

About 10:45 P.M., with both sides having had a good shout and the SDS still outside, the confrontation at the Center ended, but the "Radical Arts Troupe" of SDS was not calling it quits. They set off for Harvard's Freshman Union, where they planned to inflict themselves on the freshmen having lunch. At the Union, the Troupe attempted to stage two skits. Both skits got bad reviews from the captive audience—one freshman told me the skits were "very gross"—and both skits were disrupted. The first was disrupted when four YAF members led other students in singing Christmas carols; the second was ended

Great American Series

Liberals who want no revolution are forever trying to appease the revolutionaries in order to draw them near, to entice them back up on the raft. But when propitiating concessions are made in the face of violence or disruption, they validate the idea, so often put forward by all sorts of nonviolent people as a justification for violence, that ruthless direct action gets results. Thus they beget upending ruthless direct action. And in any event, as often as not, the propitiating concession is a capitulation to unreason.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Alexander M. Bickel

when a freshman, Duane Jones, took the batteries out of the Troupe's bullhorn.

Mr. Jones told a reporter for *The Harvard Crimson*:

If there is one guy in here who wants to eat and not listen to this, he has the right to ask them to leave—which I did at first—because they came in without permission.

Lest you think Mr. Jones is someone who worships tradition and sleeps with a night light on, you should know that he went on to characterize himself as "a radical person" who thinks the CFIA is "full of shit."

The indifference and even hostility of the students to the radical girl in the lecture hall, the opposition of students on both the left and the right to the radicals' efforts to close the CFIA by issuing demands, invading the Center, and barging into a student dining hall to stage lousy political dramas—these and other events indicate that radical students no longer can take it for granted that, in university areas such as Cambridge, other students automatically will come to their support. Some students who are at least partially sympathetic to the radicals' positions are not, if only for the time being, willing to be taken in by any radical appeal or to go along with any radical action. And some students who are not at all sympathetic to the radicals are no longer willing to let the radicals go unopposed.

This does not mean that students in Cambridge have developed a new affection for America or that intelligent criticism of the Administration's policies and American society has ended. Such

criticism should not end. For example, the migrant farm workers, who are not fashionable and who do not have money to fly around the country attending parties and rallies where their misery is lamented, continue to live in wretched camps in Florida and elsewhere. They need help. To take another case where intelligent criticism may help us to eliminate a bad situation, Senator Sam Ervin and others have revealed that Army Intelligence and other government agencies have been keeping watch and keeping files on millions of citizens, including elected officials. This should concern all Americans who want to preserve liberty. It has reached the point where, to cite one example, a college administrator whom I know well, a law-abiding Quaker who has been active in the peace movement and who is not paranoid, refuses to talk about important matters over the phone because he believes his line is tapped.

In Criticism Of Famous Bounders

The Administration could profit from thoughtful criticism of not only its domestic but also its foreign policies. The American position continues to deteriorate throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, where our appeasement of the Soviet Union and its Arab clients and our shameful treatment of Israel have resulted in greater Soviet intervention and increased Arab intransigence. (For a provocative proposal about how to improve our position in the Middle East, see Charles Benson's article, "A Strategic Alternative?" in the 17 November 1970 *National Review*).

Although Harvard radicals cannot depend anymore on other students to rush to their side in any circumstances, they continue to be active and to score some successes. The Harvard administration

has yielded to pressure from radical students and their supporters and agreed to spare all Harvard students the gastronomic and moral indigestion that comes from eating "scab lettuce." A few weeks ago, about one hundred students took over a course presided over by a radical professor, who, no doubt, had hoped the students would seize power—somewhere else. *The Harvard Crimson* continued to thrill its readers with stories about the evils of America and the Harvard administration. Its coverage of the Vietnam War is what you might expect from a student newspaper that last year editorially expressed its hope for a Viet Cong victory. The editors of the *Crimson* did not find so much as an inch of space to report or comment on the uprisings in Poland. I suppose they thought that, if you've seen one Eastern European insurrection, you've seen them all.

The radicals press on, but many of their erstwhile supporters have drifted away or even into opposition. I say "drifted" because they appear to be disenchanted with the radicals not because of an intellectual or moral rejection of their means and ends but because of an aesthetic revulsion at their style.

