

to college just as much as liberals do. But the active discrimination that has been directed against conservatives by liberal faculty members over an entire generation has discouraged conservatives from applying. After years of failure in liberal-dominated public education, what conservative high school graduate feels prepared to go to Yale? The answer is obvious. The conservative student may need special tutoring in his first year. His reduced estimate of his own humanity must be eliminated. Thus, we must demand that his first year be ungraded, as each conservative student seeks to find his place in the academic community. He should not be forced to compete directly with liberal students who have had all the advantages of a first-class liberal education. Conservatives have never had equal opportunity in school; it would be the most radical kind of liberal intellectualism to demand that each conservative student be forced to compete directly with liberals at the very start of his academic career.

For a generation conservatives have been relegated to second class academic citizenship. Herded like animals into mid-western Bible colleges and southern universities, they have feared to apply to Harvard. A few token conservatives have been picked up by the Ivy League schools from time to time, but tokenism is an insult to a people with a long cultural heritage. It is a valid heritage. No, most conservatives never learned to take drugs in their teens, and the American Revolution was the closest thing to anarchy we could ever muster, but this is hardly to say that we have been without a culture. It has only been a heritage that put emphasis on other things, like thrift, diligence, and deferred gratification. This is no reason to exclude us from the campus in the final third of the twentieth century!

What the liberals in Cambridge and New Haven are really afraid of is an influx of "undesirables" into their neighborhoods. Conservatives have supposedly learned their place in the rural ghettos, with only a few of them straying close to the cities in places like Orange County, California. The liberals talk a good line, but very few of them would really want to live next door to a police chief.

In the final analysis, the modern liberal intellectualist needs the conservative. The conservative is the only one who has bothered to read liberal balderdash with a critical eye. The conservative, in assuming the role of the outcast for the liberal, has permitted the liberal to define himself in terms of the man on the lowest rung of academic life, namely, the conservative. The only person who truly knows, understands, and shares the love-hate relationship with the liberal intellectualist is the conservative. The conservative who has lived on the outskirts of liberal culture has come to know the liberal even better than the liberal knows himself. To deny us the right to participate in academic society any longer is a negation of liberal intellectualism. It does not permit true pluralism, open discussion, and honest dialogue to flower.

The faded slogans of liberal culture are denied daily by the outcast status of the conservatives who have never been regarded as intellectual equals. It is time to end the hypocrisy.

"All power to the competent!"

"Continuity to the historical process!"

"Far right on!"

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Report from New York

The End of the Fillmore East

Nickolas Lupinin

On 27 June of this year the great rock haven of the East, the Fillmore, closed with appropriate fanfare, tears, and logic. Perhaps even with a touch of cynicism, for the audience at this last (all night) fete was by invitation only, while the faithful children milled the streets in an uncalculated display of sentiment. A multitude of rock stations covered the farewell and the airwaves were punctuated with periodic reports on the proceedings. An institution was coming to an end and the media were there with effusive eulogies.

I suspect the closing was in order. Those of us who have lived on the Lower East Side (preferentially labeled the "East Village" by the publicity-minded) during these years have seen the deterioration of the rock cult gathered at the Fillmore. The original exuberance and euphoria of the rock scene gradually lost its pristine aspects in favor of an even greater crassness.

The reasons were, of course, multifold — among them drugs. Drugs are rampant in the neighborhood. Despite disclaimers by the management, they had their effect. No one ever denied the rather substantial use of "grass" within the theater. The highs made one appreciate the music (or did they merely help bear it?). One does frequently find it difficult to separate hard rock and drugs — certainly on the Lower East Side. There are cafes here advertising "bring your own head," which set aside small hashish dens for their customers. And the streets — one need not be a "head" to note their effect on the teeming streets of the "East Village."

Commercialism was another factor and one difficult to rationalize for the cultists. They — the rock people, the juveniles — were initially the heralds of success. Coming in vast numbers from all over the country to see and listen, they literally created the rock stars. As popularity skyrocketed, the entertainers asked incredible fees and the smaller houses like the Fillmore East were hurt. This is, in fact, one of the most frequently adduced reasons given for the Fillmore's end. The Fillmore's Bill Graham could not meet the fees demanded by singers who sang of purity and love, who belabored the horrors of modern commercial society, who cried in lament over the war. Oh, how they loathed capitalism! They had not in them a touch of gratitude for the Fillmore. But the

worshippers of Mecca, the juveniles, were again left in the cold, not realizing, because of their youth, that they had been had. It is provocative to speculate on how much the juveniles themselves are responsible for the very commercialism they so decry. But juveniles are juveniles and given to ignoring the play of irony in their lives.

