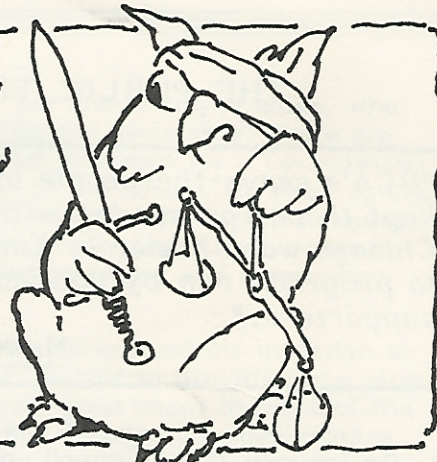


# the BERKELEY Viewpoint

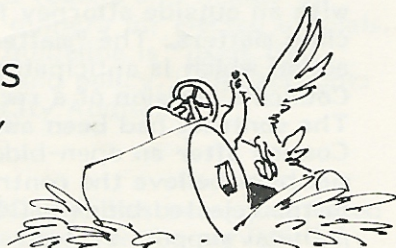


BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

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## THE PEOPLE'S AUTOCRACY



"This new (BCA) machine is a steamroller," said an editorial in the Daily Californian on December 6.

The rebuke was brought about by the manner in which the new City Council at its first meeting pushed through a number of changes in city policy without public notice or discussion.

As though there were no tomorrow, the Council added "emergency" items to an already extensive agenda and enacted them as "urgency" legislation. Urgency legislation is deemed to be in response to a critical time situation. It requires a 7-member vote, needs no second reading and takes effect immediately without the 30-day waiting period that must precede implementation of ordinary legislation.

### Rolling Along

In an atmosphere of "settling old scores" as the East Bay Express put it, the eight BCA Councilmembers:

- rescinded a recycling contract,
- imposed new requirements for eviction,
- extended coverage of the ban on condominium conversions,
- gave the go-ahead for second units in single family zones,
- provided health benefits for domestic partners of employees,

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## ...THOSE EXPENS(IVE) ACCOUNTS

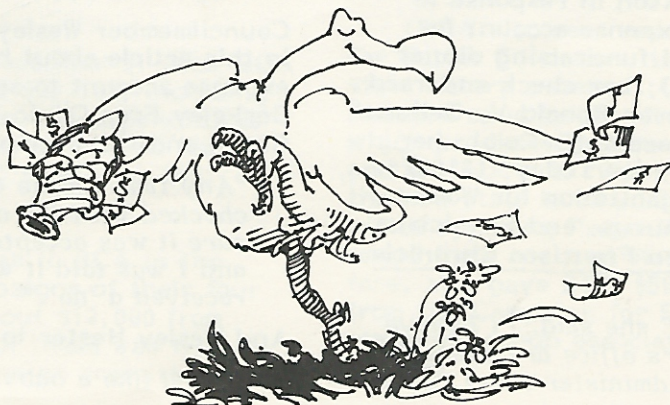
The Council's tripling of its expense accounts, -- commonly known as D-13 accounts -- has more serious implications than purely budgetary ones.

The agenda item sponsored by the four new Councilmembers made the case for the increase on the ground of diminished purchasing power of the dollar over the years. They argued, in essence, for a cost-of-living adjustment.

Discussion in council chambers and the press, however, came to turn on the need for full-time aides for part-time councilmembers. Aides were needed, Veronika Fukson said, because Councilmembers cannot rely on city staff "which is too conservative". The statement suggests that, without going through the process of changing the Charter, this new Council intends to bring about a change in Berkeley's council-manager relationship.

### Cost-of-Living Raise

First the inflation argument. Remuneration for councilmembers and mayor is set by the Charter in amounts of \$300 and \$600 a month respectively, tied to their attendance at meetings. In 1973, the Council provided in the budget, additionally, for expense accounts of \$500 a month each.



At that time the city operated out of Old City Hall on Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, which had no space for offices for Councilmembers. Some of them teamed together to rent commercial space which was paid for out of these expense accounts. Subsequently, the City acquired the Farm Credit Building and since 1977 Councilmembers have been

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