

Government could not, and because they did not wish to lose money as a result of holding a currency which would obviously have to be devalued sooner or later. The truth is that the Government was forced into deflation and stagnation in 1966, not by wicked capitalists, wicked Americans, or wicked revisionists, but by the belief of its leading members that devaluation was somehow dishonourable—a “soft option” in

the phrase of the time, or even “an escape from reality.” As a result, the Labour movement now faces great economic difficulties, multiplied by acute unpopularity and the looming shadow of electoral disaster.

But the *May Day Manifesto* does not offer any solution to these difficulties. It merely invites us to jump out of our admittedly painful frying pan into a blazing fire.

## The Prospects of Academe

*Letter from New York — By SIDNEY HOOK*

FIFTY YEARS AGO, when I began my college studies, it would be no exaggeration to say that the belief in academic freedom was regarded as faintly subversive even in many academic circles. The American Association of University Professors, organised by two philosophers, Arthur Lovejoy and John Dewey, was in its infancy without influence or authority. Today, except in some of the cultural and political backwaters of the U.S., academic freedom, although not free from threats, is firmly established. In some regions it has the support of law. Fifty years ago, the power of the chief university administrator was almost as unlimited as that of an absolute monarch. Today the administrator is a much harried man with much less power and authority among faculty and, especially, students than his forbears. Today there may be temperamentally happy administrators, but their present life is an unhappy one. There seems to be an open season on them and to such a degree that for the first time in history there is an acute shortage of candidates for the almost 300 vacant administrative posts in institutions of higher learning. When I did my graduate work at Columbia, Nicholas Murray Butler was both the reigning and ruling monarch. I don't believe that in his wildest dreams he could have conceived of the Columbia scene today. The strongest argument I know against the resurrection of the body is that if it were within the realm of possibility, Nicholas Murray Butler would have risen from

his grave and would now be storming Morning-side Heights.

Having been an administrator in a small way myself, I have learned what an ungrateful job it is and at the same time how necessary. Without administrative leadership, every institution, especially universities, whose faculties are notoriously reluctant to introduce curricular changes, runs downhill. The greatness of a university consists predominantly in the greatness of its faculty. But faculties, because of reasons too complex to enter into here, do not themselves build great faculties. To build great faculties, administrative leadership is essential. In the affairs of the mind and in the realm of scholarship, the principles of simple majority rule or of “one man, one vote” do not apply. The most “democratically” run institutions of learning are usually the most mediocre. It takes a big man to live comfortably with a still bigger man under him, no less to invite him to cast his obscuring shadow over the less gifted.

The paradox today is that, as administrative power decreases and becomes more limited, the greater the dissatisfaction with it seems to grow. The memory of favours or requests denied remains much stronger than the memory of requests granted. Faculties are fickle in their allegiance. Overnight, the most beloved of administrators can become the target of abuse, a figure of obloquy in the eyes of the very faculty, or a large section of it, which he himself has helped to build. In the very year that Clark Kerr received the Meikeljohn medal for academic freedom, the faculty at the University of California campus at Berkeley panicked in consequence of the events resulting from the Fourth Student Sit-in. In effect it repudiated him by adopting a set of resolutions that made him the scapegoat for the student lawlessness which it conspicuously refused to condemn. The faculty even voted down a motion that would

PROFESSOR SIDNEY HOOK is the author of *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx, From Hegel to Marx, Reason, Social Myths and Democracy, and other works. He has been until recently chairman of the Department of Philosophy at New York University.*

have given the students complete freedom of speech except to urge the commission of *immediate acts* of force and violence. Another example; Vice President David Truman of Columbia University was vigorously applauded at Columbia's commencement last June for, among other things, opening new avenues of communication with students. Only a few days ago he was roundly booed by a section of the Columbia faculty.

