

THE BERKELEY CATHOLIC WORKER

May, 1989

Dear Friend:

We towed a building on to People's Park this morning and opened for breakfast as People's Cafe -- the Berkeley Catholic Worker House of Hospitality. We'd like to explain our action and ask for your support and your prayers.

We opened the house so the poor who wander the Southside streets can have a place in which they may be received with the respect they deserve as children of God. After our two year search for premises and after being turned down in twenty eight locations, still the people have no house. We opened the house on People's Park because that is where the people are.

We have not done this to be political. Our move has nothing to do with controversy over the future of the Park or its twentieth anniversary. Our move is solely to provide a house where hearts may be touched and our guests may flourish.

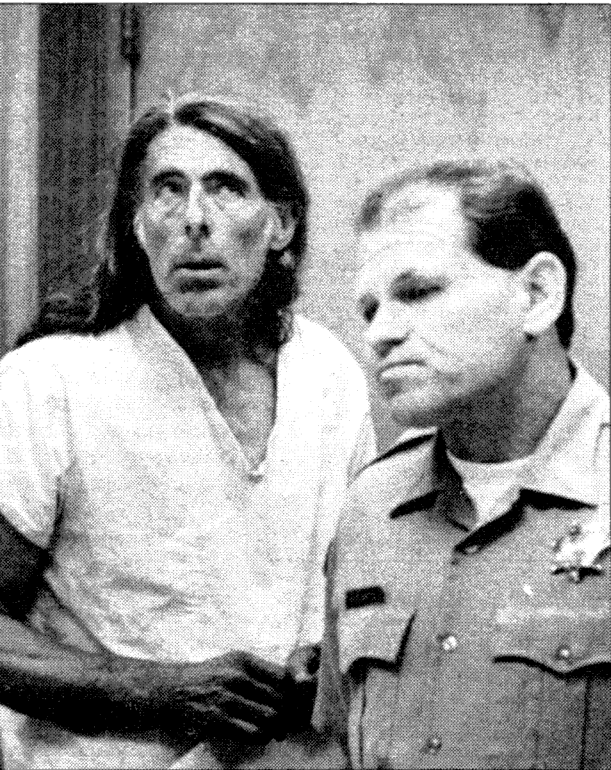
Please support us. Would you call UCB Chancellor Heyman today at 642-7464. Would you ask your friends to call. Raise your voices please on behalf of the poor who have no voice. And then come by and see our house -- People's Cafe. Come in and say hello. And please pray for us that we may do God's work peacefully and with love.

In God's Light,


John Cooper, Michele Frazier, Trish Maniatis

1442A Walnut St #443, Berkeley, CA 94709

Telephone (415) 849-3119



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID YEE

igned Monday on charges of inciting the Telegraph Avenue riot.

Sparks surrenders

ur did not enter a plea and is scheduled to appear in court one of Berkeley Municipal Court on June 1. Alameda County District Attorney Robert Swisher argued that Delacour should be held on the \$2,250 bail "in view that the damage has exceeded \$200,000."

Swisher said after the hearing on the felony vandalism charge against Delacour and Sparks would be released by the district attorney.

Delacour and Sparks might have thought he was innocent (of felony vandalism) but Alameda County Senior District Attorney Martin Brown said "different," Swisher said. Delacour and Sparks were among the leaders of the 1969 movement to open People's Park as open space. They have become prominent figures in more recent demonstrations in support of the park and the homeless population. Swisher said in a telephone interview yesterday that he would not prosecute Delacour's political activities in the park even though he was not on his own recognition

to drop a condition that I keep out of the south campus area except for business," he said.

Delacour said he was released from the Santa Rita jail in Pleasanton at approximately 10 p.m. Monday.

Swisher said the charges against Delacour and Sparks are based on eyewitness police accounts that cite the two aging activists as instigators and participants in the riot.

Reading one instance from the police report, Swisher said "at Durant and Telegraph, with Delacour and Sparks at the front, a crowd pelted police with rocks, bottles, chunks of concrete . . . paint, pieces of pipe, light bulbs, and other hard debris."

Delacour said yesterday this account of the Durant confrontation was "not true, false, a lie. I was for sure not on the forefront, I was on the sidelines, and I didn't say a word."

