

HYPOCRISIES UNMASKED

The following editorial by Michael Novak is reprinted in its entirety from the May 12 issue of Christianity and Crisis.

The radical protests in one after another American university have rendered the empire naked. Almost everyone is embarrassed. Under intense pressure, opposing myths about our society are passionately set forth without their customary clothing. The "end of ideology" has ended; freedom has begun.

The radical left is driven by a split between progressive labor militants and gentler SDS factions who recall the humanism of the Port Huron Statement. Yet even the most gentle have been driven to sickness and despair by their experiences these last three years. "Moderate" students are divided between those who concede the good points raised by the radicals, but still believe that "reason" and "democratic procedures" operate in the universities; and those who rush from fraternity houses to drive the protesters from their sit-ins, or who desire still stronger police retaliation.

The moderates accuse the radicals of infringing on the liberties of the majority. The radicals retort: Can't you see that the liberties of the majority are more apparent than real, infringed on every day by an armed government and by fatally deficient democratic procedures?

The moderates say that they are a majority. They like the Establishment, on whose bottom rungs their feet are firmly placed, the way it is. The radicals retort: Can't you see that the Establishment has bought you off, that you have been channelled into this place, and are being taught precisely those skills the Establishment most wishes you to have? And that other people are dying from the narrowness and inhumanity of those skills?

Newspapers speak of "Reform by Bully." The *New York Times* editorialized on April 26: "The nation's leading universities have shown themselves slow learners of a fundamental lesson: Reforms accomplished through surrender by the majority to force and unreason invite the continued exercise of control over campus government by those who know how to coerce and bully." The editors of the *Times* fail to see that "the majority," whether of university students or of American people, have long since "surrendered" to the "force and unreason" exercised by minorities, who

but potentially fruitful. And it is possible to offer an alternative path for this energy.

If, as I have suggested, there is no viable alternative to the democratic-argumentative system, and if violence and disruption threaten the maintenance of such a system and are accordingly not valid within it, still there may be steps to take for those with strong antipathy to the *status quo*. I refer to the serious business of serious reform.

There is in such systems, as Camus noted, the potential for upward change without destruction. There can, of course, be change in policies, but more important there can be fundamental changes of structure. It is precisely this potential for change which is the ultimate reason for saying one cannot today in the U.S. rightly conclude to violence and disruption. One of the reasons I personally have so little sympathy for many doers of violence and disruption is that I see so little they have done by way of system reform. The abandonment has been too quick and too easy. I am struck among other things by the incongruity of nineteen-year olds offering their impatience as a justification for disruptive action. Indeed, if sometime someone sets out to develop a Theory of Just Impatience, I suspect he may take it as axiomatic that no one under thirty can be impatient justly.

I would myself and do myself say that the central institutions of political act in the U.S. are outmoded and crucially flawed. Indeed, the policies of this nation which seem most to stimulate violence and disruption tend, in my judgment, to reflect the flawed political structure from which they come. (One discussion of institutional problems is to be found in Quentin L. Quade and Thomas J. Bennett, *American Politics: Effective and Responsible?* American-Van Nostrand, 1969.)

And the point is that, though difficult, reform of a serious character is possible within the confining agreements of the American polity. But, of course, to talk of reform of institutions is to talk about a course of action established through several fairly arduous steps: first there must be the perception of serious problems and imperfections deriving from the system. Second, there must be a thought-out place to go — the better arrangement needs to be seen. Third, there must be study of how to get there — of the political stages, the forces that must be mustered. At that point, one can talk seriously about reform. If he decides the pieces fit, he may then start to work in building support for change.

Where has been this kind of effort among the doers of violence and disruption?

under velvet gloves well "know how to coerce and bully." The *Times* is offended by the protests of radicals against the powers-that-be in government, industry, and university — more offended than it is by the "force and unreason" exercised daily by those same powers-that-be.

Prison sentences for those who resist the draft, the "channelling" of one's life by government authorities, the social power of universities to sort out which students will join established elites and which will not, the real estate interests of university corporations, the stranglehold of professional guilds upon what the curriculum will consider real and what unreal, the interests of business and industry in supporting an "objective" methodology that promotes two human capacities, the storage of information and the analysis of information, above all others — all these comprise a partial list of the daily employment of "force and unreason" to which American young people are subjected.

Moreover, professors too have lost their clothes. Some students have long wanted to grill them: "But, professor, what do *you* think?" Many professors consider such a question illegitimate. They do not take the rostrum to expound their own views, to propagandize, to reveal themselves. They are spokesmen for their professional discipline. Students have grown accustomed to such duality — the man as man, the man as mouthpiece — and they no longer admire it. For "the professional discipline," it turns out, also has its own interests, biases, screens, and blindnesses. Industry and government pay it well. Its "objectivity" is in fact a nest of special methods required for a rationalized, centralized, technological, capitalistic society. It is not "objective" but one peculiar way of life, not the most admirable, out of many.

Again, some professors at Cornell have resigned because of the arms carried by black protestors; they did not resign because of the fear under which blacks, even at Cornell, live daily — or over the burning of a cross the night before. They have been shocked by the resistance of blacks to the peculiar patterns of "reasonable discourse," "objectivity," and "democratic procedures" selected by great American universities; they have been less shocked by the exclusion from universities of values, perceptions, attitudes, and methods dear to most peoples of most cultures in human history. Feeling, fantasy, impulse, ritual, prehistoric emotional signals, subtle perception in human relations, and the like are systematically excluded from the universities in favor of highly developed and economically productive powers of analytic reason. The universities

function to sort out those human types that manifest qualities along one small range of the human spectrum.

