

THE INTELLECTUALS: GOD'S FROZEN PEOPLE

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Over a century ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson travelled to the Midwest to meet with a group of intellectual and political leaders, to discuss the organization of a rational world. After many days of debate on the subject of nationalism vs. internationalism, and the organization of a world community, it was decided that the future capital of the world should be in Constantinople. At this point, Emerson stalked from the conference, with the comment: "Impossible. It's too far from Concord!"

Today, as the distance from Constantinople to Concord has dwindled, our concept of the future and of ourselves has faded. The influence, self-confidence, and poise of the American intellectual has declined.

Has the rapid advance of science and technology and the explosive expansion of transportation and population *inevitably* led to the diminished political role of the intellectual in Western society? I think not. I believe the potential for courageous, intelligent intellectuals concerned with political affairs in our universities and colleges has never been greater, but the response has been inadequate to the challenge. Like the medieval scholars, many have retreated into their ivory towers to contemplate their own special visions. They, too, have become God's frozen people.

Last summer, shortly before his departure from the White House, Richard Goodwin, in a speech to foreign students, said:

. . . Nothing is more disheartening than the failure of much of the American intellectual community to evolve answers to the crisis of American public life. In other periods of challenge and forward movement we have had a fertile advance ground of thought toward which government could move—from the economics of Lord Keynes to the views of Louis Brandeis. Today, with the exception of a few men—men like Ken Galbraith, and Michael Harrington and Paul Goodman—this is not true. Of course much is being written and said. The air is filled with the insights of sociology and psychology, political science and public administration. This is the age of insight—often penetrating, sometimes brilliant, *but rarely help-*

ful to those whose job it is to guide affairs. There is a bleak and dismal failure to relate much of this fresh understanding to the process and needs of society. The result is that we in Washington—possessed with the greatest political means of forward movement in a generation—are groping for proposals and programs. . . . We know there are new problems. But the intellectual resources of this nation—the historic reservoir of social progress—do not readily provide the answers.

While Mr. Goodwin's comments were primarily oriented toward the problems of American domestic life, I believe they are equally applicable to the failure of the American intellectual to contribute new ideas to American foreign policy. Why is this so? Let me attempt to present a few reasons.

First, most political scientists are not equipped by education, training, or custom to think in political terms, whether international or domestic. Their training is neither political nor scientific, but a mélange of abstract theory with a sugar-coating of computer analysis. It is hopelessly inadequate to the challenge of modern international or domestic affairs.

Why not teach courses in political affairs? President Kennedy observed that most American mothers hoped their sons would grow up to be President, but few wanted their sons to be politicians. Whether at home or abroad, the nature and character of human life will be determined by the political leaders of the world and the nation. It is the duty of political leaders to formulate a vision of what a society should be and then to persuade others to achieve it.

The contempt of political scientists for politics is illustrated by a professor who spoke of Professor Melman's Capitol campaign: "Imagine! I understand he circulated his paper to every Senator and Congressman, and talked to as many as he could." Whatever one may think of Professor Melman's views, lobbying in the halls of Congress and the Executive Departments is certainly a legitimate and effective way to present them. Indeed, if more political scientists attempted to do so, they might be better equipped to teach.

Second, the political science community is oriented to the past instead of the future. There are journals which analyze our past policies, but few which suggest new ones. Where is the book which

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outlines the choices of political evolution in the decade ahead in Europe? In Asia? In Latin America? Indeed, anywhere in the world? Where is the book that analyzes the political and economic problems and programs necessary to provide minimum standards of human decency to the developing nations? Where is the book which analyzes the military effects of nuclear proliferation if it does occur, and the political steps which may be necessary to stop proliferation? I'm afraid the intellectual community is not discussing the issues which policy makers face in attempting to shape or influence the evolution of the human community.

Except for a very few, the political science community has abandoned its role of leadership in developing a vision of future political evolution to such disparate groups as the Catholic Church, physicists, and the international business and banking communities. To the extent that political scientists do discuss political affairs, the terms have remained in a nineteenth century framework: communism, capitalism, and the nation state.

If an engineer went back to the Wright Brothers' diaries to learn how to design a jet transport, people would think him mad. But most political scientists discuss political evolution in the dialectical framework set by Marx and Adam Smith. Isn't it about time to reject both as incredibly obsolete?

Third, a concern with political affairs must also concern itself with the administration of policy. While in theory the leaders of government determine its policy, in fact a bureaucracy can deny political leaders both the information and the opportunity to guide policy. It is amazing how few political scientists have recognized the impact that bureaucratic traditions in all nations have upon the conduct of foreign policy.

In the last analysis, however, the administration of policy is not primarily a problem of budgets and organization, but a matter of men: the quality and character of the men that carry out government policies. As Edmund Burke said many years ago:

Men are in public life as in private, some good, some evil. The elevation of the one, and the depression of the other, are the first objects of all true policy.

If I were training young men for public service, I would give them at least a term on personnel administration. I believe more fine public administrators have failed to fulfill their high promise because of failures in personnel administration than for any other reason.

Modern political science has dropped any consideration of moral or political values: the foundation

of classical political theory. Aristotle believed that politics is the queen of sciences and that intellectual life was essential to the purpose of the state, which was the achievement of the good life: a society of virtue and justice. This goal could only be achieved through the conscious application of the mind and the political participation of all citizens. It was not until the Renaissance that Machiavelli articulated the theory of politics based on power rather than virtue and justice. Today, when political scientists discuss international political affairs, they do so in Machiavelli's terms of power politics, not Aristotelian terms of virtue and justice.