He said he believes the charges against him will be dropped. "I just read the police report, and they don't have much," he said.

After Delacour was escorted out by the bailiff, Sparks arrived in court and tried to turn himself in.

Campus takes charity to court over cafe

People's Park building not wanted

By Rebecca Tauber

UC Berkeley yesterday filed suit in the Alameda County Superior Court against the Berkeley Catholic Worker, hoping for a court order to remove the organization's 70-foot trailer from the corner of People's Park.

The "People's Cafe" trailer mysteriously appeared on the park May 9, and Catholic Worker volunteers began distributing free hot breakfasts, coffee and tea to the poor from the makeshift diner that same morning.

Since then, university officials have been continually ordering John Cooper, director of the local charity group, to move the trailer off university property.

Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services Daniel Boggan Jr. previously told members of the charity "we cannot permit unilateral actions by any group to meet their own needs on campus land without campus permission," according to a university press release.

Cooper said he was not surprised to receive the summons, which arrived at noon yesterday. The university "indicated at the meeting (between representatives from the city, the university and the Catholic worker) last Thursday that they may be initiating legal action," he said.

University spokesperson Tom Debley said the park attracts an "unhealthy mixture" of people and that university plans for the park include "changing the culture of the area, so the mer-

chant's buildings don't get trashed like Friday night."

"Why should the students fear getting mugged?" Debley said.

Last Thursday's meeting was one of several during which university representatives have spoken with the Catholic Worker in attempts to negotiate an alternative location for the People's Cafe.

"We offered them a facility in the next block, on Dwight, west of Telegraph," university Community Affairs Director Dorothy Walker said. "But we told them it wasn't available immediately."

Cooper said "in all fairness to the university, they have offered us two other locations (on university-owned land): one on Murray Street, in the southwest corner of Berkeley, and the other at Fourth and Harrison (streets), beyond the (Golden Gate Fields) racetrack."

But the volunteer organization turned down the university's offer because the sites were located too far from People's Park, where most of the city's homeless population gathers, Cooper said.

"This is asking the poor person to walk an average of 6 miles (from the park to either site) . . . using approximately 660 calories to get breakfast," Cooper said. "We hope to squeeze about 1,000 calories into them at breakfast, so we would be asking them to use two-thirds of what they're eating just to get a meal."

Since February 1986, members of the Catholic worker have been serving

SEE PAGE 6

Heyman calls the park a vacuum for anarchy

By Mona Miyasato
Staff Writer

Calling People's Park a "vacuum allowing . . . anarchy to exist," UC Berkeley Chancellor I. Michael Heyman partially blamed the park for the

"If there is a vacuum at the park, it's because the university has neglected it for 20 years and refused to allow any positive activity," she said.

Pushing the university's Long Range Development Plan — which proposes building dormitories and recreational facilities on one-third of the park

Downtown: Berkeley Unites New Part to Face Up Its Commercial Center

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Michael Caplan

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49

CITYSIDE



By Maggie Miller

What Will Happen to People's Cafe?

UC scraps with activists over fate of homeless center

By Craig Anderson

Last May 6, a loose-knit group of church workers pulled off an amazing coup. As dawn was breaking, volunteers with the Berkeley Catholic Worker organization moved a brand-new, 66-foot-long trailer onto People's Park and began serving breakfast to the homeless. The move caught everyone off guard, especially the University of California, which still owns the property. The cafe attracted a lot of favorable attention in the press, and in the community at large. The purpose of the "People's Cafe" was clearly benevolent, and its sudden appearance was a grand gesture that almost everyone admired for its virtue, or at least respected for its boldness.

That was seven months ago. Today, the "People's Cafe" is still in the same location, but the

bloom is off the rose. The continuing presence of the cafe in People's Park, long after it was supposed to have moved to another location, is causing increasing consternation among university administrators, city officials, park activists, and neighbors. These groups rarely agree about anything, and in fact, they have differing reasons for wanting the cafe out of the park. But they all would like, as several people said, "to see the situation resolved."