At Princeton, spectators are not horrified by the ranks of young men channelled into ROTC by Selective Service requirements and taught during their university education to bear arms in the defense of empire. They are shocked by the ragged, freely chosen, bitterly hostile and derisive march of SDS irregulars onto the parade grounds. (Did British soldiers once stand in rank near Princeton, scorned by the rabble?)

At Harvard, a dean of highest stature wrote to President Pusey last February that major resolutions taken by his faculty regarding the ROTC were "very badly framed, gratuitously unpleasant and basically confused." He reviewed the President's options and recommended that the faculty be asked to re-write its decision. He describes whatever dissent might arise from the faculty as "loud squeals." He expresses sorrow that the Harvard faculty obliged him to transmit "the quickly formulated product of emotional debate."

A great many persons seem to be shocked that the SDS employed political manipulation in generating the dramatic conflict at Harvard; few seem shocked by the political manipulation daily practiced by administrators. A protestor at Harvard stole the Dean's letter from a file cabinet and, as he had learned from Washington politics, leaked it to the press. Deplorable actions which observers daily expect from adults shocks them in students.

In a word, the liberal, reasonable, "objective" character of academic freedom is shown by events to be not only "fragile and delicate" but rather more apparent than real. Young men feel inexorable curtailments of freedom. Not all points of view are welcomed or even expressible under the approved conditions and methodologies. The liberal, reasonable men who lead universities, and who teach at them, must take swift steps to overcome their fey revulsion and to open their eyes to a world they are unaccustomed to seeing. Their tactics of close conversation; prolonged openness; hard, honest public debate; and a willingness to confess the partiality and relativity of one's own methods, are more proper to universities than swift, 15-minute assaults by club-swinging police.

The temperature of radicals, moreover, is uncontrollably high. From their point of view, the issues are life or death. But a serious revolution requires ice in the veins. Repetitive theater is not only boring; it calls forth hoots and jeers.

On some campuses, the time is ripe for public debates between radicals and liberals, in which each participant can choose his own style. (For the present style of "objective" debate is prejudiced in favor of the technological, analytic way of life.) In many other

places, the dominant liberal complacency is so strong that unless its nakedness is demonstrated the issues cannot be intelligently discussed. In such a place, dramatic pressures may still be needed.

Radicals need to know that if force arouses counterforce, they are the weakest party. It is not wise to commit all one's resources in the beginning. Liberals need to know that, so long as resort to force is the only way

to have unpopular viewpoints listened to and acted upon, the university does not promote freedom but only the appearance of freedom, a carefully managed and profitable freedom.

In the present crisis, genuine and free diversity is being born in American universities. It is no wonder that the established are becoming alarmed. They would like everything their way, in their style.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNHINGING OF SOCIETY

James V. Schall

The attention of the Western world has been concentrated very forcibly in recent years on the meaning and the place of the university in contemporary society. Student unrest and political "activism" have gained widespread publicity in all communications media and in every legislature. In France, Mexico, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the United States, the university confrontation has occasioned grave civil crises that have shaken the very stability of government itself. The origin and nature of this phenomenon is rooted in the intellectual history of the modern world which has sought to effect a humanism totally subject to man's intellectual and technological control. What we are now seeing is how this control is passing from thought and technique to political and messianic action, to movements which profess to "re-create" man in the midst of his most pressing crises of poverty, race, war, and equality.

Why does the university show itself today to be the center of cultural unrest? Let us consider five inter-related sets of institutions which have direct influence over its being and structure — the family, the economy, the church, the government, and the university. Each of these institutions contains within itself a two-fold function — one of introducing newness and change, the other of preserving and adjusting what has already been created and handed down. In different ages and cultures, change, revolution, stability and conservation can find a spearhead or focal point in any of these aspects of society. Indeed, their coun-

tervailing force is required to prevent a destruction or maladjustment of the whole.

The family is founded upon the birth and early growth of the human child as an absolutely new and unparalleled event whose ultimate consequences can never be fully comprehended. In a sense, the newborn child is the model of all revolutionary action because he represents the introduction of unpredictable alteration into what is routine and ordered. His possibility, the fact that the child "can" be born at any moment, challenges the fullness of the present, always hinting that it can be different, can be greater if it chooses to be. The family, or its substitute in the orphanage or nursery, has the task and the glory of introducing the mysterious child to human life and society, of enabling him to find a place in this worldly life. Yet the family, and consequently society itself, never fully escape the fact that each child represents something unique, so that things will never be quite the same again.

The economy, in classical thought, was intrinsically connected with the family household, but, in modern society, it has come to be based on the much wider extent of the city, the nation, the region, the continent, or even the world. The economy represents the organized human effort to "take care of itself," *autarkia* as the Greeks called it. What lies behind the economy is the need to provide for the "necessities" and the "non-necessities" which enable man not just to survive but to flourish and to develop. What characterizes the economy is the creation of a "sufficiency" and more fully of an "abundance."

The economy is impelled by a newness whose source is either in population growth or in "rising expectations." These two motor factors, as it were, require

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