Why any scholar (and administrators are largely recruited from the ranks of scholars) should want to become a *full-time* administrator has always puzzled me. The duties, sacrifices, and risks seem altogether disproportionate to the rewards. In speaking of administrators, one is tempted to characterise them with the words Lecky used in his great history of European morals about the fallen women of Europe: "the eternal priestesses of humanity blasted for the sins of their people." Well, university administrators are no longer priests, but whenever a crisis arises they are sure to be damned if they do and damned if they don't.

ONE THING seems clear. In the crisis situations shaping up throughout the U.S., administrators are not going to enjoy a peaceful life. Their prospect of weathering the storms that will be synthetically contrived for them depends upon their ability and willingness to win the faculty for whatever plans and proposals they advance in the name of the university. For if they permit students or any other group to drive a wedge between them and the faculty, they will discover the sad fact of academic life that in such rifts the faculty will either play a neutral role or even assume a hostile one.

Not only on good educational grounds, therefore, but on prudential ones as well, the administration must draw the faculty into the formulation of institutional educational policy. I say this with reluctance because it means the proliferation of committee meetings, the dilution of scholarly interest and even less time for students. But this is a small price to pay for academic freedom and peace.

IN WRITING about academic freedom, no-thing signifies the distance we have come in the space of my lifetime so much as the fact that we now are concerned with the academic freedom of *students*. For historical reasons I cannot explore, academic freedom in the United States meant *Lehrfreiheit*, freedom to teach. *Lernfreiheit*, freedom to learn, has only recently been stressed. It does not mean the same as it meant under the German university system which presupposed the all-prescribed curriculum

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of studies of the *Gymnasium*. If academic freedom for students means freedom to learn, then two things should be obvious. There is no academic freedom to learn without *Lehrfreiheit* or academic freedom to teach. Where teachers have no freedom to teach, students have obviously no freedom to learn (although the converse is not true). Second, students' freedom to learn was never so widely recognised, was never so pervasive in the United States as it is today—whether it be construed as the freedom to attend college or not, or the freedom to select the *kind* of college the student wishes to attend, or his freedom of curricular choice *within* the kind of college he selects. Above all, if academic freedom for students means the freedom to doubt, challenge, contest, and debate within the context of inquiry, American students are the freest in the world and far freer than they were when I attended college. The incident which Professor Ernest Nagel recently recalled when we were students together in the same government class at City College is authentic. The teacher conducted the class by letting the students give reports on the themes of the course. All he contributed was to say “*next*” as each student concluded. But when in reporting on the Calhoun-Webster debates on Southern slavery, I declared that it seemed to me that John Calhoun had the better of the argument, that his *logic* was better than Daniel Webster's although his *cause* was worse, the instructor exploded and stopped me. After emotionally recounting his father's loyal services in the Civil War, he turned wrathfully on me and shouted, “Young man! When you're not preaching sedition, you are preaching secession!” Whereupon he drove me from the class. (The “sedition” was a reference to an earlier report on Charles Beard's economic interpretation of the origins of the U.S. Constitution which he had heard with grim disapproval.) And this was at City College in 1920! The incident wasn't typical, but that it could happen at all marks the profundity of the changes in attitudes towards students since then. John Dewey's influence has made itself felt even in the colleges today.

OF COURSE, THERE IS STILL a large group of potential college students who are deprived of freedom to learn because of poverty or prejudice or the absence of adequate educational facilities. And, as citizens of a democratic society whose moral premise is that each individual has a right to that education which will permit him to achieve his maximum growth as a person, our duty is to work for, or support, whatever measures of reconstruction we deem necessary to remove the social obstacles to freedom of learning. It is perfectly legitimate to expect the

university to study these problems and propose solutions to them. All universities worthy of the name already do. This is one thing. But to therefore conclude that these problems must become items, not only on the agenda of study, but for an agenda of action is quite another. For it therewith transforms the university into a political-action organisation and diverts it from its essential task of discovery, teaching, dialogue and criticism. Since there are profound differences about the social means necessary to achieve a society in which there will be a maximum freedom to learn, the university would become as partisan and biased as other political action groups urging their programmes on the community. Its primary educational purpose or mission would be lost. It would be compelled to silence or misrepresent the position of those of its faculty who disagreed with its proposals and campaigns of action. Class and group conflicts would rend the fabric of the community of scholars in an unceasing struggle for power completely unrelated to the quest for truth.