The future of the People's Cafe was supposed to have been settled last July, when an agreement was struck to move the trailer to a new site at 2427 Dwight Way. The university agreed to lease that property for three years to the city, which in turn would sub-lease part of it to

the Berkeley Catholic Worker. The agreement satisfied the university's desire to peacefully remove the cafe from the park, while also meeting the Catholic Worker's desire to maintain its services at a nearby location. Catholic Worker director John Cooper said he was delighted with the deal. "We think it's a magnanimous gesture on the part of the university," he said after the deal was struck. "And we thank them for their forbearance."

Since then, however, an unexpected snag developed. Cooper claims the university has—without his knowledge or acquiescence—inserted a provision into the lease agreement requiring the cafe to close at 5:00 p.m. Cooper says he cannot accept that proviso. Although the cafe only began opening during the

evening, from last month, Cooper demands that at night, four non-negotiable are essential says. Cooper renegotiate the and plans to tougher bargaining because he no university is

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Boggan is n frustrated recalcitrance. Cronkite, who is Cooper and the their differences file for a use per Board of Adjust "time problem" before. "The Ca trying to get as as they can," Cr would hope they get a deal so we Catherine Lew, Loni Hancock, s "We would like t wrapped up."

The university a many common ir continued on page 5

through the process and clear away any obstacles. If everything is smooth, the normal turnaround time is eight to ten weeks."

Lambert says his department has been very successful in streamlining procedures in South and West Berkeley but has only begun to turn its attention to downtown. "The appointment of the new downtown coordinator should speed things up considerably. The problem is we haven't really started marketing our services yet so people don't know we're here."

Among the improvements Lambert mentions is raising the maximum square footage for receiving a discretionary permit, which allows a business to forego public hearings. Also under consideration is another parking garage, though discussions on this are still very preliminary.

Further along are discussions on a targeted marketing program to bring in new retailers. Downtown coordinator Caplan will be working with merchants, residents, brokers, and property owners to develop a list of the kinds of stores people would like to see downtown, as well as a list of available sites. The Downtown Berkeley Association, which Leiter emphasizes is open to ordinary citizens as well as business owners, will be working closely with Caplan on this.

The general consensus seems to be that what is missing downtown is quality retail. "Downtown has been very successful as an entertainment center," notes Hancock. "We would like it to become a retail center as well. Downtown has a lot going for it. It's a great location. It's served extremely well by transportation, and there's a core of beautiful historic buildings. We still have a classic main street situation here. There's no reason why we can't make it even better. And that means bringing in more stores."

was the subject of October's much-ballyhooed "accord" between Hancock and Chancellor I. Michael Heyman. Under that agreement, the university and city would split the park, which would remain as open space. Some doubt was cast on the agreement several weeks ago when UC President David Gardner said the park's future would be decided by the Long Range Development Plan, not by any accord between Heyman and Hancock. But for now, the university and city have common goals for the park. The People's Cafe does not fit into those plans.

Cooper doesn't care. "Our constituency is not the university, the city, or the neighbors," he says. "Our constituency is the poor people in the park. These are the people I live and work with, and that is why I'm going to go to the wall for these people." Cooper says the interests of the homeless are too often shunted aside, and he is determined not to capitulate to any outside pressure. "If we don't have evening hours, where are these poor bastards going to go?"

Jamal Stewart, a homeless man, has been eating at the cafe since he moved to California in July. He believes the cafe should be allowed to remain open in the evening. "People are out here 24 hours a day," he says. "They need a place to get warm." He says the dedication of the workers is greatly appreciated. "They're real cool, and they're here like clockwork every day." Stewart says the university should not object to the cafe because when homeless people are there, they are not near other university facilities or panhandling on Telegraph Avenue.

But people who live near the park say the cafe's presence has aggravated problems which were already serious. Several neighbors said the cafe has attracted more people to the park, and with

them, more drug dealing and crime. Grace Christie, who lives in an apartment building next to the park, says conditions there have deteriorated during the past seven months. She hears shootings, sees campfires burning, and says there is more trash.

Christie, who has lived in the Southside area since the 1950s and marched to support the park in 1969, now describes it as intimidating. "It's gotten rougher," she says. "I stopped cutting through the park about the time the cafe went up. It's just bedlam, a three-ring circus." Christie said she was delighted by the Catholic Worker's success in installing the cafe last May. "But the charm has diminished for me," she says.

