McCaughey: The most common complaint I've heard in visiting various alumni clubs and talking to people who have read my book, the most common complaint about that book, in the one hand, that it was pretty heavy—as in physical heft. But then an offsetting complaint: Why wasn't there more on . . . and then you can fill in the blank. It could be on the libraries, on the School of Nursing, on the fencing team, on staff unions, on yours truly, the list goes on. The most felt

commentary, though, on the book took an opposite tack. It was put very politely: "Could there not be just a bit too much about the events of 1968, the campus events of the spring of 1968, in the book?" That had some strength to it, particularly if I had just answered that I didn't have enough room to put more in about the fencing team or the nursing school. And then the question was put even more sharply to me: "How much attention is the next Columbia historian likely to pay to the events of the spring of '68?"

Well I put the better part of three chapters addressing issues running up and then running away from Columbia '68. Had I done that for every semester of Columbia's history it would've included 1,500 chapters, and about 67,000 pages. So then we're really into heft of a different order of magnitude.

The place of Columbia '68 in the national history, it seems to me, is quite clear, and is likely to remain quite prominent. It was—now, 36 years later remains—the most extensively reported-upon campus story in American history. It was a huge story in a year of very big stories. It was sandwiched in between the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the decision of Lyndon Baines Johnson not to run for a second term of the presidency, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. And then the principal events of Columbia '68 followed hard on by Robert F. Kennedy's assassination, the Chicago convention, and the election of Richard Nixon. Nonetheless Columbia ranked as one of the year's top six stories. It demonstrated, if nothing else, the intensity felt about Vietnam and America's involvement in it.

It was also a shaping event in the rise of neoconservatism. Whether it was William Crystal or William Safire who defined a neoconservative at about this time—as a liberal mugged by reality—Columbia for many neoconservatives was one of those reality checks. And insofar as it was, it remains an important event insofar as some of these folks and their progeny have inhabited the White House for the better part of 23 of the last 36 years.

But that wasn't the question asked. The question was how would '68 figure in Columbia's history written 50 years from now? How will it figure, in other words, in Columbia's future? Well, in asking an historian it was inevitable that one would begin with comparisons with past events.

Disruptions in Columbia's History

As Columbia's disruptions go, 1968 is a big one. Only two others admit to comparison. In 1775, after 22 years of existence as King's College, the place was shut down. It remained shut for eight years, and it was a very close call as to whether it would open. And when it did it did so with a new name, a new president,

a new charter, new trustees, new faculty, and a new official and now thoroughly republicanized ideology. No other colonial college was so seriously disrupted, but then again no other college had so clearly bet on the wrong side of the American Revolution.

Nineteen hundred and seventeen represents another one of these unsettling moments, and there it was a dispute over the appropriate response of the United States, and then of Columbia, and then of Columbians as individuals, to the war in Europe that had broken out in the summer of 1914. By the spring of 1917 lots of positions had changed in the intervening three years. And Nicholas Murray Butler, who had begun that process as a real skeptic as to America's intervention in that war, was now saying to Columbia alums directly, but clearly to Columbia faculty: what had been tolerated before in terms of dissent became intolerable now, what had been wrong-headedness was now sedition, what had been folly was now treason. And heads rolled, that summer, of faculty who objected and then violated what he said was a prohibition against any public statement against the war. And as the students returned in the fall of that year, Charles A. Beard, a member of the history department, and one of the most popular professors on campus, delivered a letter to the trustees. It begins, "Having observed closely the inner life of Columbia for many years, I have been driven to the conclusion that the University is really under the control of a small and active group of trustees who have no standing in the world of education, who are reactionary and visionless in politics, narrow and medieval in religion," and promptly resigned. His resignation was followed by others, and by what I would call semipermanent alienations on the part of some of the most prominent members of the Columbia faculty for the next generation.

That said, the University did not shut down. The press coverage was supportive of the trustees and President Butler, and there were no discernible immediate financial repercussions. Nicholas Murray Butler was not fired; indeed his postwar hand was immensely strengthened by the events. Trustees went quiet for the next five decades, having, I think, realized that they had embarrassed themselves in their attacks on faculty members. And the faculty who stayed, stayed as they were told to do by Nicholas Murray Butler in the midst of this—to tend to their knitting. And what went on for the next three decades was a very quiet campus in terms of trustee, faculty, and presidential relations. The long-term effects of this, of course, were terribly negative on Columbia. In allowing Nicholas Murray Butler to determine his own tenure he stayed on much too long, 43 years. He was 83 when he stepped down in 1945, had been deaf for several years and blind for the last couple. Those last ten years worked to the detriment of the University and there seems to be no question about it.

So then we come to '68. Actually '68 is the culmination of a three-year buildup that was begun in opposition to NROTC graduation ceremonies in the spring of 1965. And over the next two years building protests against military recruitment on campus, military research by faculty on campus and off campus, limits on antiwar protests on campus placed on students by the administration, the University's dealings with the neighborhood, plans for a gym in Morningside Park. And then on April 23 demonstrations led to—and the noun is yours to choose—a sit-in, an occupation, or a liberation of Hamilton Hall. The next two days, four more buildings were occupied. That weekend some 1,500 occupiers moved in and out of five buildings on Morningside Heights, the academic calendar having come to a halt.

There in those buildings, there were discussions of issues, debating of options, instruction in resisting police, who were seen as not far from coming. In Fayerweather Hall a somewhat lighter touch: two students got married, several students got high. On April 30 about 1,000 New York City Police Department officers removed about 1,000 occupiers from those five buildings. There were some 150 injuries to the occupiers and the police and to observers on South Field.

An effective disruption of the academic calendar had occurred. There were competing commencements in June. In August President Kirk resigned. President-in-Waiting David Truman was sidelined not to become president, as many thought would be his fate. There was the quiet cancellation of a capital campaign—the first capital campaign that Columbia had ever launched, and the largest at that time, 200 million dollars. And there was negative and lasting impact on the reputation of the University, on the reputation of its faculty, on its competitiveness in terms of students.

There's something common about 1775 and 1917 and 1968. They all take place against the backdrop of a divisive war, divisive on campus and divisive in terms of a Columbia view versus a view of the rest of America. But then again, Columbia's been on the divisive side of most of the wars that have been fought, the 12, since King's College was founded in 1754. I can only find near unanimous support for the French and Indian War—which of course occurred in the neighborhood, just a little north of here—and the Second World War.

What Was Different in 1968

If that's what's common to these three events, there are two items that are distinct about 1968 and bear some further consideration. One is the role played by race and race perceptions—the prominence of black students among the protesting students. Hamilton Hall was exclusively a black project. Of some 120 or so black students at Columbia College in 1968, 84 were in the building. Most of them were arrested

following the police retrieval of the building. But there was a second part of the race question in '68: it was the fear on the part of some faculty, some administrators, the police, and the mayor of the City of New York that any kind of abrupt action on the campus could well bring Harlem storming onto it. It was a disabling fear in terms of the number of options that were simply taken off the table as the result of that consideration. Whether it was an accurate fear, of course, we have no way of telling.

But the second distinction—and I've already alluded to it in effect—is the role of undergraduate students. They were the catalytic, crucial determinative players in the crucial events of 1968. It's not the administration, it's not the trustees, it's not the faculty, it's not outside agitators—white like Tom Hayden, or black like a number of the New Yorkers in Hamilton Hall the first night before the students decided that this was to be a student activity there. It's students who led the demonstrations from 1965 to 1968. It was a student-organized demonstration that set the immediate events in motion—organized by the Students for a Democratic Society, but joined by the Society of African-American Students. And the buildings that were taken over were controlled by students. And come the bust some 700 of the 1,000 arrested in the buildings were students—most of them Barnard College, Columbia College undergraduates. And of those injured most, too, were students.

