

Chapter 2: Early years of the Department

To summarize the lessons of this chapter, the 1960s constituted an extraordinary period. Copious funding from New York State made massive faculty recruitment possible. The rate of growth was dizzying. Well-established figures in the discipline and newly-minted PhD recipients joined the Department. Other appointees had compiled impressive academic records but had been denied tenure at universities such as Berkeley; offering them associate professorships cinched the case for Buffalo.

Political Science at UB thus received national recognition due to the reputations newly recruited full professors had already established. Were substantial numbers of the senior faculty to leave, this instant renown would be challenged – as it was. Such widely-known scholars as Roy Macridis (Comparative), John Wahlke (American), Kenneth Vines (American) or Robert Scigliano (Comparative) stayed but a few years, while Al Somit (a major historian of Political Science as a discipline) became an administrator. The loss of people of such repute hurt the Department in the short term.

Taking a longer term perspective, the on-campus disturbances of 1969-1970 and the abrupt halt of UB's growth in the early 1970s (owing to New York State's fiscal crises) destroyed the unrealistic optimism of the Department's early years. The 1970s and 1980s brought further problems, as Political Science coped with gradual erosion of its faculty numbers, even while trying to maintain a broadly-balanced set of fields.

The combined Department of History and Government

The State University of New York as a whole entered its life ringed about with restrictions that, in the view of many education leaders, made it next to impossible to create or build a major public, research-oriented institution, with the small exception of specialized schools in areas like medicine. SUNY can best be described in its early years as a collection of entities, most of which had been locally-established normal schools designed to trained teachers. As an example of the strictures, no campus other than that at Binghamton was permitted to offer B.A. programs – only the B.S. or Bachelor of Education would be permitted. No tuition was charged, akin to the policy followed in the City of New York public university system. In effect, however, SUNY had no center, only a series of campuses linked by little save concern about effects of 'Albany' on local administration. However, major social changes in the forms of the G.I. Bill and the arrival of baby boomers at college age, path-breaking reports and ambitious Republican governors paved the way for major expansion. These laid the necessary foundation to create a system, eventually with the traditional capstone of a "real" publicly-supported, PhD-granting entity. Generous tax support flowed into the new-born system. New York lived up to its motto 'Excelsior,' 'higher.'

Given the straitened financial circumstances of the private University of Buffalo and its teaching-intensive tutorial system for undergraduates, faculty members faced heavy demands. Members of the combined Department of History and Government spent the bulk of their time on instruction, with demands for campus and department governance, as well as scholarship, atop this basic responsibility.

As noted in the previous chapter, UB did not create a separate College of Arts and Sciences until the end of World War I, although small steps had been taken in that direction during it.¹ Among the departments created at the outset were such stalwarts of baccalaureate instruction such as Biology, Chemistry, English and Psychology.² The combined Department of

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History and Government was one of these units. Its faculty members were drawn heavily from the History side, in particular American and “Western” history. Political scientists remained in the minority, with the orthodox subfields of American, comparative (largely European), international and public administration represented.

The joint Department, *ab ovo*

I deliberately chose the Latin term since for most of its history the joint “Department of History and Government” was headed by scholars raised with deep appreciation of Western culture. Many of them read and quoted the language of Virgil or Pliny with ease. The ethos of the combined Department was set by its historians. Overall, they constituted three-quarters or more of its faculty strength. Some of them held senior administrative positions, notably Julian Park and Julius Pratt, respectively Deans of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School. Given the scope of this recounting, I haven’t delved into details about the Department of History itself; that task remains to others.

Given the straitened financial circumstances of the private University of Buffalo and its distinctive tutorial system for undergraduates, faculty members faced heavy demands. Members of the combined Department of History and Government spent the bulk of their time on instruction, with demands for administration and scholarship atop this basic responsibility. Little time existed for research – and it’s fair to say that research was perceived as a luxury, a rich and not necessarily needed sauce for the meat and potatoes of teaching. Only with the influx of resources made possible through the creation of the State University of New York and the merger of the private University of Buffalo into it could: 1) Political Science be established as a separate Department; 2) research be elevated to a primary criterion for faculty recruitment and retention; 3) doctoral programs created or spurred; 4) major new facilities provided; 5) thousands of new students recruited; and 6) the tuition-driven budget of UB replaced by near-total reliance on the State of New York. These extraordinary implications make it important to look briefly at the creation of SUNY.

