

Letters

To the Editor:

Let me congratulate you, Bob Tyrrell, Tony Campaigne, and the rest of the staff of *The Alternative* for a truly superb publication that meets a real need on the campus today. Even more heartening is the realization that your circulation has expanded from 5,000 to over 30,000. It restores one's faith in the level of literacy that prevails on our college and university campuses at a time when the actions of a noisy few have called into question the viability of higher education.

I will look forward eagerly to the opportunity to get acquainted with some of the fine minds that, despite so much of a corrosive nature attending the university experience today, have still managed to learn, to inquire, and to express themselves with lucidity.

Best Regards,
Philip M. Crane
Member of Congress

THE CONTINUING CRISIS

Continued From Page 2

with delinquent students and identified their activities not as instances of "academic unrest" but of "academic disruption and violence." Hook said the threat to universities comes from within and is traceable "to one fundamental poisoned premise"--that unless social and foreign policy problems are solved, campus disruption and violence will continue. Denis Hayes placed the whole issue in its cosmic perspective by saying: "We are in trouble as a species, and the unrest of this country's young people and of their peers around the planet is perhaps the healthiest development for which one might have dared to hope."

The serene Mr. Rhodes "inquired of Professor Hook if he 'hated students.'" The *New York Times* called Mr. Rhodes "a complex, altruistic youth...endowed with an extraordinary faculty to come up with inspiring new ideas and get other people to carry them out."

On 4 August Senator Allott of Colorado suggested on the Senate floor that "we disband the President's Commission on Campus Unrest and all read the *Wall Street Journal*."

As we go to press the three hundred page report has been out for twenty-four hours, but the speed readers at CBS, ABC, and the *New York Times* have all editorialized proluxly on it. We shall read it at a more reflective pace and in our next issue analyze it with our typical cool detachment.



EDITORIAL

Continued from Page 2

conformity through their empty crania.

Supposedly the education mills of the land were grinding American youth into bland conformity, pulverizing them to adjust to society, smothering their creativity and putting all our nascent Beethovens to flight. From the middle fifties to the middle sixties, conformity served as the professors' most reliable

motif in a ceaseless cacophony of twaddle. Yet today as commentators blubber about "youth's idealism," "the priorities of youth," "the life-style of the young," and "youth culture," the dons seem peculiarly unconcerned about conformity. Though a student's appearance is as distinct and discernible as that of a month-old corpse at an Irish wake, none of the sages are repining over this conformity. And for the best of reasons--today America's new conformists are their conformists, and all those chafing apprehensions about a generation of robots have been soothed by the clatter of regiments of students goosestepping into the dawn of a brave new world--the very same world that the dons have spent the last half century concocting. Hence rather than anxiously heave their bosoms over youth's slavish conformity to society, the dons now sweat over society's failure to conform to youth.

At *The Alternative* we believe that there is nothing inherently wrong or unusual about conformity; certainly it should not have surprised the fifties' great minds that gregarious creatures like the Homo saps conform. What renders conformity wrong is what the saps conform to, and today large numbers of students--always mistakenly characterized by the gross generalization, "American Youth,"--are conforming to anti-intellectualism, solipsism, and treacherous totalitarianism. Their coercive life style has created a barbaric underworld but one step removed from the monkeys in the zoo. Many of them are walking epidemics. Still many idiotic Liberals see these beasts as the culmination of all their bedazzled hopes and abstractions, so they have darlingized them replacing as a national idol the image of the All-American Boy with the image of the idealistic young bomber. All this demanded some pretty high-toned salesmanship, for both images are moronic and the latter is dangerous. Nonetheless, no thoughtful observer is very surprised that the dons carried off their hoax so masterfully. They have been peddling moonshine for years. What is remarkable is how the truth hawkers managed to reverse themselves so ignominiously.