If the university is conceived as an agency of action to transform society in behalf of a cause, no matter how exalted, it loses its *relative* autonomy, imperils both its independence and objectivity, and subjects itself to retaliatory curbs and controls on the part of society on whose support and largesse it ultimately depends.

THIS IS PRECISELY the conception of a university which is basic to the whole strategy and tactics of the so-called *Students for a Democratic Society*. I say “so-called” because their actions show that they are no more believers in democracy than the leaders of the so-called *Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee* are believers in non-violence. And indeed the leaders of the *SDS* make no bones about that fact. In manifesto after manifesto they have declared that they want to use the university as an instrument of revolution. To do so, they must destroy the university as it exists today.

I wish I had space to list some of the clever stratagems they have devised to focus their opposition. On every campus there are always some grievances. Instead of seeking peacefully to resolve them through existing channels of consultation and deliberation, the *SDS* seeks to inflame them. Where grievances don't exist, they can be created. In one piece of advice to chapter members, they were urged to sign up for certain courses in large numbers and then denounce the University for its large classes!

Freedom of dissent, speech, protest is never the real issue. They are, of course, always legitimate. But the tactic of the *SDS* is to give dis-

sent the immediate form of violent action. The measures necessarily adopted to counteract this lawless action then become the main issue, as if the original provocation hadn't occurred. Mario Savio admitted after the Berkeley affair that the issue of "free speech" was a "pretext"—the word was his—to arouse the students against the existing role of the university in society. One of the leaders of the SDS at Columbia is reported to have said: "As much as we would like to, we are not strong enough as yet to destroy the United States. But we are strong enough to destroy Columbia!" He is wrong about this, too—the only action that would destroy Columbia would be faculty support of the students—but his intent is clear.

Actually, the only thing these groups, loosely associated with the New Left, are clear about is what they want to destroy, not what they would put in its stead. In a debate with Gore Vidal, Tom Hayden, one of the New Left leaders, was pointedly asked what his revolutionary programme was. He replied: "We haven't any. First we will make the revolution and *then* we will find out what for." This is truly the politics of absurdity.

**T**HE USUAL RESPONSE present-day academic rebels make to this criticism is that the University today is nothing but an instrument to preserve the *status quo* and therefore faithless to the ideals of a community of scholars. Even if this charge were true, even if the universities today were bulwarks of the *status quo*, this would warrant criticism and protest, not violent and lawless action in behalf of a contrary role, just as foreign to their true function. But it is decidedly *not* true. There is no institution in America in which dissent and criticism of official views, of tradition, of the conventional wisdom in all fields, are freer and more prevalent than in the university. The very freedom of dissent that students today enjoy in our universities is in large measure a consequence of the spirit of experiment, openness to new ideas, absence of conformity, and readiness to undertake new initiatives found among them.

The first casualty of the strategy of the campus rebels is academic freedom. It is manifest in their bold and arrogant demand that the university drop its research in whatever fields these students deem unfit for academic inquiry and investigation. This note was already sounded in Berkeley. It is focal at Columbia. It is a shameless attempt to usurp powers of decision which the faculty alone should have. After all, it is posterous for callow and im-

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mature adolescents, who presumably have come to the University to get an education, to set themselves up as authorities on what research by their teachers is educationally permissible.