At the same time the most visible anti-protest groups were made up of students, sometimes called the Majority Coalition. They threatened to retake Hamilton and Fayerweather. And there are some photographs—interesting photographs of that weekend with them encircling Low Library. And much the best coverage of the events of '68 was done by students, whether it's WKCR reporting on the radio, or the *Spectator*'s reports. Robert Friedman as editor and later as coauthor of *Up Against the Ivy Wall*, or James Kunen's somewhat quirky memoir of the events. But this was the kind of reporting that would suggest Columbia may well stay as an important issue, at least in national history.

Students and the Recovery Process

My point this evening is that students were also crucial in the recovery process, by which the whirlwind of '68 was not allowed to become a perfect storm by which the then 224-year-old Columbia was simply blown away. "Tuesday morning, April 30, at 2:30 this morning," an SDS flyer announced, "Columbia University died." That was to mark the first intrusion of the police into Hamilton Hall—our presence tonight evidence that the pronouncement was premature. But the burden of all those pages in my *Stand Columbia* was that it was a very near thing.

The first signs that Columbia's condition, while serious and long-term in the wake of '68, was not fatal came on September 12, 1968, just as students came back on

campus. And there was a faculty meeting to discuss the imposition of disciplinary rules that had been drawn up by a joint faculty-student group. And like most faculty meetings there was a good deal of hemming and hawing going on, and whether the proposals were quite exactly the way one wanted it. And there were proposals that maybe the faculty could be asked to accept these disciplinary rules without quite endorsing them. Now to give some distance, one of the student participants in the effort to draw up these proposals, losing some patience—his name Eric Witkin, Class of Columbia '68—announced, "The question really before us is whether this faculty is going to take the responsibility of voting on approving disciplinary measures." It was the first step back.

Caveat time. I don't mean to minimize the extraordinary and even heroic and courageous efforts early on of the Executive Committee of the Faculty that formed in the wake of the police bust. Michael Sovern, Allen Ginsberg, Ted de Bary, a number of faculty put in loyal time and service to help bring the University around. Nor do I mean to minimize the contributions of Andrew Cordier, who was acting president for several months and then became president; nor those of the trustees. Veteran trustees like Frank Hogan or incoming trustees who came in at a time when Columbia was not the place to take up important trustee positions, like Robert Lilly and Richard Luce. I also mean to acknowledge, but only in passing, the number of faculty who could've left, were offered other positions, and decided to stay and see if they could help put things back together again. I also mean to acknowledge the professional schools, who did much of the heavy lifting during the 1970s when the College was in trouble, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences struggling. And the finances of the University came to depend very heavily on the capacity of the Law School and the Business School and the Medical School to not only pay their bills but to help out in a more general way.

Nonetheless '68, as I see it, a third of a century on, will best fit into Columbia's tercentenary history not as a chapter about governance or presidential leadership or university structure or its finances or about its neighborhood relations—though it figures into all of these—but I think it belongs in the evolving, changing, and at least in this period of history, improving history of student power at Columbia . . . the student power, student life. For Columbia, I think, student life has often been seen as an oxymoron. There isn't much of it. And if you depend upon the vast literature on college life, starting really in the eighteenth century and coming to a kind of climax in the late nineteenth century, there's something to be said for that. Because college life as we define it generally in this country doesn't fit the Columbia model very well. First of all it's essentially residential. College life takes place in dormitories or in fraternity houses or in boarding houses, which are off limits to parents and to faculty. Where the Columbia experience has been largely a commuting experience into the 1970s . . . commuters—or in the case of Columbia College men, but not

Barnard College women—apartments in the neighborhood. Student life traditionally has been seen as essentially undergraduates. They typically constitute the majority on a real American campus. Not so at Columbia after the 1860s. By 1900 the student body at Columbia consisted of only about 20 percent undergraduates. In 1968 Columbia College, engineering, Barnard College, GS full-time students, undergraduate students, constituted less than a quarter of the students at Columbia University. College life is a four-year experience, it's an extended social moratorium. Yet Columbia was never that kind of institution. It always welcomed transferors, mid-term transferors, it had accelerated programs, it had combined programs so that undergraduates could whoosh through and get themselves into the Medical School or into the Law School. Mike Sovern, an undergraduate in the 1950s, was quite typical of undergraduates through that period. After his third year in the College he was essentially a Law School student for the rest of his student days here at Columbia.

One of the consequences of that is the absence of class loyalties that are common elsewhere . . . play a very small role, I think, in what goes on at Columbia University. There's also in student life traditionally a religious component—the first and second Great Awakenings running through colleges like Yale and Williams, the foreign-missionary fervor of the 1820s, Yale in China in the 1880s . . . Columbia singularly lacking in any evangelizing, proselytizing impulse. Now maybe you could say that's the way Episcopalians would have it. You have to knock, they don't come calling. But if that's true how do you account for Phillips Brooks at Harvard preaching a kind of muscular Christianity that suggested to his Episcopalians out in the pews that there was something to be said about getting college students aroused?

And then of course there's athletics, a crucial part of the extracurriculum elsewhere from the 1860s onward. Columbia is not without its moments, whether they be in crew or baseball or basketball or football. There was the Stanford victory in the Rose Bowl in 1937. The defeat of Army in 1947, so signal an event in the history of one alumnus that at the first talk in this series he got up and reminded us of the victory of Columbia over Brown in 1947. Yet in 1967 Columbia was winless in the Ivy League, and Coach Donelli had been fired.

Student activities: Columbia more preprofessional than most other institutions. The Variety Show often led directly to Broadway, a position on the *Spectator* led directly to a position on the *New York Times* or the *New York Herald Tribune*, or so James Wexler or Max Frankel or Robert Friedman or Anna Quindlen would suggest. The literary magazines led directly to publishing positions, and if you couldn't find a position then you created a publishing company yourself.

Student politics: Lacking standing animosities would characterize the Columbia situation. There was no substantial fraternity versus dormitory clash, there wasn't much in the way of jocks versus pukes, clubmen didn't exist in any numbers to constitute either a political force or the political enemy. There was no political union as there was at Oxford or even at Yale. In the 1930s, to be sure, the Columbia campus was politically active, but not about student issues. These were issues that had to do with the Depression and with fascism, not with student activities. In 1961 Columbia College students, on a referendum, abolished student government altogether.

Who Were the Students of Columbia?

Well then, who came to Columbia in circumstances like this? Well the first answer to that question is who didn't come? And the shorthand version of that are legacies—those already possessed, those inheriting what others had left behind. The trustees' sons left Columbia by way of prep schools in the 1890s and off then to undergraduate schools other than Columbia. Many of them, to be sure, returned for graduate studies, but college life was not to be had here at Columbia. When Hamilton Fish IV announced in 1906 that he was going to Harvard, Hamilton Fish the First, the Second, and the Third all had reason to turn in their graves at that moment because Columbia was their native institution. Hamilton Fish II had been chairman of the Board of Trustees for nearly thirty years. So if Fish goes to Harvard where he becomes a star of the football team, Randolph Bourne came to Columbia two years later, a 25-year-old, self-employed kid from New Jersey, father an alcoholic, decided that a college degree would get him on in what he wanted to do, which was to write; but congenitally deformed, ill, and died of influenza in 1918. For some Columbia trustees what they saw was their sons leaving and the Randolph Bournes of the world coming in.