For example, I have been amused by many intellectuals' reactions to the Vatican Council's Schema XIII on the moral implications of nuclear arms. The general reaction seemed one of embarrassment, and many, including Catholic intellectuals, plead that the bishops were not "qualified" to speak on this issue. Most intellectuals seem embarrassed at the courage of the bishops to confront directly an issue which scholars have studiously avoided for many years. In the past few months I have observed a number of intellectuals concerned with military affairs struck speechless when asked by a priest or layman for their views on the Vatican schema. This behavior reminds me of the old punch line: "He's lost in thought. He's never been there before."

We are a moral people. The Marshall Plan, foreign aid, and the current effort to guarantee civil rights all reflect the moral commitment of most Americans to help their fellow man. Economists like Galbraith, and sociologists like Riesman, shape the political values of our time. But domestic values are not international political values. I realize that there are many leaders not only in the Communist world, but also in the Western world, who not only preach, but practice the politics of power, in which virtue and justice have no place.

Clearly, this is not true of President Johnson, who recently said: "A President's hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right."

Yet, if intellectuals continue to ignore the moral and ethical values which motivate much of U.S. and Western citizens' attitudes toward foreign policy, a fatal flaw can develop, for good will and high purpose without understanding and compassion can unconsciously become self-righteousness. I commend to you the words of Paul Camus:

We are all responsible for the absence of values . . . if all of us who come from Nietzscheism, from nihilism or from historical realism, said in public that we

were wrong and that there are moral values, don't you believe this would be the beginning of hope?

Fourth, most political scientists are poor scientists. In their pursuit of the intellectual stature of the physical scientist, they have lost touch with reality. Often, in discussions with political scientists, I have the impression I am talking with frustrated physicists, men who feel compelled to develop detailed mathematical models. These men are either unaware or unwilling to admit that every human being is intricate, that even the simplest social group is incredibly complex, and, therefore, with the exception of elementary matters, such as the prediction of elections, no computer program can describe human behavior.

It is unfair, however, to criticize without suggesting the direction in which solutions can be found. While the richness and variety of human experience cannot be defined or quantified, it *can* be observed. In this fact lies the possible rebirth of political science—not by following the atomistic patterns of physics, but those of medicine. Early in medical history there were complex theories of medicine based on concepts of good and evil, humours and spirits which troubled mankind. Progress began when men like da Vinci and Harvey began to investigate and clinically describe human anatomy and human ills. If intellectuals are to make a greater contribution to international affairs, I believe they must pursue a similar road. The relatively recent trend toward the conduct of rigorous political analyses of the past, particularly the events of the post-war world, the excellent analyses of people such as Allan Whiting on the Korean War, Roberta Wohlstetter on the events leading up to Pearl Harbor, and Morton Halperin on the behavior of the Communist Chinese in the Quemoy/Matsu crisis, provide extraordinarily valuable insights. The value is increased, not decreased, by the fact that the evidence conflicts sharply with the conventional wisdom, which is, as usual, superficial and fits the myths of our parents and the press, rather than the realities of today. Thus, for example, Whiting's and Halperin's works suggest that the Chinese Communist leadership is not irrational. Indeed, they suggest it is quite sophisticated.

Second, and perhaps the more difficult task, is to conduct an analysis of policy alternatives available to Washington or other governments and then recommend the direction which policy should take. This is, undoubtedly, a most difficult task, for it requires a rigorous analysis of available materials and an attempt at objective analysis of the likely

outcomes and, last but not least, a lucid presentation. Such papers are extraordinarily valuable for the government, are very widely read, and very rare.

At present the channels of communication between scholars and their government are clogged with tons of paper. I read a recent report which said that there are 1,500 monthly scholarly periodicals. On the average, each new scientifically published paper was read by 1.3 persons. As some papers are read by hundreds, it is clear that some are read by no one but the author, and sometimes I wonder if the author has read his own paper! However, these figures should not discourage you, for the occasional rare paper that is very good will be read by hundreds of people in Washington.

In my experience, the high reputation of an author does not guarantee reading, nor does the obscurity of an author mean that his paper will go unread if his prose and analysis is sound and interesting. Unfortunately, the supply of creative thought does not meet the demand. Recently an attempt was made within the Executive Branch to review all newly published material on international affairs, to extract fresh, new ideas to circulate to high-level policy makers. It was abandoned after some months because of a lack of material.

While my remarks may appear overly critical, the fact remains that scholars and teachers—the custodians of human intellect, the central nervous system of democracy—have failed to address most of the fundamental questions of our time. Rarely does anyone go beyond the limits of the conventional wisdom. Public responsibility cannot be fulfilled by empty rhetoric. It must be fulfilled by men who assume the role of leadership in the intellectual world; men who present new ideas on the organization of the human community.

I hope that some will accept this challenge and inject new vitality and new ideas into the dialogue on international affairs. If they do, I think there is no better advice than that of Thomas Jefferson, when he wrote to a nephew in college:

Shake off all the fears and servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear.

You must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject anything because any other person, or group of persons, has rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable not for the rightness, but uprightness of your decisions.