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## Opinion

# Editorial: Thieves of Liberty

Thursday, February 28, 2002

Back in the 1960s when thousands of UC Berkeley students rallied on Sproul Plaza demanding free speech, they wanted protection from an administration bent on suppression of opinion.

But that was then. Now, sadly enough, free speech needs protection not from administration or government, but from UC Berkeley students.

When perpetrators broke into the offices of the Berkeley College Republicans and stole all 3,000 copies of the California Patriot, they were betraying their cause. Any objections they had to whatever angered them in the Patriot were completely negated when they turned from protesters into criminals.

And these criminals aren't stealing jewels or cars. They are stealing the right of someone else to express an opinion, and that cannot be tolerated.

The university must do all it can to discourage this base oppression, and Chancellor Berdahl has already made his stance clear.

"Such actions are completely antithetical to the values that form the foundation of our democracy, and ... are particularly egregious in an educational setting," he wrote in letter to us yesterday.

Now, he has the opportunity to back up his words and bring those responsible to justice.

Those behind the theft might think themselves noble. The rest of the world knows they are criminal, and striking at one of the roots of American, and civil, society.