There were those who came to Columbia . . . there were the locally aspiring, those in a hurry to get professionally credentialed, sent by parents from the boroughs without such credentials. Norman Podhoretz's book *Making It*, I think, is an interesting account of this, but just one. Many of these are Jewish kids. But then there are Irish kids from the Bronx, and Italians from Sheepshead Bay, Poles from Greenpoint, and Greeks from Astoria who were doing much the same thing. The book when I was growing up was one by Bud Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?* but here at Columbia it would equally apply of What Makes Seamus Run? There were escapees from Middle America who came to Columbia. Langston Hughes from Ohio, as we heard last week. Whittaker Chambers from Connecticut to be sure, but he spent one week at Williams College before he knew he had to get out. Margaret Mead from Green Castle, Indiana. Thomas Merton, who spent a kind of suitcase childhood traveling about Europe but settled in at Columbia. Dan Wakefield from Indianapolis.

Twyla Tharp, this is a third Indianan, come to Barnard but really come to New York to be able to dance downtown.

In addition there were the precociously skeptical or alienated. Randolph Bourne fits this role, but so does Allen Ginsberg, so does Jack Kerouac, and so perhaps do the Red-Diaper students of the late 1960s—that is, children of the Old Left whose parents had been battered by McCarthyism. And they themselves were rejecting of the suburbs where many of them had received their secondary education.

This is not a student population given to breaking out in college fight songs. A few Hamilton College deans aside, they were not called upon to do so. The faculty didn't exact it, presidents and trustees were otherwise occupied. What made Columbia acceptable to many of the students who did come was precisely this absence of collegiate spirit. It separated us from the rest. There was little in the way of institutional loyalty, then, that you had to muster up on a regular basis where it was common to do so elsewhere. It was therefore liberating, but it was also latently destabilizing when an institution becomes challenged.

One couldn't expect institutional loyalty from lots of constituencies that were reasonably content here at Columbia in quieter times. That loyalty couldn't be expected from newly recruited black undergraduates. Columbia only began to really go after talented black undergraduates in 1964, and by 1968 had really not put in place the kind of infrastructure that would suggest that Columbia was committed, as it needed to be and became later, to making this work.

Among the disloyal, or at least hard to assume loyalty, also consisted of virtually every woman in all the University's estates. Students on up to administrators, they all had some sense that their own place in the University was conditional, and in some areas unwanted, and in some areas subject to rejection.

The Bursting of the Academic Bubble

Now I would suggest that there's a third category of Columbians peculiar to the postwar era that somehow link up the alienated and the aspiring, in a way, to almost artificially extend a kind of intergenerational accord, which goes on perhaps too long, and when it ends it ends in a rush. That is, the offsetting characteristic at Columbia was, whereas everyone else it seemed, according to John Updike, in the 1950s was getting pregnant, everyone at Columbia was going on to graduate school, was getting a PhD. So what happened was that students found in their faculty, in their teachers, professionals to emulate. It was suitable for the escapees because it wasn't Wall Street. It was suitable for the aspirants because academe represented for the first time now an opportunity for a middle-class existence when you didn't bring

independent income to bear. Higher education was a growth sector—respectable, relatively tolerant. Columbia and Barnard credentials served you very well in that competition. Students couldn't wait to become their teachers, and insofar as that was the case, they tended to affect their manners, their clothes, their politics, their speech. Mark Naison, a student here in the late 1960s coming over from Brooklyn, was amazed to hear some of the students he had known in his Brooklyn high school, but now seniors, speaking with an English accent.

I was part of this generation, although not here. We even managed to think we liked drinking sherry. I mean there were all sorts of sacrifices being prepared to be made. And then something happened, to recycle Joseph Heller's title of his novel, whether what happened was the assassination of JFK, Vietnam, a turn in the civil-rights movement, the sexual revolution, or rock 'n' roll, you have a choice. I think I would add bursting of the academic bubble in the middle of the 1960s to these events that turned the situation from generational accord to discord.

Many Columbia and Barnard students sour on their initial intentions of going on to graduate school during this period. There's a very discernible flight from the sciences. Sociology, philosophy, anthropology, English, just those elements that Lionel Trilling described as "the adversary culture" attracted students. And students break with academic ways, with the clothes, with the hair, with the language. Not to trust anyone over 30 had an academic equivalent: not to trust anyone in line for tenure. Faculty were packing suitcases, and those who managed to stay loyal to undergraduates in Hamilton Hall had a tough time of it. David Truman, whose job was to recruit faculty to teach in the Core, said that anyone who did that could be seen as potential failures or real suckers. Ditto on funded graduate students. Ditto adjuncts in the General Studies faculty, most of whom were women. So a long-deferred generational divide comes on with a rush.

The most striking phenomenon of 1968 is not student protests. There were some serious issues. Many of them were manipulated at different times by different people, but the issues were serious. And it's not the incapacity of the administration to manage the crisis—they had no rehearsals, they couldn't have gone to school on Berkeley, Berkeley was California, didn't seem to apply to what was going on here. No, I think the most striking phenomenon is the incapacity of liberal, even left-leaning faculty to get through to the protesting students to talk them out of the buildings. Indeed conservative faculty, or those within the Columbia confines that get described that way, seem to be far more effective in talking to the jocks, to the fraternity people, to the anti-protesters, and seem to have much more influence over them. Mark Rudd's coarsest, most dismissive language was reserved for the ad hoc faculty group who wouldn't grant him outright amnesty.

Now to the denouement. SDS takes the battle off campus. They had never been, I think, primarily out to destroy Columbia, although they were prepared to see it as part of the collateral damage. And they went into what Paul Berman called various forms of radical thuggery. And there are some personally harrowing experiences for several of those SDS leaders, Ted Gold, David Gilbert, Mark Rudd. But there were activist students on campus, some of whom had been in the buildings, who decided to focus on seeing the demands of the protest negotiated, pushed through, and that a restructuring of the University could take place. They testified before the Cox Commission and laid their complaints out, they served on faculty-trustee committees, they saw to it that the gym project was cancelled, that the University was out of secret research and out even of the NROTC, and that new disciplinary rules were put into effect, and that they would be administered by students and faculty. There were longer-term changes too in which students were involved—the creation of the University Senate, which in its early days made a point of pushing women's equity rights up to the top of the agenda, to raise the South African divestment issues.

The Legacy of Student Power

So students are now at the table. They acquire an investment in Columbia's survival, in its revival, in its subsequent prospering. They exercise a constructive power as a distinct estate—not as faculty in the process of becoming, but as students. Their power is recognized by the actions of the next four presidents in their dealings with the undergraduate estate. Andy Cordier was willing to listen to students endlessly, and to have his administration do likewise. William McGill took students' ongoing disruptive potential seriously, personally confronting them, but also giving a place at the table for others who wanted to change things that needed changing at Columbia. McGill often referred to the Senate as having a good deal of guerilla theater about it, but he rather enjoyed it and it was important to him that that institution survive.

To be sure there's some braggadocio in the McGill description of what's going on. Here's 1973 after there had been a momentary quieting of student activities. The kids who come around now do not have the skills of Lewis Cole or Mark Rudd, or that Mario Savio had. We can run rings around them. It's McGill who abandons the idea of moving the College to Putnam County, who managed to get some upgrading of the undergraduate facilities—the Dodge Fitness Center, East Campus being signal examples. He did oppose coeducation, but he opposed it because it was too expensive, he had too much on his plate, and I think he did believe that it would be destructive of Barnard College. But he supported functional coeducation, which led to the real thing soon enough.

Sovern was a poster boy for the college. He sought gifts from others equally well served by the college or its professional schools. He early on endorsed the opening of the college to women. He negotiated a livable agreement with Barnard. It was his plan, criticized at the time, that I think has largely won most people over these days—enhancement and expansion of the College. He underwrote considerably more upgrading—the construction of Shapiro Hall along with Barnard's Sulzberger Hall made both Columbia and Barnard, for the first time in their histories, wholly residential.