Unless checked, it will not be long before these students will be presuming to dictate the conclusions their teachers should reach, especially on controversial subjects. This is standard procedure in totalitarian countries in which official student organisations are the political arm of the ruling party. Already there are disquieting signs of this. At Cornell a few weeks ago—before the martyrdom of Dr. King—a group of Black Nationalist students invaded the offices of the chairman of the economics department and held him captive in order to get an apology from a teacher whose views on African affairs they disagreed with. Only yesterday, another group at Northwestern demanded that courses in “black literature” and “black art” be taught by teachers approved by the Negro students. And there are spineless administrators and cowardly members of the faculty who are prepared to yield to this blackmail. Under the slogans of “student rights” and “participatory democracy” the most militant groups of students are moving to weaken and ultimately destroy the academic freedom of those who disagree with them.

LET US NOT delude ourselves. Even when these militant students fail to achieve their ultimate purpose, they succeed in demoralising the university by deliberately forcing a confrontation upon the academic community which it is not prepared to face and of which it is fearful of accepting the costs. In forcing the hand of the academic community to meet force ultimately with force, the citadel of reason becomes a battlefield. The students glory in it, but the faint of heart among their teachers turn on their own administrative leaders. These militants succeed in sowing distrust among students who do not see through their strategy. They also succeed in dividing the faculties. There is always a small group—a strange mixture of purists and opportunists desirous of ingratiating themselves with students—who will *never* condemn the violence of students, but only the violence required to stop it. These students succeed, even when they fail, in embittering relations between the administration and some sections of the faculty. They succeed, even when they fail, in antagonising the larger community of which the university is a part, and in arousing a vigilante spirit that demands wholesale measures of repression and punishment that educators cannot properly accept.

## Internationalism or Russification?

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HOW IS IT possible, one asks, for events of this character to happen? There have always been extremist and paranoid tendencies in academic life, but they have been peripheral—individuals and small groups moving in eccentric intellectual orbits. But not until the last four or five years has the norm of social protest taken the form of direct action, have positions been expressed in such ultimatic and intransigent terms, have extreme elements been strong enough to shut down great universities even for a limited time.

There are many and complex causes for this. But as I see it, the situation in the university is part of a larger phenomenon, *viz.*, the climate of intellectual life in the country. I do not recall any other period in the last 50 years when intellectuals themselves have been so intolerant of each other, when differences over complex issues have been the occasion for denunciation rather than debate and analysis, when the use of violence—in the right cause, of course!—is taken for granted, when dissent is not distinguished from civil disobedience, and civil disobedience makes common cause with resistance and readiness for insurrection. A few short years ago, anti-intellectualism was an epithet of derogation. Today it is an expression of revolutionary virility.

In the 1950s I wrote an essay on "The Ethics of Controversy" trying to suggest guidelines for controversy among principled democrats no matter how widely they differed on substantive issues. Today I would be talking into the wind for all the attention it would get. Fanaticism seems to be in the saddle. That it is a fanaticism of conscience, of self-proclaimed virtue, doesn't make it less dangerous. This past year has presented the spectacle of militant minorities in our colleges, from one end of the country to another, preventing or trying to prevent representatives of positions they disapprove of from speaking to their fellow-students wishing to listen to them. The spectacle shows that we have failed to make our students understand the very rudiments of democracy, that to tolerate active intolerance is to compound it. If we judge commitment by action, the simple truth is that the great body of our students is not firmly committed to democracy or to the liberal spirit without which democracy may become the rule of the mob.

I DO NOT KNOW any sure way or even a new way of combating the dominant mood of irrationalism, especially among students and even among younger members of the faculty whose political naïveté is often cynically exploited by their younger, yet politically more sophisticated, allies. What is of the first importance is to preserve, of course, the absolute intellectual integrity of our classrooms and laboratories, of our teaching and research against any attempt to curb it. We must defend it not only against the traditional enemies, who still exist even when they are dormant, but also against those who think they have the infallible remedies for the world's complex problems and that all they need is sincerity as patent of authority. Fanatics don't lack sincerity. It is their long suit. They drip with sincerity—and when they have power, with blood—other people's blood.