Robert H. Stern was the senior Political Science faculty member when the Department was created. He came to UB in 1950, after completing his doctorate at Harvard.³ History and Government then included between nine and ten faculty members, some of whom served concurrently as major administrators.⁴ Stern was the third political scientist in the Department. He took responsibility for teaching Introduction to American government, the basic course in any Political Science Department. Previously, historians had covered it.⁵ Stern also taught public administration,⁶ regarded as an important part of the curriculum, and constitutional law. His formal lecture courses were complemented by group tutorials, one-on-one tutorials having been dropped earlier for financial reasons.⁷ Members of the Department collectively participated in preparing, administering and grading the comprehensive examinations that all senior majors were required to take. These tests included oral portions in which students, according to Stern, “faced a panel of three or four faculty members ... I remember long hours in which groups of faculty toiled over the acceptability of every question to appear in the various parts of the written examination, and then at the oral, sometimes, experiencing with the student a shared ideal.”⁸ Recruitment decisions were made in what Stern deemed a “quasi-collegial way.” In terms of his own hiring, he was invited to visit Buffalo, met one-on-one with the Department chair, individually with some other faculty members, and finally with the Dean

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of Arts and Sciences. In short, no formal presentation to the faculty or any to a class existed at that time at the junior level.⁹ The tenure process understandably involved more complications, with review by a key executive committee of the College; the Department itself tended to recommend promotion to associate professor “rather early through a kind of accumulated consensus.”¹⁰

The Department of History and Government was staffed entirely by white males, at least on the Political Science side. To be certain, this was the norm at that time, given the demographics and social expectations of the 1960s. In my research for this history, I turned up the name of only one female prior to the division into two units. Helen Dwight Reid taught international relations at Buffalo from 1928 to 1939. Her life is a relative mystery. Ms. Reid remains known within the discipline through an annual award given by the American Political Science Association for “the best dissertation in the field of international relations, law, and politics. The award is supported by the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation. It carries a prize of \$750.”¹¹

Reid came from an independently wealthy family, likely from with a background in Glasgow ship-building. She was educated under English and French governesses, and then spent eleven years in travel and study abroad. As a result, Reid could converse in several languages. She finished high school in three years, graduating with honors in 1918. Reid entered Vassar, graduating in 1922 as one of 10 members of the Advanced Standing Honor Group, majoring in political science and history. She received an International Law Fellowship of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1922-1924, doing research in international law, diplomacy, history, government and international trade at Harvard, where she received her MA in February 1924. Reid also had finished preliminary requirements for her doctorate, along with the first draft of PhD thesis. Her appointment at UB came quickly, given her credentials, and her rapid rise in rank reflected her research capability and enthusiasm for teaching. Reid finished her dissertation in 1935. It dealt with ‘international servitude.’¹²

At that time, UB was gravely affected – like American higher education and the country as a whole – by the dire impact of the Depression. Faculty retrenchments were commonplace. Salary reductions occurred as well, sometimes with staff volunteering to lower their pay in order to preserve jobs of colleagues. Promotions – at least those involving salary increases – became rare, as did sabbatical leaves. Many academics were drawn into government, joining the brain trust that Roosevelt built, or becoming affiliated with NGOs. Such was the case with Dr. Reid. For a variety of personal reasons, she resigned in 1939, moving to Washington to follow her interest in Latin American politics.

Reid died tragically August 6, 1965, in a car crash. She was due to leave that day for an APSA South American tour. Apparently her assets had already been placed into a charitable cause: she served as president of the Helen Dwight Reid Foundation, which gave scholarships to graduate students in international relations. The foundation lives on as the Heldref Foundation, sponsoring a host of academic publications and, of course, the annual APSA dissertation prize.¹³

Edging toward division: the Committee on Courses

By the late 1950s, higher education leaders in the United States realized they would soon confront immense new demands. The post-World War II baby boom meant a major bulge of students would arrive on colleges’ doorsteps by the early 1960s. Between 1946 and 1957, as

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mentioned in the previous chapter, the number of births increased dramatically from the levels of the Depression and World War II. Technology changed dramatically. By 1955, Buffalo reached the acme of its 20th-century population, with an air of optimism marking the urban area as a whole.

