

THEME 2
REFORM
Reading Selections

1. MARIO SAVIO - Sit-in Address on the Steps of Sproul Hall (December 2, 1964 at UC Berkeley [excerpt])

Background:

A chronology of the conflicts over free speech in Berkeley can be found here:

www.fsm-a.org/stacks/FSM_RAB-chronology.html

... Now, there are at least two ways in which sit-ins and civil disobedience and whatever – [at] least two major ways in which it can occur. One, when a law exists, is promulgated, which is totally unacceptable to people and they violate it again and again and again till it's rescinded, appealed. Alright, but there's another way . . . Sometimes, the form of the law [renders] impossible its effective violation -- as a method to have it repealed. Sometimes, the grievances of people [extend] to more than just the law, extend to a whole mode of arbitrary power, a whole mode of arbitrary exercise of arbitrary power.

And that's what we have here. We have an autocracy which -- which runs this university. It's managed. We were told the following: If [UC President Clark] Kerr actually tried to get something more liberal out of the [UC Board of] Regents in his telephone conversation, why didn't he make some public statement to that effect? And the answer we received -- from a well-meaning liberal -- was the following: He said, "Would you ever imagine the manager of a firm making a statement publicly in opposition to his Board of Directors?" That's the answer.

Well I ask you to consider -- if this is a firm, and if the Board of Regents are the Board of Directors, and if President Kerr in fact is the manager, then . . . the faculty are a bunch of employees and we're the raw material! But we're a bunch of raw materials that don't . . . have any process upon us. Don't mean to be made into any product! Don't mean . . . to end up being bought by some clients of the University, be they the government, be they industry, be they organized labor, be they anyone! We're human beings!

And that. . . brings me to the second mode of civil disobedience. There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part! You can't even passively take part! And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus -- and you've got to make it stop! And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it -- that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all!!

... I know [what that] will be interpreted to mean, unfortunately, by the bigots who run *The Examiner*, for example [but such action] doesn't mean that you have to break anything. One thousand people sitting down some place, not letting anybody by, not [letting] anything happen, can stop any machine, including this machine! And it will stop!!

We're gonna do the following -- and the greater the number of people, the safer they'll be and the more effective it will be. We're going, once again, to march up to the 2nd floor of Sproul Hall.

... Likewise, we'll do. . . something which hasn't occurred at this University in a good long time! We're going to have real classes up there! They're gonna be freedom schools conducted up there! We're going to have classes on [the] 1st and 14th amendments!! We're gonna spend our time learning about the things this University is afraid that we know! We're going to learn about freedom up there, and we're going to learn by doing!!

2. CÉSAR CHÁVEZ – “What is Democracy?” (speech)

Please obtain a hardcopy printout of this speech from Mr. Gleason to staple to this page. If you wish, you may find a published version in *An Organizer's Tale: Speeches*, edited by Ilan Stevans (Penguin Classics).