And then on to President George Rupp. At his presidential interview he told the search committee that Columbia College was the most underleveraged part of the University. He came from a background of someone who knew undergraduates, Princeton, Yale, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, Rice. He seems to me to have been happiest in Morningside Park on cleanup day with students all around him. He, too, directed much of the funds into improving the physical circumstances of undergraduate life—Lerner Hall, the Milstein Library, the Kraft Center. He articulated what three of his predecessors were moving toward without quite saying: that a university's reputation rests substantially on the quality of its undergraduate program. Undergraduates matter. That truism was a long time coming at Columbia. It had been missing since the 1850s. And Columbia '68 is part of that belated recognition.

Now to be sure, events in '68 with regard to undergraduates have not been enough to satisfy every Hamilton Hall true believer, or all alums, or all parents, or all students. And I'm not underestimating the resistance of some parts of the faculty to accept or welcome the effective teaching of undergraduates as part of our deal. But Columbia's a very different place than it was in 1968. It's financially stronger, it's better administered, its faculty reputation is comprehensively on the rise from the sciences to the professional schools, and it is in an active dialogue with its neighbors about mutually important matters.

Still, the most important change: undergraduate students today on Morningside Heights are less different from those at other leading universities and colleges than they had been in 1968. There are more women, there are more minorities, there are more legacies, there are more for whom Columbia and Barnard was a first choice, they're more diverse geographically, and come from wider educational circumstances. They are, in other words, more empowered.

Now there's some cause for concern here. Is it the case that Columbia is becoming gentrified? We've become too select? It's a concern, but to use the distinction that the White House has found attractive lately, it's a serious concern but not a critical one, it seems to me. Undergraduate life on Morningside is unlikely soon to lose its

distinctive character, its edginess. It's not likely to be confused with Middlebury any day soon. For those who doubt it we have George Rupp's immortal recommendation, delivered to a *Columbia Spectator* student who was complaining on behalf of other students that Columbia College student life was something of a sink or swim situation. He said, "If you want more structure, go to Amherst, go to Princeton." So if Columbia's 300th anniversary assigns the events of 1968 to a more modest place in this splendid university's ongoing history, I will suggest it will do so because that historian will have concluded that Columbians—and very much Columbia students, who have in the intervening three decades put the place back together—did a good-enough job that it need not be much remarked upon. If that's the case, I'll take that.

Thank you.

Lewis Cole Responds to Robert McCaughey

Lewis Cole: Good evening. I didn't know . . . I didn't realize I was going to go first. I like to go last, so I can respond to all the responders.

I only have seven minutes so I want to be brief and make the points that seem to me the important ones in terms of my participation in the strike, etcetera. First of all I want to thank Bob for inviting me here and for adding my voice to the occasion. It's something to . . . in '68 I had a big debate with Fritz Stern, and we didn't see each other for about, I don't know, 35 years after that. And I met him recently and I was introduced to him and he went, "Oh my God, Lewis Cole, what are you doing here?" And I said, "I'm teaching at the same university that you are, Professor Stern. It's the cunning of history."

I was a participant in '68. I was a member of SDS. I had worked in SDS for three years here, and I was a member of the Columbia Strike Steering Committee. And one of the ways in which I think I really differ from Bob's view about things is that implicit in what he's saying is that there's a difference between the issues of student issues and political issues. Let me make that clear. That is, on the one hand there were issues that had to do with what was going on in the time—Vietnam, the issues of the fight for social equality that had taken a very dramatic turn in 1967 and 1968 with a series of uprisings throughout the cities, both in the summer of '67 and then again in the spring of '68 after the assassination of Dr. King. And then . . . so those are one set of issues. And then there were the set of issues that affected students. And one of the ways in which I think that I and my comrades were different was that there was no distinction for us between those two issues. That is, as a student and as a person here and as an active, thinking, living part of this society, I felt I needed—along with my colleagues, you know, what I then called my sisters and my brothers—to take a stand about those issues. And I felt that for two primary reasons.

One was because of the nature of the times. And Bob alluded to that but I think it's hard for us to understand now, especially if we weren't alive then, the power of what was going on then. And the felt need of people—certainly I did, of myself—to feel who were you allied with; that there was a sense that the culture of which you were a part was a culture that was bringing death to people. And I mean that in a very literal sense. The criminality of the war in Vietnam is still in many ways something which this society has not absorbed, and which, whenever it comes up—as for example with the issue a couple of years ago about ex-Senator Kerry, etcetera—the society as a whole really tries to ignore and to deny that there was an attempt to wipe out an entire people because of their political persuasions and because of their desire to be free. And that there was an enormous amount of sheer destruction that this society was being geared toward and was doing towards people, and that you were living in that society, and that you needed to take a role in either saying that you were part of that or that you were against it, or in some way defining your relationship towards it. This was a pressing issue.

But the other point that I want to make about that, which may be a little bit surprising to you, is that the other reason why I felt that was because of my education here. There was not, for me, a distinction between what I learned at Columbia and what I did at Columbia. They were part of the same thing. Now I know that for many members of the faculty . . . I'd like to make just one brief note, which is that in the mention of thanks for the faculty members there are other members that I'd like to thank who were people who very much demonstrated their support of the strike at, I think, some personal risk—people like James Shenton and Sidney Morgenbesser, who also remained at the University and also contributed to its life for many, many, many years after that. So for me what I learned at Columbia was put into practice and was tested by what was going on in the society.

And let me just say, and I think it actually is partly a personal amplification . . . an example of some of what Bob was saying about the kinds of students that Columbia attracted, of how I came to Columbia and what I did here. I had not been a good student at high school. I came from a very left-wing political household in New York. I was a kind of pink-diaper baby, I guess, because my parents left the party. So I was a semi-diaper baby, and I was not a good student in high school. I had gone to McGill University for a couple of months. I met a young professor there who said, you know, you really should go back and go to get a good education. I can get you in. At that point you could do this to either Columbia, Harvard . . . where do you want to go? And I wanted to go to Columbia. And I wanted to go to Columbia for two reasons: because of the Core and because of New York. And I came here because of that situation. I then worked. I left McGill and I worked. So I came, I supported myself throughout my time here, etcetera. And my experience in the teaching that I

had here was that it simply opened my mind to a whole world of thinkers and of history and of culture that otherwise I never would've had the opportunity to get.

My teachers at the time were Istvan Deak, who taught me Contemporary Civilization, Angus Fletcher, Edward Said. They were young. They were devoted to the idea that culture is a living issue, that the things that you read you bring into the practice of life. So when, as time progressed and the events of '65 turned into '66, '67, etcetera, and the University itself had decided on its own that it was not going to be neutral in any of these issues, but that it was actually going to take an active part in them, it seemed to me that there was no choice but to take a stand, given what I had learned here. And that in fact if the people who were running the University were intellectually honest they would support that. They might not support my sitting in, they might not support other activities that I was going to do, but that they would welcome that attempt to create some kind of challenge and debate to what they were doing. And make no mistake about this, the University was the institution which entered into activities that were part of the war effort and that in terms of the gym seemed to be part of, you know . . . reflective of a very conservative attitude towards the issue of black liberation.

So for me coming into the strike and pursuing the strike was not about destroying Columbia. It was about having the University respond, because it had already done something, to what the University should be doing. And for me, having come back, it was a complete accident that I came back to Columbia. I did not have the desire. I mean after the strike, I left. I was a political organizer for many years. I had a life as a writer and a screenwriter, etcetera. It was an accident when I was called and they said would you like to come back and teach screenwriting as an adjunct? And then to my surprise I ended up loving teaching and so I became quite involved in it.