Curricula needed updating, new facilities constructed, and faculty recruited to meet the dramatically expanded teaching needs.¹⁴ Repercussions spread through the entire University of Buffalo.

With respect to Political Science, the most significant event came with the 1958 report of the Committee on Courses. It listed five reasons why the combined Department of History and Government should be split:

- a. Political Science frequently wasn't recognized by students or some advisers as a distinct field of study
- b. For serious coverage in courses, establishment of separate department was desirable
- c. Department autonomy was important to insure adequate recognition at the administrative level with respect to personnel requirements, library needs, etc.
- d. Faculty recruitment and placement of graduate students would be easier
- e. Department autonomy and a sense of identity were important for esprit de corps among majoring students, students and faculty members, and among faculty members

As sound as these academic principles may have been, and as significant the impending higher demands for admission were, fiscal realities precluded immediate creation of a separate Department of Political Science. Only with serious discussion about merger with the massively changed SUNY system did change come about.

The "velvet divorce" occurred fall 1962. According to the long-time chair of the combined department, "The most significant development is that the Department of History and Government has become pregnant; and will, we hope, by the autumn of 1962 give birth to a new and separate Department of Political Science."¹⁵ John Lane, a specialist in comparative politics who had been recruited as an assistant professor the preceding year, recalled the split as occurring by "consensus."¹⁶ The escalating aspirations and resources of the time made it possible to search for an outside chair. By bringing a nationally-recognized individual to Buffalo and giving him a substantial mandate to recruit, Political Science could receive a jump start. And that it did, thanks to the contacts, commitment and vision of a French-trained Greek comparative political scientist, Roy Macridis. His appointment marked the "real" start of the Department.¹⁷

Growth began explosively. In addition to the three and a half persons who transferred from the former Department of History and Government,¹⁸ Macridis reached out nationally for new faces. He followed a time-honored pattern of seeking out friends who were willing to move to a new university that promised much. An immediate appointee was his associate Bernard ("Ed") Brown, with whom he had worked closely in a widely-used book of readings on comparative politics.¹⁹ Among the most important other rapid appointees were political philosopher Richard Cox²⁰, who joined the Department in 1963 and IR specialist Glenn Snyder.²¹ And, probably most important, Macridis lured eminent Americanist John Wahlke. Wahlke served at that time as President of the Inter-University Consortium on Political and Social

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Research. He exemplified the scientific side of Political Science, ensuring that graduate students received a rigorous introduction to contemporary methodological approaches.

The new Department thus was launched in a spectacular fashion. The simultaneous recruitment of nationally-recognized scholars Macridis and Wahlke vaulted Buffalo to greater recognition. The “classic” areas were represented: American politics by Wahlke; comparative politics by Brown and Macridis; empirical political science also by Wahlke; international relations by Snyder; and political philosophy by Cox. These complemented Stern’s expertise in public administration.

The annual report for 1963 reflected the exhilaration of the early, fund-filled years. Macridis wrote glowingly about the new Department’s first year of operations with “great and indeed excruciating (sic) pleasure.” All members of the Department shared the goals of academic excellence and productivity; national recognition and visibility; research and graduate development; and “solid instructional performance” at the undergraduate level. The natural constituency for the Department was “the scholarly fraternity in the country.” Sounding a theme that has often been repeated, Macridis wrote, “Our effort is to emulate the best institutions. It is to the profession that we shall owe our foremost allegiance and our efforts and priorities will be established accordingly. It is by attaining national recognition that we shall be serving best the University and the community.”²²

A similar explosion of growth came in 1964. Five new assistant professors, including the author, arrived that year. They came from a variety of backgrounds: area specialists in Africa and the Communist world; other Americanists; international relations theorists, and the like. Similar rates of recruitment followed in the ensuing years of the decade.