We need more, however, than a defensive strategy, safeguarding the intellectual integrity of our vocation against those who threaten it. We need—and I know this sounds paradoxical—to counterpose to the revolt of the emotionally committed the revolt of the rationally committed. I do not want to identify this with the revolt of the moderates. There are some things one should not be moderate about. In the long run, the preservation of democracy depends upon a passion for freedom, for the logic and ethics of free discussion and inquiry, upon refusal to countenance the measures of violence that cut short the processes of intelligence upon which the possibility of shared values depends.

These are old truths but they bear repeating whenever they are denied. Even tautologies be-

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come important when counterposed to absurdities.

We, as teachers, must make our students more keenly aware of the centrality of the democratic process to a free society and of the centrality of intelligence to the democratic process. Democracy has our allegiance because of its cumulative fruits, but at any particular time the process is more important than any specific programme or product. He who destroys the process because it does not guarantee some particular outcome is as foolish as someone who discards scientific method in medicine or engineering or any other discipline because of its failure to solve altogether or immediately a stubborn problem.

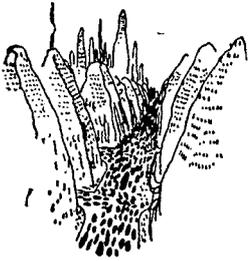
There is one thing which we cannot deny

to the intransigent and fanatical enemies of democracy. That is courage. Intelligence is necessary to overcome foolishness. But it is not sufficient to tame fanaticism. Only courage can do that. A handful of men who are prepared to fight, to bleed, to suffer and, if need be, to die, will always triumph in a community where those whose freedom they threaten are afraid to use their *intelligence* to resist and to fight and ultimately to take the same risks in action as those determined to destroy them. Yes, there is always the danger that courage *alone* may lead us to actions that will make us similar to those who threaten us. But that is what we have intelligence for—to prevent that from happening! It is this union of courage and intelligence upon which the hope of democratic survival depends.

### American Commentary

## On the Politics of Conscience & Extreme Commitment

By Seymour Martin Lipset



THE FREQUENTLY expressed idea that the United States is a conservative nation characterised by consensus politics has been sharply challenged by recent events. The emergence of aggressive Civil Rights and Black Power

movements and the considerable success of the struggle against the Viet Nam War suggest to some that the United States is on the verge of a new era of sharp civil strife. In fact, a consideration of American political history points up the conclusion that moralistic militant mass movements dedicated to attaining their ends through demonstrations and even illegal tactics of civil disobedience have occurred on many past occasions. The politics of conscience which leads men to ignore the accepted means of democracy to secure their objectives has motivated Americans towards a willingness to accept the risk of social opprobrium, economic loss, and even prison.

The long-term successful struggle for social reform, often involving the use of extreme tactics, clearly belies the view that the United States has been among the most conservative countries from a political standpoint. The con-

servative image, of course, has been bolstered by the fact that all efforts to create radical "Third" Parties, whether of the left or right, have failed miserably. The United States remains one of the few democratic countries without any socialist representation in its legislative bodies. The Democratic Party rightly claims to be the oldest party in the world with continuous existence. Although its opposition has changed format, one can trace a line of continuity among the more élitist-based Federalist, Whig, and Republican parties.

But the fact of partisan continuity in two electoral coalitions has not prevented the enactment of major changes. The clue to the flexibility of the American two-party polity in policy terms has been the relative ease with which a variety of "social movements" dedicated to major reforms have arisen. These include the Abolitionist movement, the large Nativist and anti-Catholic organisations of the nineteenth century, the Prohibition movement, the various radical Agrarian movements of the second half of the nineteenth century, the women's Suffragettes and the Progressive movements of early twentieth century, the multi-million-member Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, the profascist mass-based movements of Father Coughlin and others of the 1930s, the various socialist and other liberal-left organisations of the first