Our story begins around 1955 when some luminary by the name of Robert Lindner briefly burst from obscurity to publish a very profitable book: *Must You Conform?* in which he magisterially declared amid gusts of oohs and ahhs "No, because there is an alternate way of life available to us here and now. (ooh) It is the way natural to man, the way he must and will take to achieve the values he aspires to just because he is human. (ahh)" These were palmy times. The editors of *Commonweal* remarked: "Probably never before were so many young people urged by their elders to revolt." Later in the decade Mr. Lindner in the scholarly pages of *McCall's* playfully urged that mothers "Raise Your Children to Rebel." Time even published "Rules of Nonconformity"--sort of a beatitudinal blueprint for the Lee Harvey Oswalds of the "quiet generation." At any rate, to paraphrase Lord Keynes, contemporary men who believe themselves free from the ideas of the past are usually slaves of some defunct ideogogue.

We have moved from an age in which supposedly everyone was a conformist to our present age in which supposedly everyone is a dissenter or nonconformist, and public spokesmen had better not disagree with the Zeitgeist of dissent, for to do so--we are admonished--is to polarize society--i.e. to introduce diverse opinion into society--which of course leaves the precious nonconformist no choice than to turn his governmentally endowed wonderland into a war zone. So it is that healthy nonconformity has literally blasted its way into the American conscience, and *The Alternative's* Jolly Boys gleefully await Mr. Lindner's next manifesto.

Our present age is a glorious one teeming with nonconformity. And just as there are archangels, seraphim and cherubim, there are many different ranks of nonconformists. Allow me to reveal to your just three. First we shall discuss the common nonconformist. Mouthing the elliptical language of what in more primitive times were adjudged mental defectives, he yammers, "ya know," "like I mean," "dig it," and expletives too racy for reproduction in this family magazine. Adopting a cunningly tailored peasant dress, he earnestly slouches about various loafing spots never before dreamed of like street corners, front porches, and parks, where he seriously discusses such senseless curiosities as Western civilization. So assiduous is the common nonconformist in his conviction that the world would be vastly more intelligent were Congress to enact compulsory sensitivity training or the President to raise the rock festival to cabinet level that he will even abandon his loafing grounds to take part in a spirited rampage on behalf of peace or some other worthy cause.

The next rank of nonconformist is the advanced nonconformist whose raiment does not differ significantly from that of his more common brethren. (However certain of these advanced nonconformists have been known to camouflage themselves in the style of "the Middle Americano" when applying for Ford Foundation grants, employment at Health, Education and Welfare, or purchasing explosives.) But whereas the common nonconformist generally just slouches around parks and public restrooms, the more energetic, advanced nonconformist busies himself with the bombing of buildings, beating professors, and threatening politics. Some are even given to ambushing police and butchering judges. All are motivated by the loftiest ideals. History has produced some other idealistic nonconformists in the image of our advanced nonconformist, but never did they embellish their nonconformity with the coruscating moral dazzle, intoned by, say, David Dellinger. Herr Himmler and Herr Eichmann made admirable efforts, but without the forensic savoir faire of a Kunstler, their chances were slim and none.

The most distinctive rank of nonconformist is also the most entertaining, and we shall categorize him as the ultra-advanced nonconformist. These creatures embalm their marvelous minds with wonderful new drugs and drift about en-

cased in invisible placentas of joy. In almost any American urban center they can be seen shuffling stupefactively through the streets, paw outstretched, pleading for a cup of coffee. These are gay, jaunty imps. When properly laced with their delicious acids and herbage, they have been known to reenact the early experiments of the Wright Brothers from eighth floor windows or to dive prankishly into flaming trash cans. The ultra-advanced nonconformist has discovered an immensely freer, more satisfying life than his predecessors ever dared envision; all retire to asylums early in life.