Important implications flowed from this early, massive recruitment:

- Almost all the sub-fields of the discipline received tenured leaders new to Buffalo (public administration was already covered to some extent by Stern)
- The Department accordingly was structured from the outside along “traditional” lines. Each section had at least a few faculty members, sufficient to mount and support doctoral work. The only dissenting voice came from Wahlke, who favored organizing it along functional lines.²³
- Political Science gained a reasonably high degree of national recognition as a result key initial appointments. A corresponding problem existed, however. Rapid departure of some of them could trigger a reaction in the opposite direction, namely that the situation was unstable.
- The rapid and extensive hiring of the late 1960s affected the University as a whole. Numerous assistant and associate professors were recruited during this period – and then served decades more as they were promoted and became more ensconced. When fiscal problems assailed New York in the early 1970s and subsequently, this disparate group were immune from retrenchment, meaning the cutbacks fell almost entirely on junior faculty.
- The blistering pace of recruitment also encouraged a “the sky’s the limit” outlook. This was reflected in the “Berkeley of the east” phrase bandied about at the time.

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- Undergraduate students flocked to UB from all over the state, diminishing the local or at best regional focus of the institution. This presumed dilution of community influence in the University crystallized in the disturbances of the late 1960s.
- The grandiose plans made at all levels made possible the launching of graduate programs. Doctoral degrees could be pursued, thanks to the larger and more varied faculty. How the long-standing but very modest MA program morphed into a full-blown Ph.D. program appears in a subsequent chapter of this history.

The relatively rapid departure of the two senior members of the Department slowed the momentum that had been established, although did not stop it totally. Macridis left first. Lured by an offer from Brandeis – located in a metropolitan area he and especially his wife loved – he left in 1965, barely two years after arriving. Filling the chair's position thus posed an immediate issue, indeed crisis. The ranks of tenured faculty were thin. Wahlke was the only nationally known full professor who had held that rank for a significant period of time. Following the usual procedures, the Dean of Arts and Sciences polled all faculty members for written comments. These revealed a clear preference for Wahlke.²⁴ The Dean could not persuade him. Wahlke departed in 1966 for the University of Iowa, then headed in 1972 to downstate SUNY rival Stony Brook, where he carved out a continued long, distinguished career. On the other hand, two highly regarded full professors were lured to Buffalo in 1966, Al Somit (best known for his co-authored book on the history of political science as a discipline²⁵) and Robert Scigliano (a constitutional and court scholar who also wrote about South Vietnam prior to leaving Michigan State for Buffalo). Glenn Snyder, who had arrived from Berkeley in 1964 as associate professor, recalled the departure of Macridis and Wahlke as significant, since the 'stars in our firmament' were no longer there, and 'the rest of us had yet to prove ourselves. This was kind of deflating.' According to him, the thought developed that Buffalo 'may be an ordinary department. We were destined to be an ordinary university, (and) should retrench our aspirations.' Scigliano's move to Boston College seemed to ice the decision: 'We thought of him as 'the most well-known/famous person (outside Roy and John) in American government, which is center.' His leaving was 'sort of a tipping point, for things were starting to go downhill.'

UB as a whole reversed gear at the same time. A combination of serious on-campus disturbances, state fiscal crises and the start of internal dissension within the Department darkened the 1970s. These factors bear attention at this time.

A dream cut short: global student riots and local offspring

Much has been written about the late 1960s. A time of major unrest, especially among students in Western Europe and parts of the United States, it brought major transformations in governments and popular attitudes. The repercussions were felt most strongly in France, where demonstrations brought down the Fourth Republic and ushered in the far more rightist Fifth Republic of General Charles DeGaulle. LBJ decided not to seek re-election in 1968, having been tarred with the brush of the ever-dragging the Vietnam War, opening the door to a Republican dominance of politics that lasted for two decades plus.