The cafe also has its critics among People's Park activists, who disapprove of having any structure on the land. Lisa Stephens, a member of the People's Park Council, says activists are divided on the issue. "A lot of people believe that People's Park should just be a homeless park," she says. Those activists are delighted with the cafe, and would probably fight against any attempt to forcibly remove it. Stephens, however, does not think the cafe belongs there, and says Cooper has "taken advantage" of the situation at People's Park for his own purposes.

"Putting [the cafe] on another piece of university property would have been a very controversial move," Stephens says. By selecting People's Park, Cooper has made it more difficult for the university to move the cafe away.

Many activists, Stephens says, will fight against any university action on People's Park, even if they are ambivalent about the cafe. The university has attempted to avoid an ugly battle over the park for years. The presence of the cafe puts the

university, and People's Park activists, on the spot. Stephens says arguments over the cafe only divert attention from the still unresolved question about the park's future. "As long as we're having this debate [about the cafe], I don't know whether we're going to be able to move forward," she says.

Cooper is a single-minded fellow, however, and he does not worry much about neighbors' complaints or People's Park activists' mixed emotions. His determination, and that of the other volunteers, brought People's Cafe into being in the first place, and has helped it thrive for seven months. But a large and diverse group of people say Cooper is also a zealot with whom it is very difficult to negotiate, much less come to an agreement.

Boggan says he has just about run out of patience. Three weeks ago, he sent Cooper a letter demanding that the Berkeley Catholic Worker officially apply for a use permit at the site on 2427 Dwight within five days. Cooper ignored it. Now Boggan, upping the ante, says he may not be able to avoid using force to evict the cafe. "We've been trying to avoid that," he says. "Ultimately, I don't think we're going to have a choice." Boggan, however, says any decision to forcibly remove the cafe will not

come until next month at the earliest. "Clearly, we're not going to screw around with anyone's Christmas season," he says.

Boggan's reluctance to use force is understandable. Such a move would be politically unpopular, and would almost certainly face physical opposition from park activists and homeless residents. An ugly battle over People's Park would also not be helpful if UC Berkeley officials are still trying to convince the board of regents to lease part of the land to the city for a dollar a year. City officials, who are still reveling in the newly smoothed-over town-gown alliance, do not want a nasty battle over the homeless to louse things up. And park activists would prefer not to be pulled into a struggle over the People's Cafe when the park itself remains to be won.

So everyone wants Cooper to go along, to be reasonable. But he is just as insistent that he should not, even as he runs the very real risk of alienating sympathetic observers and endangering the cafe's survival. Cooper says he is representing the interests of his constituents, whose plight is not reasonable at all. And so, he insists, he will not back down. Maybe he is bluffing, maybe not. "I am being unreasonable," Cooper says. "I'm in an unreasonable situation."



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As we begin the holiday season and look forward to the beginning

Speers acknowledges that the city genuinely does appear to be moving in a positive direction, but expresses skepticism about the future. "It's not just the political process," he says. "There have been changes recently in granting administrative permits rather than forcing every tenant to go through public review. It's the whole attitude. Businesses still perceive the city to be hostile, and it's going to take a lot to turn that around."

Caplan, having come here from San Jose, a city which, though perceived as very much pro-business, has nevertheless had even greater difficulty reviving its downtown, believes Berkeley can succeed in downtown revival. "This is a new initiative that the city is very proud of. It's really trying to do something to make downtown work. This is not like bringing downtown back from the dead. It's fairly active as downtowns go. It's more a matter of making it better."

CITYSIDE

People's Cafe

continued from page 3
days. One of those interests is the future of People's Park, which

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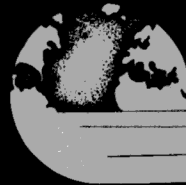
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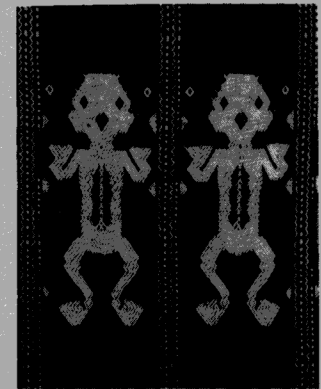
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