These wondrously diverse non-conformists are, as you would expect, a powerful inspiration to their mentors. Consider the euphoria they evoked from the late Fred Harvey Harrington, president of the University of Wisconsin. Even as the smoke curled from his charnel halls of ivy, he recently extolled them as the flower of the Twentieth Century. Those mentors who cannot agree on their younglings' intelligence, prudence, and civilizational achievement (such qualities always defying the calibrations of hagiographers) can at least sing as one to the students' commitment. Now at *The Alternative* we are not so sanguine about commitment. For instance the Red Guards are committed and Mr. Richard Speck has been committed. Nonetheless an enormous number of the illuminati in the media and at the great universities are more cheerful, and with good reason. For many are stupid, and some are willful, dreaming great dreams. One of the more appreciable benefits of commitment is that it triggers calculable action, and the dreamers—if they are to realize their dreams—must be able to rely on a supply of cannon fodder. It is no secret that on many campuses gullible members of the Chosen Generation serve as Hessians for activist faculty. Mustered by their preceptors to intimidate university administrators and topple the sordid Nixon regime; lest it bring even more havoc to this land which we love, the Hessians are urged to kick their way out of civilized society, yielding any hope of self-sufficiency or civilized achievement. In the long run we suspect historians will record that, under the tutelage of the dons, students have been more often victimized than pampered. But we do not mean to be disputatious.

Members of the intellectual vanguard realize that Mr. Nixon has—in not quite twenty-four months—made America the terror of this globe. He has sent his brigandes into Southeast Asia to make off with the lavish treasure of that famous ~~El Dorado~~ and turned America's young and underprivileged into veritable Helots. America's economic marvel, Dr. Laurence O'Brien, has recently revealed that the Nixon junta purposefully and instantly dragged the economy *pari passu* into inflation and recession—all the while deluding the citizenry into believing Congress was dominated by Democrats. This is a sly and crafty tyrant and it is the duty of the enlightened to do him in.

Back in the Dark Ages the geniuses were utterly unable to bestir the conformists of the "Quiet Generation" whose members were as numb to their horror stories as Billy Graham is to voodoo. But in the past

fifteen years their prestige has soared, for they have mastered dramatic techniques for attracting the increasingly influential media and have grown enormously proficient in delivering scholarly anagoges on almost any national occurrence.

After President Nixon unleashed his terrible blitzkrieg into Cambodia and ordered the Kent State Massacre, no one could say for sure what the future would bring. Beset by unspeakable cruelty, the universities ignited into a heroic reenactment of the Paris Commune, vaulting the nonconformists to spectacular and immediate stardom. And today rumors are spreading that Mr. Nixon intends suspension of the Bill of Rights and cancellation of the 1972 elections. Grimly the pundits prophesy that our non-conforming darlings will soon have to bury their books on Russian literature and cancel their lessons in modern dance. Every American—if he is to avoid banishment to hard labor in Nebraska—will be suspect and nonconformists will not even be allowed the pleasant relaxation of occasionally burning an American flag. No more idealistic young demonstrators, no more attacks on the police, no more harmless bombings or debuts before the cameras of CBS. The hour of repression is at hand. American youth is about to lose its dearest freedom—the freedom to act like jackasses while the public picks up the tab. Never again will the massed non-conformists of Yale be able to follow their leader Dr. Brewman Kingster in cater-wauling for the support of racists and common gangsters. Youthful idealism will dissolve into the crucible of democratic process. The dissenters have been profoundly shaken. Sadness frames all their days.

How they had revelled in the gay antics of their months of glory. Remember Harvard where their spring festival had actually cost the local burghers over one million dollars. Remember North-western—Northwestern by the Sea—where they scored as well. In Ohio and later in Kansas a number of the more intelligent nonconformists had even managed to get themselves killed. Now it will no longer even be safe to riot at the Democratic Convention or to burn a library. Worse still, the professors might have to find legitimate work, and the television commentators might cease their glamorous tales of crisis and vatic affirmations of catastrophe. How horrid! What is to be done lest the seventies prove a bummer?