The Buffalo campus stood out as one of the most affected university settings in the United States. Activists – including some young members of the faculty and staff, as well as students – latched on a series of intra-University grievances, linking them to broad national and

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global concerns. One immediate cause was a charge of racism and discrimination against Black basketball players, which led to on-campus demonstrations and occupation of the Union (Norton Hall) by a large group of students. Their forcible removal by Buffalo police lit the tinder. Forty-five faculty members occupied the UB President's office on a spring Sunday afternoon, to express their concern about the presence of large numbers of armed Buffalo police on campus and to petition the Acting President for a meeting.²⁶ Tension escalated. Confrontation nearly turned into catastrophe. Fortunately, UB escaped events as grievous as at Kent State, where four students died and an additional 67 were wounded when members of the National Guard opened fire. However, the latent town-gown tensions that had grown following UB's merger with the State University of New York risked boiling over. In the eyes of many, a far stricter approach in academic leadership was essential. The departure of President Meyerson²⁷ and the selection of Robert Ketter, a civil engineer regarded as a 'hard-line' candidate, to UB's presidency ushered into a new period. The 1970s proved remarkably different for the University as a whole, and for individual units.²⁸

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Political Science at UB thus received national recognition due to the reputations newly recruited full professors had already established. Were substantial numbers of the senior faculty to leave, this instant renown would be challenged – as it was. Such widely-known scholars as Roy Macridis (Comparative), John Wahlke (American), Kenneth Vines (American) or Robert Scigliano (Comparative) stayed but a few years, while Al Somit (a major historian of Political Science as a discipline) became an administrator. The loss of people of such repute hurt the Department in the short term.

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Buslet/Department history/Chapter 2 LATEST

¹ For details, see Julian Park, *The Evolution of a College* (1938) and *A History of the University of Buffalo* (1917). A detailed, first-rate study was recently published by two former senior administrators: William R. Greiner and Thomas E. Headrick, *Location, Location, Location: A Special History of the University at Buffalo* (Buffalo: Center for Studies in American Culture, 2007).

² Histories of individual Departments at UB remain unwritten for the most part – a pity, given the dramatic changes that occurred in almost all as a result of the merger with SUNY and resulting changes. The single exception known to the author can be found at <http://www.psychology.buffalo.edu/contrib/home/documents/-AHistoryoftheDepartmentofPsychology.pdf>. Professor Jack Meacham, who retired in 2007, kindly provided a longer version of this history to me, and offered several useful hints in preparing this current work.

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³ “The Federal Communications Commission and Television: The Regulatory Process in an Environment of Rapid Technical Innovations.” Stern believes he was recruited as a result of direct discussions between the Chair of the Government Department at Harvard and of History and Government at Buffalo. Information comes from handwritten note to the author, February 2008. The same word-of-mouth probably applied in the appointment of the present author and a substantial portion of faculty members appointed since the Department’s creation.

⁴ Historian Julian Park (1888-1965) was the longest-tenured Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, having served in that position from 1919 (six years after he joined the UB faculty) until 1954. He was the son of the eminent Buffalo surgeon Roswell Park. (For brief information, see http://www.buffalo.edu/ubreporter/2009_05_13/flashback.) Historian Julian Pratt not only taught, but also was Dean of the Graduate School. Park’s books (in addition to several focused on the history of the University of Buffalo) included studies of Canadian and French culture. Pratt (1888-1983) was a diplomatic historian, with special attention to the United States. Perhaps his most intriguing book is entitled *America’s colonial experiment: How the United States gained, governed, and in part gave away a colonial empire.*

⁵ This was John Horton, Chair of History for several years, including when the important Committee on Courses prepared its report.

⁶ See details subsequently in this history relating to the checkered history of Public Policy.

⁷ As Stern recalled, each instructor enjoyed considerable leeway in choosing the subject for the group tutorials. He favored “the dead white male canon of Western political thought – Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, the *Federalist Papers*, de Tocqueville, Rousseau, J.S. Mill, Marx, etc. – in addition to authors around whom contemporary controversy swirled, such as Hayek or Herman Finer.”

⁸ Personal communication to the author, February 2008.

⁹ Stern wryly notes that having two senior administrators as members of History and Government “may have simplified matters.” Personal communication to the author, February 2008. Similar streamlined recruitment was also eased by the small size of the Department, its homogeneity and, by the mid- to late-1960s, the torrent of State funds that facilitated wholesale hiring.

¹⁰ Personal communication to the author, February 2008. Stern also notes that two relatively close decisions were made at the junior level during his decade in the combined department: one went instead to Yale, the other came to Buffalo, won the Bancroft Prize in History in 1966 and subsequently became President of Swarthmore College and head of a major Philadelphia area foundation.

¹¹ http://www.apsanet.org/section_270.cfm, accessed September 27, 2008.