One of the things that I've learned is how much Columbia has changed during that time, how much it has in fact taken the lessons of '68 and tried to incorporate them into the life of the University. And it is for this reason—I'm going to say this—that it is particularly disturbing to me as a faculty member that the University has not yet entered into negotiations with the striking graduates, etcetera. Because whatever the rights and wrongs of that, it seems to me that the idea that you enter into the negotiations and that you pursue them is one of the things that has been learned from 1968.

So, my time is short and it's almost over. I want to say that for me the idea that the University exists is an idea about the bringing to life of the ideas that you study here. If it doesn't do that it's not doing its job. And in doing that you run a risk. In 1968 we had all been very influenced by Herbert Marcuse—whose son teaches here, Peter Marcuse—and a book he wrote called *One Dimensional Man*. And in SDS, Marcuse

was a kind of, you know, he was Bruce Springsteen to us. His ideas of resistance to the authority in society, his ideas of the ways in which tolerance can be an oppressive instrument, etcetera, we believed in these deeply. So in 1968 when we met with him during the strike, we were appalled when he said to us, "You are doing a terrible thing. You have to stop what you're doing in terms of you are threatening the University. And it is very important at this point, given the powers that are existing in this society now, that the University remain an area where you can have the free expression of ideas." And we argued with him, and then actually, to my shame, we walked out on him.

Marcuse had been involved in a long debate with Theodore Adorno at this point, because Adorno—who was teaching in Germany and who was his intellectual colleague, etcetera, for thirty, forty years—had been shouted down by students in German SDS. And recently correspondence came out between the two of them in which Adorno was saying how can you defend these students and what they've done? And Marcuse wrote back a great sentence, I think. He said, "We can not abolish from the world the fact that these students are influenced by us." Which is exactly the way I felt at Columbia. I had been influenced by everybody here. So we cannot abolish that. And then he wrote, "I am proud of that and am willing to come to terms with patricide, even though it hurts sometimes."

Thank you very much.

William Theodore de Bary Responds to Robert McCaughey

William Theodore de Bary: I think my mike is working, and I'm going to take advantage of that.

Professor McCaughey has spoken to you as an historian. I, too, am an historian, but there's no way in the few minutes allowed to me that I can present an historian's view of this period. I shall speak rather personally as a participant-observer, so to speak.

Actually my story begins when I entered the college in 1937. Throughout my junior and senior high-school years in the early and mid-thirties, I had been an active member of the Young People's Socialist League. I had also been active in the antiwar movement, close to being a pacifist, but perhaps more precisely identified as a war resister. I had attended many socialist and pro-labor meetings and rallies in Union Square, and remember marching up, once, Seventh Avenue from Union Square to Columbus Circle in an antiwar parade.

During the Spanish Civil War, however, like many young socialists, I joined with the communists in the so-called United Front Against War and Fascism, supporting the Loyalist cause. The Loyalists, of course, were defending themselves against attack from Franco, so implicitly I was supporting defensive warfare. And thus was not a complete pacifist. If you have read George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and his other writings about the Spanish Civil War, you know the bitter outcome of that collaboration between socialists and communists.

For the evolution of my political thinking I skip forward to 1939 and the pact between Stalin and Hitler, by which they divided up Europe between them. And Hitler was left free to attack Britain and the Jews, with no little help from Stalin. On campus here the communists supported Stalin's disengagement from the United Front, but Hitler's threat to the West and the Jews gave war resisters like myself and erstwhile supporters of the Neutrality Act something to think about. The effort to rally support for Britain on Morningside was led by Carlton Hayes and Alan Nevins at Columbia, and Reinhold Niebuhr at Union. And I was persuaded by them of the need to aid Britain.

In 1940, when I was chairman of the college student government, I was visited by Joe Lasch, a representative of Eleanor Roosevelt, who was trying to wean the student movement away from its antiwar neutralist stance to one that supported aid to Britain. I agreed to help and was invited to the White House to meet with Eleanor Roosevelt and a group of national student leaders who lent themselves to active support of Britain against Hitler. What has this to do with '67–'68? A lot. It tells you that by the time I graduated from college I had already come to the conviction that civil societies had a right to defend themselves against violent attack.

Now fast-forward again to '67–'68, almost 30 years later. And I'm skipping a great deal of my own personal history. By then I had spent so much time developing the undergraduate general education program in Asian Studies and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures that I had no time to revise and publish my own PhD dissertation. I had published eight books for the program, but not the dissertation. So having spent so much time in organization and administration, I was determined to get back to my own work. So determined, in fact, that I even declined the deanship of the college in the fall of 1967, the one administrative job that would have meant something to me, or the most to me. So I was desperately husbanding my time in April 1968 when a former student, George Keller, then editor of *Columbia College Today*, came to tell me about the ad hoc faculty group that was meeting in Philosophy Hall lounge trying to negotiate a solution to the raging conflict on campus. How to restore order to the University when Low Library was occupied by Mark Rudd and company? I bestirred myself to do what George was asking me to do, but as you know, that effort to negotiate a solution failed. No big surprise to me.

As Mark Rudd emerged from Morningside Park, where he had been protesting the gym, and marched on Low Library, he was carrying a banner that read "To rebel is justified." No doubt most Columbians who saw that sign, and a *Spectator* photographer who snapped it, took this as just an expression of youthful rebellion. I was perhaps one of the very few who recognized it as a quotation from a revolutionary manifesto of Mao Zedong, which justified the use of violence and dismissed all civil politics as a kind of pantywaist liberalism given to negotiation, vacillation, and compromise. I understood what Mark Rudd meant when he said that he was going to push Kirk and Truman up against the wall and force them to say no—not to say yes to what he was demanding but to say no. He was not looking for compromise but for a confrontation. He would force Kirk and Truman to call in the police, give up their moderate liberal pretensions and lay bare their adherence to an exploitative, oppressive system.

My own commitment to civil struggle on behalf of the University—as, above all, a civil institution entitled to defend itself—continued. Although I met my classes wherever and whenever I could, I spent much time at faculty meetings, at meetings of students and faculty in Kent Hall, at a meeting of the combined university faculties, which ended up creating the Executive Committee of the Faculties that attempted to restore some credible authority in the midst of the prevailing anarchy, at meetings of the college and graduate faculties trying to restore academic and civil due process, and at meetings of another ad hoc group led by Richard Hofstadter and Fritz Stern. These latter meetings were held at Fritz Stern's apartment on Claremont Avenue, and our group became known as the so-called Stern Gang—an ironic reference to the Zionist struggle earlier to set up Israel.

We eventually published a full-page ad in the *New York Times* defending academic freedom and civil due process in the University from attacks by either the left or right. A university is nothing if it cannot promote and protect civil discourse. Out of all this, when it came time to elect representatives to the Executive Committee of the Faculties, I found myself elected as representative of the faculty of philosophy. And after the Executive Committee succeeded in setting up the new University Senate, I was also elected to that, and eventually chairman of the Senate's Executive Committee. I was proud of what we accomplished in the first two years of the Senate, and wrote a report in 1971 on what we had done to restore some kind of civil due process in the University. Anyone interested in that part of Columbia's history can still consult this report, but let me just tell you one anecdote that illustrates the situation in those years.

During the building occupations of 1968, among the buildings occupied by radical elements were Earl Hall and St. Paul's Chapel. The University Senate had to deal

with the problem of whether and how these buildings dedicated to religious and philanthropic purposes could be restored to their original functions. The Senate appointed a student-faculty committee to study the problem and make recommendations. As it happened, among the faculty I persuaded to serve on the committee was Margaret Mead. She had, of course, enormous prestige among both young and old, and when the crucial issue was joined in that committee as to whether Earl Hall and St. Paul's should continue to harbor radical groups or whether we should set up a new regime of religious groups to take it over, Margaret Mead carried the day. She said, "Every community needs a sacred space." That did it. The committee proceeded to draw up a plan that was later approved by the trustees and is still essentially the duly constituted order at Earl Hall and St. Paul's. The Senate and Margaret Mead did make a difference.