As Mr. Alsop points out, the radicals' show has become a bore. But show business is not a static profession. Perhaps the radicals can revive their show in the spring, when the thoughts of some turn to making love and causing trouble. The radicals may bring on new faces, raise new issues, and promote new causes, and if they do, they could have a success on their hands. So, we had better wait awhile before we order a casket for radical chic or dismiss the New Left as a significant political movement. I can remember remarking to friends about this time last year how quiet everything was. □

Arts and Letters

The Decency of E.M. Forster

Kent Owen

My maternal grandfather used to look up from the obituaries to observe to no one in particular, "I see that a number of great men have died recently, and I don't feel so well myself." Imagine then my own feelings of mortality in view of the recent deaths of Charles de Gaulle and Bertrand Russell. There was in both their lives and their persons a monumentality that overshadows men of less awesome mien, men whose achievements seem less grand, but may in fact be worth as much according to another set of values.

E. M. Forster, another man of advanced years and considerable distinction also died within the year. His accomplishments were fashioned on a different scale, one that more nearly approximates the range of experience of ordinary men. Like de Gaulle and Russell there was a certain nobility, even a heroism about Forster, but

it was admittedly of a different order. His attributes were civility, tolerance, kindness, compassion, and in the largest sense, decency.

Decency, like moderation its kindred virtue, seldom seems the kind of quality that inspires others to acclaim it a form of heroism; yet it possesses greater staying power over the course of a long life than does the gallantry that is glamorous but momentary. Its elements are humbler and quieter, consisting of fairness, generosity and modesty; there is also the matter of humor which few heroes in their loftier moments of exertion can claim. In short, decency is a thoroughly humane and even homely virtue, unbolstered by the energies of titanic personages.

To speak of one as being a decent person is praise to be sure, but no trumpets flourish when that happens. Instead,

something more like a gentle respect, empty of envy, comes to mind. And to mind it ought to come, for decency is the least visceral of qualities.

Nowadays, at least for Pied Pipers like McLuhan, Charles Reisch and Timothy Leary, the senses alone are the only things worth trusting. Hence that other kind of sense, the one that takes into account reason and considered experience, is pronounced stale and corrupt. What is most worth knowing must then be perceived without the bother of intellection, which, as one hears all too insistently, is a fraud and a delusion. Granted, this overstates the case, but then overstatement is the rhetorical ploy currently most likely to succeed.

Now that last assertion is both too cynical and too unreasonable for Forster to have used. He believed with Lao-tse that when one intends to slay a dragon, one should take care not to become that very dragon. His restraint was not born of academic timidity about having to verify all the facts and then gathering some more to verify; rather it grew out of his ingrained modesty about just how right a man can be. Whatever conclusion he may have reached, it remains apparent that self-righteousness never afflicted him. In fact, the opinions he was most likely to question were most often his own.

So far all that I have said about Forster I have said without quotation, apt or otherwise. At the time of Forster's death last June so many elegists were quick to pay his homage by extracing a few neat but quirky phrases from his writings in the hope that these shards would somehow do him justice. Although Forster is by no means innocent of handsomely turned lines, he declares himself in a singular voice, casual yet alert, through a pattern of carefully articulated impressions and

reflections, which do not readily lend themselves to abridgement.

To say this of him is, of course, to stress his essays, certainly not to the exclusion of his novels and short stories, but to set off his non-fiction pieces as a more compelling revelation of his manner and presence. The essays in *Abinger Harvest* and *Two Cheers for Democracy* build up in the mind of the reader an image of a solitary observer, an amateur of human events and the arts, an attentive friend, a man of somewhat feminine sensibility whose perceptions are generally tempered by the monitor of moral judgement.

It was Henry James, I believe, who said that to make a perception is to make a judgment. I take this to mean that the very act of perceiving selects some things in experience in place of others, and that to do so, whether instinctively or rationally, is to assert a preference. One may assign such a choice to taste or prejudice, but the fact remains that Forster's characteristic response was in one way or another moral in nature in that it usually bore on some larger sense of good. The remarkable thing about his kind of response was its lack of priggishness. Risky as it is to link aesthetics with morality in any systematic way, the question of how the good can be realized does not confine the artist to a rigid set of prescribed practices and aims; in fact, it should be what freedom leads to, and Forster above all was dedicated to securing and advancing freedom.

Coming as he did from the Cambridge-Bloomsbury ethos that celebrated personal relations as the summum bonum, Forster gave to the characters he created in fiction and to his own persona in the essays a painstaking attention to the complexities of human conduct. That can, of course, be said of any writer who studies persons to portray them convincingly, but with Forster it is something rather dif-

ferent. His portraits are never etched in acid; there is no element of vengeance or malice or self-justification evident in the motives he discovers in their actions. Instead, the governing impulse is reconciliation, and even so, the result is often the recognition of opposing forces that cannot be brought together, as in his finest novel, *A Passage to India*. Hence, Forster examines the disparities and the paradoxes that separate human lives, not for the sport of pointing out what fools we mortals be, but for the harder matter of bringing about some manner of understanding and acceptance that will transcend the need to blame and punish.

