

Changes Loom at Famed

By Ralph Dighton

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SANTA BARBARA, Calif.—The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions is about to become a center for something else.

Just what, at this stage, is not clear.

Extremely clear, however, is that this comfortably multi-millioned, confusingly multi-purposed community of intellectuals is at a crossroads.

Its 70-year-old president and founder, educator Robert M. Hutchins, has announced plans to yield the reins with which he has guided the center through controversies over the past decade.

Its principal backer, inventor Chester F. Carlson, has died, leaving the center \$5 million in stock—"completely," says Hutchins, "without strings."

Staff Shaken Up

Its staff of "senior fellows"—resident experts paid college-professor salaries to hold weeks-long seminars on current topics—has undergone a drastic shakeup.

Its major product, millions of words once distributed to members on tape and in pamphlets, is being aimed at a larger audience in a different package: a bi-monthly magazine recently placed on newstands for the first time.

And there are hints the center may change its charter, possibly even its name. Neither fits the center's widening scope and increasing affluence.

Whatever the internationally known "talk tank" becomes in the foggy future, it probably will remain what it is—~~an~~ ~~up~~ ~~work~~ ~~usq~~ ~~svy~~ controversial.

"We Seek . . . Truth"

It has been accused by anti-Communists of leaning far to the left; by liberals of being a right-wing mouth-

California Study

Center

piece, of being pro-Catholic, hyper-Protestant, and ungodly.

Faced with these accusations, Hutchins shrugs.

"We are an educational institution," he says. "We try to educate, to influence; to identify problems, not find solutions. Since there are many sides to any problems, we bring in people of many political ideologies and religious faiths. We live in a paranoid, conspiratorial universe, and there are those who believe that whatever you do must have hidden reason. But we seek only the truth."

Hutchins believes this goal is best approached through dialogue between scholars, and that to achieve it, they must be free from economic pressures.

Funds Dwindled

That was his announced purpose in setting up a community of intellectuals 10 years ago in a Grecian-style mansion on a hilltop overlooking Santa Barbara.

The scholars he hired achieved some measure of financial tranquility, but he did not. As the original \$15-million grant from the Ford Foundation dwindled, he appealed to private donors for funds. The response was slow, at first.

The center's annual budget dropped from \$1.5

million to less than \$1 million. Hutchins went on tour, offering memberships in the center at rates ranging from \$10 a year for students to \$1000 a year or more for those whose tax brackets could afford it.

He credits the turn in financial affairs to Carlson, inventor of a duplicating process, who gave the center \$5 million before he died and bequeathed an equal amount in his will. The center used much of the windfall to expand its publications program and recruit new members—a highly profitable venture.

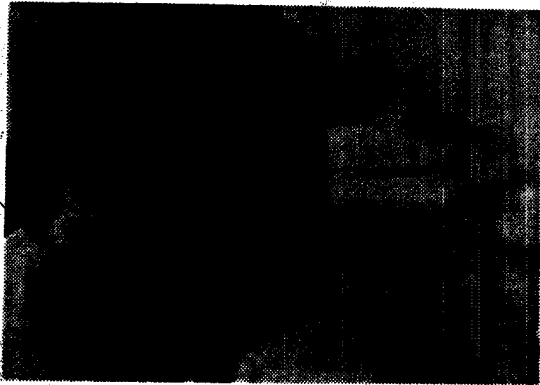
The center's current budget is \$3 million a year. Its membership has jumped from 17,000 to 100,000 in the past 18 months, and executives are considering boosting the annual membership rate to a minimum of \$15.

Hutchins' early dream is closer to fruition.

Last June, in preparation for his eventual retirement, he set up a self-perpetuating rulership for the center made up of senior fellows. He chose one, then the two chose a third and the three chose a fourth, until there were seven.

Novelist Chosen

The first man Hutchins chose was Harvey Wheeler, co-author of the book "Fail Safe," whose current project at the center is federal control of scientific research. They picked Rexford Guy Tugwell, adviser to the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who is drafting proposed revisions of the U.S. Constitution.



Henry Ashmore, center's executive vice president.

Others, in order of selection and their current proj-

ects: John Cogley, former religion editor of The New York Times who is editor of the center magazine; Harry Ashmore, Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper editor, reform of the electoral process; physicist-philosopher John Wilkinson, civilization of dialogue; Elisabeth Mann Borgese, daughter of novelist Thomas Mann, world order.

Some scholars were dropped, others were shifted to administrative duties.

From now on, the surviving seven scholars (there originally were 18) will decide what programs the center will study—a prerogative previously reserved for Hutchins himself—and pick any replacements or addi-

tions to the fellowship in the future.

Finances Good

Ashmore, who is executive vice president of the center and who may inherit some of Hutchins' administrative duties, says, "We're in the best financial condition in our history. It is the first time that any of us could say we feel we're permanent. No matter how unpopular we might become, we can keep the doors open."

Hutchins recently said that he wanted to be relieved of all administrative duties "as soon as possible" and that he hoped to stay on as a senior fellow doing research in education.

Associates say Hutchins

probably will remain in an executive capacity until the center's reorganization is completed, probably in a year or so. Whatever his official role, he still will have a voice in deciding what direction the center will take.

If clues to the future may be found in the past, the road ahead will be at least occasionally stormy. Hutchins established his role as a rebel in education when, at the age of 30, he abolished football at the University of Chicago, which he then headed.

Promoting "Dialogue"

He later joined the Ford Foundation and undertook a

years-long battle for civil rights. In 1954, the foundation set up the Fund for the Republic with Hutchins as president, and five years later, Hutchins established the center.

In its brief lifetime, the center has had several apparent changes in emphasis, each arousing both acclaim and criticism. From its original focus on civil rights, it shifted to a wide spectrum of national problems because, as Hutchins says, "No one national problem can be truly understood except in relation to other national problems."

Then, a few years ago, its scope became global. For a

time, the center's major goal was finding a way to world peace through promoting what Hutchins calls "dialogue" between world leaders. To implement this, the center sponsored at a cost of about \$1 million two "pacem in teris" (peace on earth) convocations which drew a total attendance of about 3,000.

Now, apparently convinced that global conflict somehow will be averted, Hutchins is concerned with the impact science and technology will have on the world of the future—a project that happily assumes there will be a world to be concerned about.