From thereon one damn thing led to another. After serving as chairman for the Senate Executive Committee I was asked to serve as provost and reluctantly did so for seven years from 1971–78. The demonstrations and threatened building occupations continued, however. When I set up the University Lectures and asked Lionel Trilling to inaugurate them right here in this room, the radicals tried to disrupt the proceedings, but did not quite succeed in drowning out Lionel's soft and gentle voice.

During those years it was not just child's play dealing with the threats to civility and the due educational processes of the University. Many distinguished scholars and teachers had difficulty meeting their classes. Those of you who have read "The Living Legacy" series in *Columbia Magazine* know how the distinguished classicist Gilbert Highet stood up to such intimidation. I know many colleagues who did likewise in spite of personal abuse and physical threats.

For my own efforts as a teacher and active faculty member I was branded a liberal fascist. My office was ransacked during the occupation of Kent Hall, and when my daughter at Barnard tried to come see me in Kent she was roughed up by pickets and had to brave it out against a mob in order to get to my office. This was not of course unique to me. Other faculty endured the same, some of them here tonight. It was not nice. Mark Rudd and Mao Zedong had said it would not be nice, it would not be friendly. At the very least it would be rough, tough, and possibly bloody. But I followed the way of Confucius and not Mao, as reported in the Confucian *Analects*, where it is said, "The scholar must be stouthearted and enduring, for his burden is heavy and his way is long. His burden is service to humanity. Is that not heavy? And his way lasts to the end of life. Is that not long?"

Finally let me just add that I did after all revise my PhD dissertation and publish it in 1993, 40 years after I had defended it. According to the old rules which obtained

when I started my graduate study, one didn't get the degree until the dissertation was published. Think what that would've meant for me. Whatever the *Analects* say about the way of the scholar being long, my days at Columbia would have been very short.

Thank you.

Jacqueline Russo Responds to Robert McCaughey

Jacqueline Russo: I guess I'm going to speak from here, too, because my mike is working as well.

As the student panelist I feel . . . I guess I should first speak about how the memory of '68 is alive and well in our student body. It's something that, when you come onto campus, you're reminded of on Activities Day, when different groups kind of honor that tradition. And it's not something looked down upon. It's a time where, as an incoming undergraduate and as an undergraduate that's about to graduate, it's a show of how students stood up for what they believed in at that time, and weren't afraid to challenge the administration. And so it's not so much as a bad part of Columbia's history or a detrimental part to its history, but as something that is a time-honored part of it.

And a lot of that comes from just the method of teaching at Columbia, which is the Core, and being in New York and being exposed to so many different, you know, philosophies and ways of thinking, and just diverse beliefs that you're exposed to over your four years here. Because I knew that I would challenge my beliefs, and over four years I would emerge as a different person, a more educated and, you know . . . I guess just better able to view my world in a different way than I came in.

And that being said, I could speak most about student-administrative relations. Recently, obviously, expansion has been a huge thing on campus, and it parallels '68 in a lot of ways because the expansion into Manhattanville is viewed by some students to be as a sort of gentrification of the area. And a large part of this is that the administration has not been communicative with students, and so there is a problem. It's not necessarily that expansion is a bad thing, but until last week there had been no mention of what the plans were going to be for Manhattanville, and so therefore students were kind of left in the dark. And I guess that is the central problem, if there is one, between students and administration now at Columbia—which is just a lack of communication.

This year has been an interesting year, in my opinion. You know, in my four years there's been a lot of things that have happened, especially recently. First being, I

guess, many people are very familiar with the recent events regarding racial discrimination, the cartoon in *The Fed*, and the group the Concerned Students of Color have pushed for a Core class on diversity and an office of multicultural affairs. They drafted a list of concerns to the administration, gave it to President Bollinger, and it was returned saying that they would support this but, you know, it took a long time and there were student protests for an entire week and the administration didn't necessarily handle it in the best way it could have.

More recently the strike of TAs has taken a large toll on undergraduates. Nine CC classes have been cancelled and that means that they're not having class and it's very hard for us to . . . I mean I'm not particularly affected by the strike, but those that are kind of question why the administration has failed to address the TA concerns. Or at least it seems to the undergraduates as if they haven't really been in communication with them in an adequate way, and so almost as if they're being ignored.

But also as a member of the University Senate and the Columbia College Student Council I see that, those things aside, there is a large degree of communication with the administration now that is definitely better from what it was in 1968. And that is because, as a member of those student bodies, we're the link for the students. And those things didn't even exist; they were voted out. And you know, we're constantly gauging student opinion and going to the administration as the representatives of the College. And it's very important to us too, and it's not always an easy road. Many students wanted an ethnic-studies major. It took three years. It's finally been approved. But that was something that the Columbia College Student Council could go forward with. Also, I guess just in general . . . like programming to build community—and this goes back to an improvement in student life, there was . . . just in athletics, homecoming was fun. I went to Baker for the first time, and it was very good. And then there was also Midnight Mania, where 1,000 students went into the gym to celebrate the opening of the basketball season. I mean that doesn't sound like Columbia, but it's amazing because the councils in conjunction with the administration and Joe Jones were like, you know, we're going to have to . . . we can make this a student event. We can build community using athletics. And it's actually working.

And also, I mean it is a more residential university. We are more similar to our peer institutions. And at the same time we're still different. We're still Columbia, but it's nice that we do have that kind of community.

You know . . . and there's new problems that I guess students value. I mean obviously Professor Cole spoke about the separation between student concerns and political concerns. Recently ROTC has asked to come back on campus, and that is a

heavily contested issue because some students don't agree with some of the activities of the U.S. government and therefore feel that ROTC should not be a presence on campus. And that was something that was moved off campus as part of the 1968 resolutions.

But also, at the same time that there are problems, there is so much growth. And as a student that is graduating I, you know, I really do love Columbia and I feel that my four years here have been so beneficial and have really helped me to grow as a person. And I would never have wanted to go to any other university. My experience here has been amazing and I'm happy that I feel that I'll continue to grow. And in fifty when . . . if another historian addresses the issue of '68, I do hope that they keep it with the same thorough explanation, because it's an important thing. It's important to remember that there was a time when Columbia wasn't so strong in its community, and there were problems with the administration. And so as long as we keep that in our memory I think that we can only move forward.

Eric Foner Responds

Eric Foner: A student asked me earlier today what is my role going to be tonight, and I said, "Well I'm just the moderator. I'm not going to actually say anything." And she said, "Oh, I doubt that." And this was correct.

I do want to say one quick thing or two quick things before turning back to Bob McCaughey for response to the comments. I was actually a graduate student here in history in 1968, but history moved so fast at that time that a new generation had already appeared on campus and the real catalyst . . . the graduate students were already too old and conservative, and it was the younger generation, the undergraduates, who were the real catalysts of change, like Lew Cole and others. But I just want to comment on one point that was raised in Bob McCaughey's talk: Did Columbia University die? My position is, yes it did die on the night of April 30 to May 1, but then was reborn soon afterwards. And one of the reasons it was reborn which was not mentioned is that the students themselves created a different university here. There was a campus-wide strike, and you know at that time the academic calendar went to the end of May, so there was a month left in the term. The University closed down, but a new university arose from these ashes. I'm an historian so I brought a document. This is a list of the liberation classes for one day during the strike period. Students were not just lolling around or going off to take part in political events. They actually created their own university to replace the one which had died. And the courses, just one day's courses, included, let's see: The Role of the Librarian in Relation to the Strike, Slavery—there had never been a course on slavery here—What Should a New University Look Like?, The Philosophy of Revolution, Afro-American History. Here's a piece of Columbia lore: the first time

Afro-American history was ever taught at this university was by David Slavin in the liberated university—we had never managed to have a course in African-American history under the old university—a course on William Blake, a course on Marxist views of history and sociology, a course on Black Power, a course on national liberation movements, Twentieth-Century Philosophy, Liberated Talmud, Dandies, Revolutionaries and Poetry, American Social History, The Protest Song, and, if you'll pardon my French, Learning the Pronunciation of "Up Against the Wall Motherfucker," a phrase from that era, or Radicalizing Education in the Ghetto.