Well if we are to assure that the seventies prove as adventurous as the late sixties *The Alternative's* Standing Committee on Continuing Chaos urges that university administrators continue to demand opulent budgets enabling them to drag the university into every arena of American life and to expose it to every source of discontent. Of course one should hardly have to mention to the educational-political complex that every conceivable type of young person must be carted off to the university where, for four years, he can diddle at the knee of some fraudulent philosophe. The AFL-CIO would greatly expedite chaos in the seventies if it were to demand that all hard hats receive at least two years exposure to one of the social

sciences. Further we suggest the utter politicalization of the campus. Nothing is more likely to improve education than the benign attentions of Democrats and Republicans. Immediate adoption of the "Princeton Plan" will do more to bring the university into politics and politics into the university than any comparable quack plan yet averred. It will assure rapid transformation into those magnificent academic cathedrals which are the glory of Latin America.

And there is one more sure-fire remedy to a dull decade. Students and faculty alike must make every little social unpleasantness into a catastrophe. Every distasteful abrasion of our elevated standards must be loudly and threateningly billed "a crisis," and if possible it must be souped up as a "moral crisis." Creating a crisis is perhaps the most fruitful contribution one can make to chaos. Not only does it—if publicized with drama and tastelessness—never fail to unsettle the citizenry, but it gives the authors of crisis a splendid opportunity to invite crackpot speakers to the campus—assuring the growth of spectacular ignorance amongst exploitable students, revulsion amongst citizens, miserliness amongst legislators and joy amongst *Alternative* readers.

In 1958 the poet Kenneth Rexroth sensed a breeze through the doldrums. Viewing the embryonic youth culture he observed "An orthodoxy is forming, and like all orthodoxies it is a system of lies and evasions, a ritual of the lazy and the greedy. How do you escape it?" "Through art," he replied. Unfortunately most of us do not possess the necessary talent, a truth most of our rock singers, kinetic poets and junk artists have proven most convincingly. Some of us have to be students, and the orthodoxy envisioned by Rexroth is threatening to roll us over in the seventies. The university's shield of Liberalism is withering before the continuing salvoes of the new orthodoxy ushering in an age of intolerance as bleak as any in our history.

Finding the present extent of political evangelizing amongst faculty and students dreary enough, *The Alternative* opposes further attempts to turn the university into a kind of chiliastic Tammany Hall. Those persons advocating politicalization are blatantly exploiting ignorant students and contemptuous of the rights of the civilized few. They are the enemies of academic freedom and a nuisance to dispassionate scholarship. Pundits who fawn over the new conformists characterizing them as the All-American Boys of the seventies are hastening the destruction of the American University more surely than the bombers, the buffoons or the bedwetters. Already infested by hordes of the new conformists and their sputtering mentors, the American University is fast taking on the appearance of Bug House Square. Let us not see it opened to the "politicians of vision." □

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania—The government said Thursday 170 persons have died in Tanzania during the past year after taking medicine given them by witch doctors.



Brayings from the Left

"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad." --Euripides

WASHINGTON POST

Psychiatric report from the eminent journal of psychiatry and palmistry the Washington Post:

There is something so erratic and irrational, not to say incomprehensible, about all this that you have to assume there is more to it than he (Agnew) is telling.

PETE HAMILL, NEW YORK POST

A clearly reasoned argument uttered by the Aristotle of our age:

When you call campus dissenters "bums," as Nixon did the other day, you should not be surprised when they are shot through the head and chest by National Guardsmen. Nixon is as responsible for the Kent State slaughter as he and the rest of his bloodless gang of corporation men were for the anti-integration violence in Lamar, and for the pillage and murder that is taking place in the name of democracy in Cambodia...At Kent State, two boys and two girls were shot to death by men unleashed by a President's

NEW YORK TIMES

A flabbergasted report to Yahoooland from the celestial New York Times:

He (Lucifer Agnew) lambasted the nation's youth in sweeping and ignorant generalizations, when it is clear to all perceptive observers that American youth today is far more imbued with idealism, a sense of service and a deep humanitarianism than any generation including Mr. Agnew's. (What about Hitler's?)