A few critics have seen this reconciling, healing intention as an inadequate means of dealing with evil. The claim that Forster's moral universe is much too tidy and well-arranged is not altogether beside the point, for in his work evil is seldom regarded as an absolute and immutable force, working its will through irredeemable agents. Though Forster was not much for orthodox Christianity, he was, up to a point, far more generous in the matter of forgiveness than one usually expects from writers equipped with an active moral sense. Perhaps he knew too well that to understand everything is to forgive everything the semblance of evil notwithstanding. As Gerald W. Johnson has noted, there is a real distinction between hatred and contempt, for contempt implies a controlled, even humorous sense of what is wrong, and hatred allows no such fine shadings. Most often then, it is contempt that Forster expresses for those who sell man short, who violate his dignity or his privacy, who subject him to barbarities that reduce his freedom or thwart his humanity. But even these are errors of judgement or failures of understanding that will eventually be revealed and set right; no great injustice will go on forever.

If Forster is to be remembered for any single phrase, in this case one that forms its own context, it will probably be his epigraph to *Howard's End*, "Only connect." Wisdom is rarely put so succinctly, yet few insights have framed so clearly the job of the humanist. □

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Next Issue:
George Nathan
On
Bird Watchers

College Entrance Form-- 1975 Vintage

What follows is a model college entrance form secured for us by Miss Elizabeth Kristol, a student of Third Century Cabala at Nightingale-Bamford School in New York City. She informs us that according to her divinations of the drift of higher education this entrance form will be standard by 1975.

Note: To those of you who have gone to progressive grammar and high schools, please have a friend or parent fill out this form as you dictate. Thank you.

- I 1. Name _____
 2. Address _____
 3. Telephone _____
 4. Position (class rank) ☐ upper ☐ middle ☐ lower ☐ lowest
 5. Father's Job ☐ plumber ☐ chicken plucker ☐ rodent furrier ☐ other
 6. Mother's Job ☐ other

II Why do you want to go to this college? (Circle one)

- A. to achieve spiritual fulfillment and enlightenment
 B. to find out who I really am (see part one) and what my purpose is on earth
 C. it is the only remaining college with all its buildings and grounds intact
 D. it is my sixth choice and no one else will have me
 E. to obtain an education
 F. to beat the draft
 G. to defraud the public

III Courses (Circle one)

NOTICE:

We had planned to introduce into our progressive university a new and totally unique course, unlike any found in other colleges in the country. Entitled History, this would have been a non-credit, optional course, and anyone (regardless of race, color or creed) would be eligible to sign up. However, due to a lack of interest in the unusual, (only three people enrolled) this course will not be available.

- A. glass-blowing
 B. organic foods and their place in today's world
 C. love and hate in today's society
 D. the comparison of the Gangua religion of ancient Peru to the commercial religions in today's society
 E. comparisons of the ideologies of some of the world's greatest philosophers, featuring Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Mohammed Ali and Charles Reich III, Leonard Bernstein and Jane Fonda
 F. the art and mechanics of bomb-making
 G. force and its crucial place on today's campuses

IV Please check the following books read in the past year

- A. How to overrun the Establishment and Remain Callous-free
 B. The Red Caboose
 C. John and Yoko's Pornographic Picture Book
 D. Contemplation, by I.F. Stoned
 E. Your Guru, by Con Tem Plate
 F. Relevance, by U.R. Dumm

V Politics

- A. hard-core radical
 B. revolutionary dove
 C. bleeding-heart liberal
 D. brutal hardhat

VI Hobbies

- A. burning
 B. looting
 C. rioting
 D. loving
 E. (all of the above)
 F. (all of the above and everything else)

VII If you are a conservative, why?

- since when?
 forced by whom?
 When you get out of this rut, what are you going to do? (reform, repent, etc.)
 What "job" do you want to attempt after dropping out of college?
 How is this relevant to life?

VIII Write a brief, but extremely meaningful, and relevant essay on what kind of drum-beat you follow, what psyches you out, what turns you on, what's your bag, what makes you freak, what gets it all together, and the like.....

(due to your lack of achievement you may print.)

please attach a COLOR photo