¹² The dissertation was completed in 1935, dealing with ‘international servitude.’ Although no detailed information is available through a WorldCat search, I surmise that it focused on the League of Nations Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labour and Similar Institutions and Practices Convention of 1926. In a sense, I am working in the same area, examining in my current book project problems with this treaty and the 1956 Supplemental Convention. See Claude E. Welch, Jr., “Defining Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Updating a Venerable NGO,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 31 (February 2009), 70-128.

¹³ Peter Katzenstein, 2008/09 president of the American Political Science Association and chaired professor at Cornell, received this award in 1976. In an interesting twist of fate, Katzenstein gave an invited lecture at UB in February 2009, ‘Anti-Americanism and Obamania: Challenges for America in 21st Century,’ organized in part by the present writer.

¹⁴ One repercussion came in the abandonment of individual in favor of group tutorials.

¹⁵ “Annual report of the Department of History and Government, 1961” written by historian John Horton; available in the UB Archives.

¹⁶ Interview with John Lane and Robert Stern, Buffalo, April 24, 2008.

¹⁷ Interview with John Lane and Robert Stern, Buffalo, April 24, 2008.

¹⁸ These included Stern, Lane and Crittenden; Hulicka split his time between History and Political Science.

¹⁹ The first edition of their *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings* appeared in 1961. Subsequent editions were published in 1964, 1968, 1972 and 1976.

²⁰ Cox and Macridis were close personally. Macridis had reached out to Cox when Cox was completing his MA at Northwestern. They remained in contact while Cox taught for two years at Harvard and six years at Berkeley. He was denied tenure at the latter, so was on the job market. Macridis tried to lure Cox to Washington University

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when he taught there. Informal discussion with Richard Cox, August 14, 2008. His major scholarly works have focused on John Locke, including *Locke on War and Peace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

²¹ Snyder had also been turned down for tenure at Berkeley. Telephone discussion February 12, 2008. Cox and Snyder represented exactly the sort of high-quality talent Macridis sought: young, respected within their fields, ready to move to a new institution.

²² Annual Report for the Department of Political Science, on file in the UB Archives.

²³ Interview by the author with John Lane and Robert Stern, Buffalo, April 24, 2008.

²⁴ Archives, University at Buffalo, Box 7.7, "Political Science Screening Committee." Among the sentiments expressed, the following are typical:

- Wahlke enjoys "a national scholarly reputation, a somewhat broader range of contacts in the profession.... "His loss would be heavier blow than departure of Macridis, due to Wahlke's "special talents and skills in the area of 'survey research' and quantitative data processing." (At this time, Wahlke had been elevated to chairmanship of the Inter-University Consortium and served on the Executive Committee of the American Political Science Association.)
- Wahlke was "the only one who is comparable in all respects to Macridis... involved in all stages of development of the department with the chairman ... (enjoys a) broad professional reputation which is indispensable for the continuing growth of the department."
- "It is absolutely essential that the Political Science Department regain the momentum it has unfortunately lost this year."

²⁵ Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *American Political Science: A Portrait of a Discipline* (New York: Atherton, 1964).

²⁶ President Meyerson took leave spring 1970, in order to head the externally funded "Assembly on University Goals and Governance." Peter F. Regan, M.D., moved up from Executive Vice President to the presidency on a temporary basis, while Warren Bennis, then Provost of Social Sciences and Administration, took on additional duties as Acting Executive Vice President.

²⁷ Meyerson had been on leave spring 1970, when the major disturbances occurred on campus. His place was taken by Peter Regan. Meyerson moved fall 1970 to the presidency of the University of Pennsylvania, becoming the first Jewish president in the Ivy League. Regan returned to his position in the Department of Psychiatry, remaining there until his retirement.

²⁸ The author observed many events from the inside, having served in the late 1960s as Dean of the Division of Undergraduate Education. This position meant I served in the academic hierarchy, as a staff officer, and not on the "student affairs" side where the Dean of Students was positioned. Nor did I have any real power relative to the line Deans. I was charged with implementing the baccalaureate side of the reforms proposed by President Meyerson and approved by the Faculty Senate. My nickname was the "Boy Dean," since I had been asked to serve as the head of DUE a few days after my 27th birthday.