My point is simply that the students, as Lew Cole said, were interested in education. They were not just anarchists or trying to destroy something. And the education that they tried to create actually is now in some ways represented in a much broader and better curriculum that has emerged here than what those of us who had been undergraduates here encountered in the years before that.

But let me just stop there and ask Bob McCaughey if you want to respond to any of the comments that have been made.

Robert McCaughey: No, I think let's use the time for questions from the audience. I think both behind and in front of the dais would suggest that a civil contentious society continues to exist here at Columbia. So let's hear from the . . .

Question-and-Answer Period

Eric Foner: Okay, well then let me . . . there are two microphones. Please. And I will just give the normal moderator's request to make the questions short and to the point. So, yes sir.

Man: I want to thank Professor McCaughey for a marvelous series. I was basking in nostalgia until now, but today I've had what in my business we call a return of the repressed. And I remembered back to 1961 when I was an undergraduate where this school was a very repressive place. I remember that student government was abolished not for lack of interest but for absolute depression that students could do anything. We talked about the Vietnam War. We haven't said a thing about an equally evil war, which is only incipient right now. It bothers me to see students here sitting like window dressing. That's what happened in my day: we sat like window dressing. That, the war, this Morningside or this Heights thing with the real-estate development that's going on, I think there are all these issues that are brushed aside by all of this self-congratulation on our high admission rate. Do you not think that we are not perhaps in 2004 but rather like in 1964?

Eric Foner: Anyone want to respond to that question, or should we just perhaps more . . . that was really more of a statement than a question, I believe. And that is not a criticism. I believe that's what you intended. So let's allow some others to put their views on the table here. Yes sir.

Charles Kaiser: My name is Charles Kaiser. I'm a member of the Class of 1972 and the author of a book called *1968 in America*, for which I interviewed Lewis Cole, among others. And I want to subscribe to most of what Lewis said. I agree with Professor de Bary that these were violent, bloody, and sometimes destructive times, but I do feel very strongly that we were right about most of those things. We were certainly right about the war in Vietnam, which was a terrible, wasteful thing. We were right to end Columbia's participation in that war. We were right to change Columbia from the extremely arrogant and really contemptuous institution it was towards the surrounding community. I think the presence of these demonstrators is a small symbol of our success. Indoor demonstrations were legalized after 1968. And finally I think we should all remember the most important improvement in student life which resulted from those demonstrations in the era of same-sex dormitories . . . was the ending of all restrictions on the visits of women to male Columbia students in their dormitory rooms.

Tony Granovich: Hi, my name is Tony Granovich, and I graduated here in '67 so I watched the birth and the explosion. I actually came here that night. One of my classmates from '67, Buzz Potamkin, said, "Look, the cops are marshalling in front of the precinct on 68th Street. Come on up." So I came, rushed up, we got onto the campus. And I must say what happened that night converted many conservatives to radicals because the police did not discriminate. They went into the dorms and they beat heads and smashed heads and bloodied a lot of dorm rooms that night. I'm also the author of a book called *Race and Class Politics in New York City Before the Civil War*, and I'm reminded that war is the leitmotif of the American experience. And Randolph Bourne, who was cited earlier, his most famous aphorism is "War is the health of the state." As far as I'm concerned nothing has changed except we are entering a phase of endless war, as recently described by our presidential leader. And the issue really in the sixties, what really galvanized the students, not only was the presence of ROTC on the campus but also the draft. And the draft is impending next year. But on top of that the militarization of the campus, the secret trips that David Truman took to the Council on Foreign Relations to report back to his intellectual taskmasters as to what was going on, of course, crippled him as an eventual provost or dean forever on the campus. And we have to be aware also—which I didn't bring up the last time when we talked about John Dewey—but John Dewey was secretly working for military intelligence during the First World War and compiled a secret report on the Poles in which he was basically working for the military for the entire length of the war. So we're facing a situation, we've had dress

rehearsals—1917 with what happened with Beard. And of course my question is going to be what happened in 1970 when we had the Cambodian campus revolt, and Jim Shenton's head was bashed in? What happened after all this talk in '68 of developing a new mechanism and a new network? It was in 1970 that Jim Shenton's . . .

Eric Foner: No, no. Tony. On one point I will have to correct you. It was in '68 that Jim was victimized there. But let's continue. That was also a statement, not a question. So maybe you have a question, sir, or a statement—that's all right, too.

Garland English: My name is Garland English. I'm an undergraduate. And I think it's quite serendipitous that we have some ten or 15 real live, modern-day, disgruntled students in front of us. And although I've enjoyed listening to the multiple personal anecdotes, I think it would be quite fitting and quite appropriate to let our fellow TAs and RAs here share some of their personal anecdotes regarding their relationship with the administration.

Eric Foner: That's a fine proposal, however we are drawing to the end of our time and I will actually agree with you that their demonstration is a dignified and excellent example of the freedom of expression that we value and is essential to this campus. And they have an absolute right to be here, and that as teaching assistants and research assistants they play an essential role in the education at this university. And like Lewis Cole, I hope this dispute can be settled soon on the basis of comity and democratic decision making, which is all they're asking for. However, I want to allow others to comment on the issue of the moment here that is being discussed. Anyone who wants to talk to these students about their cause, I'm sure they will be more than delighted—we only have about five more minutes to go—to talk to anyone who wants to find out more about their cause.

Man: I'm sorry, I'm probably going to ask a question, but the question is, basically, is it always wrong for the university to help the government, the powers that be, in military research? . . . not necessarily in Vietnam, but in the Manhattan Project or any other things that I'm not aware of, is that always a mistake? When does protest . . . it's very nice having the students here and it's very nice having them protest, and I'm sure their cause is very just, but people didn't come necessarily to hear that. Is everything everybody's bully pulpit? When does argument, dialogue, picketing . . . when does it justify to change that to taking over? If instead of having 16 students, would it be justified having the entire student body here and nobody else here to hear them, because, you know, they're entitled to be here? At what level does one cut it off? Or is there no level? Or is it arbitrary?

Eric Foner: Does anyone want to respond? Go ahead.

Lewis Cole: I think that question was partly addressed to me.

Eric Foner: Well, then respond.

Lewis Cole: The answer to that seems to me the following. If you enter into things that people are not going to like, then you have to expect and anticipate and accept that they protest it. You cannot say . . . in '68 there was this expression of the value-free university, and it was held that the University was above the political debate because it was absent from it. You know, the idea of the university as an ivory tower. But in fact that was not the case. And if that is not the case, and if you, as the university administrator, the head of the trustees, etcetera, it seems to me, have entered into arrangements which openly become part of the political and the social universe outside there, then you can't very well expect that people are not going to take a side about that, and that they are not going to try to exert their power because you have already exerted yours. You have said, "This is what this university is going to do." So they're going to say to you, "Well, I am also a part of this university. And I don't agree with that." Now the only response to that would be, it seems to me, is if you negotiate between those two parties. And you try to find some kind of common ground. And that's going to mean giving up on both sides. But if you don't do that, then you've entered into, you know, you've entered into conflict, you've entered into struggle. And you can't expect . . . I mean, there's the quote, Mao Zedong's quote. But there's the great quote from Frederick Douglass about, you know, the people who want freedom without struggle are those who want . . . Eric, help me out here . . .