NEW YORK TIMES

Vice-Presidents are to be seen and not heard, as explicated by the Brahmin demagogues of the New York Times:

When with abrasive phrases, the Vice President focuses his bitter attack on those who oppose the Administration's present policy in Vietnam he is only exacerbating the divisions in this country, and making a mockery of the President's evidently forgotten pleas for reasoned discourse among the great majority of moderate, patriotic, but most necessarily, silent Americans.

ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

Here we see an example of the restrained rhetoric which all cultivated

Liberals urge upon the beastly Mr. Agnew:

Honorable men ride that rocky ledge....Spiro Agnew has none of those redeeming qualities. He has the grace of a drill sergeant and the understanding of a 19th century prison camp warden.

WASHINGTON POST

Combative spirit displayed by Mr. Agnew's competition at the Washington Post:

A gratuitous clomp...a page from Vice President Agnew's copybook...campus unrest is simply being fanned and exploited by the Administration...Hate the dissidents, excoriate the 'bums,' see if you can match Mr. Agnew in hurling names at them.

NEW REPUBLIC

As he totters off into harmless dotage Gerald W. Johnson confuses history with anthropology to blubber this splendid absurdity:

He (Vice President Agnew) is a relic of early nineteenth century federalism, not of the John Adams type, but of the Timothy Pickering-Hartford Convention type.

NEW YORK POST

After a bone crushing full nelson and an Arkansas death grip, the Vice President pinned the New York Post's distinguished woman wrestler, Harriet Van Horne; and, as she later recorded:

The President's...TV presentation of this decision was, moreover maudlin, crafty and stained by fulsome sentiments.

DR. LAURENCE O'BRIEN

Dr. Laurence O'Brien reports on the scholarly pursuits of the Democratic National Committee:

We have come up with a word to match the best being offered by Vice President Agnew. Mr. Agnew, we have concluded, is a sesquipedalian--and lest you think that I am stooping to Mr. Agnew's level of attack, it means he is a fellow who is addicted to the use of big words."

R. SARGENT SHRIVER

R. Sargent Shriver, father of American virtue, finds the Vice President's behavior strangely familiar:

Agnew is behaving like a drunk

in a barroom brawl. He's swinging wildly, throwing the roundhouse punch. The Vice President is beginning to appear to more and more people as a man given to wild statements.

SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN

Yet another attempt to "Lower our voices from the distinguished Senator from the American steppes:

...he (Mr. Agnew) has done more to divide and weaken the country, perhaps, than our enemies in Hanoi have done. He is undercutting the whole possibility for a unified American people. He is a divisive damaging influence on the people of this country.

HUGH SIDNEY

A distinguished oracle laments on what America is coming to when the Vice President attracts more headlines than the Viet Cong:

For weeks now Agnew, more than Abbie Hoffman or William Kunstler, has dominated the headlines with a torrent of abuse that served mainly to call attention to all that is bad in our society....

NEW REPUBLIC

A charming specimen from the geniuses who worry most about "polarization":

But we will say that we think Spiro is revving up fine (sic) and will be off the runway any day now like an old Ford tri-motor, if he doesn't shake off a wing first (sic). His Cleveland denunciation of Averell Harriman, Mayor Lindsay and six others as addicts of "American defeat" marks a crescendo of vibration. We wonder, though, if he can rise to the heights of Dean Acheson's "college of cowardly Communist containment"? Well, maybe his boss will give him lessons.

I.F. STONE'S BI-WEEKLY

Splendid prose from renowned Biblical scholar, Dr. I.F. Stone:

The race is on between protest and disaster....The only hope is that the students can create such a Plague for Peace, swarming like locusts into the halls of Congress, that they stop all other business and make an end to the war the No. 1 concern it ought to be: Suspend Classes and Educate the Country.