Eric Foner: . . . crops without plowing the ground.

Lewis Cole: . . . crops without plowing the ground. Eric and I can go on like this for a long time with these quotes. So that seems to me the answer, you know, to the question.

Eric Foner: Professor de Bary wanted to also respond to your question.

William Theodore de Bary: The University was not operating in a complete value-free atmosphere. When the issue came up as to whether University facilities and personnel should engage in what was called war research, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Louis Hencken, whom many of you would know as the leader of the human-rights movement at Columbia. We deliberated this matter. We said there's nothing wrong in performing research as long as it is not secret or confidential. Whatever the results are should be made public. It's essential to the university that whatever goes on here is public and open to criticism. And

that's what we did. We made that recommendation and the administration and the trustees accepted that.

Eric Foner: Yes sir.

Man: I was Class of '66 and out of here before it happened. But I'd like to represent politically incorrect . . . the apathetic minority or majority. When I was out of here it was not a consuming interest of mine to find out what was going on on the Columbia campus. I moved on. And I was wondering how many of the students were here—they weren't all on the picket lines or on the other side—how many of them were the silent minority or majority who just went to class, did their thing, and weren't all consumed by what was going on on campus at that time?

Robert McCaughey: I think safely a majority. If you use the numbers that we have available, perhaps 1,500 students moved in and out of the buildings during the course of the week. There were only 700 students arrested. The University at that time had 24,000 students. There was clearly another circle of interested supporters. Most of the SDS members, for example, were not arrested, so wouldn't fall into that category of 722. A small minority. It does strike me, however, having said that that the numbers of students, Barnard and Columbia students, represent 15, 20 percent of the student body. I think there are relatively few political movements that you can point to that get going and get energized, including the American Revolution, with numbers much higher than that. And there was an equal number of students, I think, who were mightily put out by the disruption that the protesters engaged. I mean there were some who thought that their campus had been hijacked, a feeling that at some moments this evening I can understand with a new sympathy.

Eric Foner: Yes sir.

Greg Vargo: My name's Greg Vargo, I'm a member of Graduate Students Employees United, and I wanted to say that we were disappointed that the organizers of this event didn't choose to honor our picket line, honor our strike, and move the event off campus in a space that we had arranged in the neighborhood. We feel that it's, you know, hypocritical celebrating student power and student democracy to not respect a picket line. And I just want people in the audience to know that the, you know, Columbia administration now is not only trying to break our union, they've impounded ballots from an election . . .

Eric Foner: I want to unfortunately say that this is not a captive audience. I sympathize entirely with your position, but it is not appropriate to use this as a captive audience for another cause. If you want to talk to people after the event is

over, which will be in about three minutes, I'm sure they will be more than happy to hear about the . . .

Greg Vargo: I'll be brief.

Eric Foner: No. I think it's time to let one or two more people make their point and then we will have to end and have the reception. But I think your position has been made quite clear to the audience now, as you have a right to do. But let me turn to that gentleman who's been waiting also.

George Scerlock: My name's George Scerlock, member of the class of '69 of the engineering school and, until leading up until the period immediately preceding the revolution, as it were, was president of the Student African-American Society. I'm pleased by the professor's book. It appears that it does make a distinction that there were two separate protests after that first night, which was not widely recognized in the national press. There was a separate black student protest in Hamilton Hall, and the balance of the students were occupying other buildings for other purposes. The black students were primarily addressing the issue of the gym in Morningside Park and the attitude with which that reflected against the community there. So I'm pleased. I'm looking forward to reading the book for just that sort of distinction . . . mild disappointment is that the African-American student perspective isn't reflected in some manner on the panel there. And to close with just another thought, I was part of a school that could be termed as primarily conservative in its student body, raised a lot of concerns around the strike when it was happening, calculating as engineering students will do the cost per class, things that were lost by the protests. And to his great credit, Dean Hennessey at the time, who had a history of protecting human rights, said, and I think it's relevant to the protest in front of us today, that if any four-year curriculum is dependent upon any week or month of classes then there's a problem with that curriculum.

Eric Foner: Okay, thank you. I think this will have to be the last question or comment, so ma'am.

Woman: It's both. I guess a comment and a question. And the comment is I was in Boston, in Cambridge, at the time of the '68 strike. And I just remember the tremendous impact it had there. Then there was the takeover at MIT eventually, and there were eventually Kent State and the sit-downs all over the place that happened. And I guess I was a little disappointed that there wasn't more reflection on the details of the strike and the mechanisms, because I think that in fact we're in a very similar situation again with
. . . Now we have Iraq, then we had Vietnam. And that was a tremendous concern to a lot of people, and the lack of a means of communication of that broad concern.

And I thought the question . . . Is the Internet a means for communication? And I don't see Columbia using it at all with this graduate students and the teaching fellows. And there's an example of, for example, *The Times of India*, when it was a question of should they support the U.S. government from India in the Iraq war to go into Iraq or not? They opened up their . . . they had an online discussion. They had over 1,000 people discussing it and talking to each other. And I guess I wonder why there's no effort to see this as a . . . '68 was something wondrous and it said that a broader set of people have to be able to talk to each other. So the question I thought to the . . . Is there some way to get Columbia to begin to help open up this community so people . . . we all begin to talk to each other? And I guess that's my question to the panelists.

Eric Foner: Would anyone like to respond to that final question?

Robert McCaughey: I look at the Columbia Web site fairly regularly, and I'm rather struck by the amount of information that is conveyed. To be sure the University has an official position on the strike. I thought that the provost's comments, for example, over the last couple of weeks are fairly well covered and available on the Internet to certainly all Columbia subscribers. So that I would've thought that in this instance the position that the University has taken has been fairly clearly and articulately presented. You may disagree with it, but I don't think it's an absence of discussion or at least articulation of position. And I would choose to use this as an occasion to make the comment that we are having a discussion, unscheduled, unplanned by the organizers of this activity tonight, or the last three meetings of this, so we have engaged in a, to be sure, mostly silent conversation tonight. But I think it does again speak to the limits on which restraint can be placed. We have an open society, and sometimes it screws up events. And sometimes it leads to people saying things in fora that are perhaps not the most appropriate place to put it. For example, the provost of the University and the president of the University are not here, and Ted de Bary and I might settle the strike between us in the next five minutes, but I doubt it. But meanwhile there was an event tonight that was scheduled months ago, and it was picketed tonight. And I was charged with a bit of hypocrisy, and I would like to respond to that, because I think that works both ways.

There have been innumerable events in the last two weeks since the strike began that were not picketed. The history department, of which I a member, the Columbia University history department, had a graduate-student function. It was organized by graduate students months ago. Some of them are TAs. Some of them are on strike. That conference was held. The Bancroft Dinner was held. One week ago we had the third in this series of four meetings. Professor Rosenberg spoke. That was not picketed. So there's a certain selectivity that does go on in these events, and one

lives with them as best one can. But it's beyond my powers to describe it as easily sloughed off.

Eric Foner: Thank you. I think Thomas Jefferson said something or other to the effect that a revolutionary every twenty years is probably a desirable thing in a democracy. And the differences of opinion we have tonight are simply part of the process of open discussion, which is the lifeblood of this university. And it's been conducted in a dignified and respectful manner, which is what we all want and expect.

Let me thank Professor McCaughey again, not only for his talk tonight but for organizing this series of four events. And let me thank the panelists. And let me invite you all, including the TAs and RAs here, to join us in the faculty room just around the back here for a reception. You're all invited to come.