The juveniles were not the only ones to attend the Fillmore. Being voguish it also drew the fashionable-minded who invariably stood out from the rest. They were never the ones to stand around and wait in lines. Their tickets were in hand, and they did not worry about parking their Rolls or Maserati in the no parking zones. These people, though drawing some opprobrium from the blue-jeaned and mod, were not a problem. The problem came from the rather typical "East Village" phenomenon, the hanger-on.

When the early influx of hippies came to this area, the number that came to dawdle, to gape, and clog the streets was rather small, but along with the rapid rise of the hippie population (now in decline, in-

Great American Series

"If you are lucky enough to have lived at a major American university as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for the American university is a movable illness ... in some places it is an insane asylum."

George Nathan to a college chump

cidentally) came a faster growing population of hangers-on. Unfortunately, the hanger-on could never be classified with the harmless hippie tourist. His breed was harder, a breed bred on the streets of New York, a breed to whom no form of vice was foreign. He hustled dope, picked pockets, robbed apartments, loafed on people's stairs, or panhandled in the street. The hanger-on came here because, "this was where it was at." Lower East residents implicitly agree to this — the hanger-on has wrought more havoc in this area than any of the hippies. The latter, by and large, have been peaceful, whereas a check at the local police station will corroborate the claim that, for example, the largest proportion of crimes are committed by transients — by hangers-on.

What this has done is to give the area a rougher atmosphere, a hardness that was missing, say, ten years ago. And the victim has been everybody from the weekend visitor to the Fillmore, to the local citizenry. Fewer and fewer people see the Lower East Side as a place to live and most often the disenchantment stems from the unsavory street elements that inhibit normal life. Needless to say, the Fillmore devotees were hurt by these roamers and the theater itself was hurt. The Fillmore as a symbol of peace and new ideals lost its glitter. The symbol began to crumble. It really was time to close.

It is a commentary on this area that the closing of the Fillmore East will have little lingering effect. The same people will be floating on the streets of the "East

Village," the same fifteen-year-old girls, bra-less and in college T-shirts, the same groups gathered around lone guitar players who struggle with the same two or three chords. The filth will remain. In a year or so the Fillmore will be forgotten; modernity forgets quickly and completely, for neomania demands the new. The dabbler in nostalgia will, of course, continue to prowls the back issues of the Village

Voice, but not everyone finds that type of boredom palatable.

They were all at the Fillmore East at one time or another—Janis Joplin, Elton John, Jimmi Hendrix, the big rock groups. While it lasted it had its say, but it could not, in effect, cope with the time. That is a damning commentary. Who knows who is sadder for it? I'm afraid that is the extent of my reaction to the end of the Fillmore East. □

The Counter-Thinker

First Things, Last Things

By Eric Hoffer
Harper, \$4.95

A few years ago a woman from California wrote one of those songs that just happen to catch on. It became a commercial success, was listened to and talked about for a while and then died a natural death from over-exposure. The song told us of "ticky-tacky" houses inhabited by "ticky-tacky" people. The message was clear: we live in a nation which is being smothered by conformity. Our conformist suburban "ticky-tacky" housing developments reflect the personalities of their robot-like inhabitants and the conformist spirit of the nation.

It so happened that at the time I was working as a meter-reader for a gas and electric company in a large eastern city. My job took me to many types of dwellings, from six-family walk-ups to enormous housing developments, and the more homes I saw, the more I became convinced that the song was wrong. The housing developments may have a looked alike from the outside, but the inside of each development home was different, reflecting the particular taste (or, if you wanted to get nasty about it, lack of taste) of the owner. Far from being proof of conformity, the mass-produced homes of the developments were proof of the incredible diversity of American life. Yet day after day I would hear that song and, what was worse, would listen to people tell me how accurate the song was in exposing the outrageous conformity of our national life.

If I had not had the opportunity as a meter-reader to see the reality of the housing-development, I would perhaps have gone along, willy-nilly, with the intellectual attitude represented by the song, for at that time the "conformity" thesis was the fashionable idea without which no cocktail party could be a success. The intellectuals who shape our opinions told us we were conformists and what could be better proof of our conformity than our mass-produced homes, each indistinguishable from the other? The only thing wrong with that idea was that it wasn't true and it was most demonstrably untrue precisely where the intellectuals told us it was most true, i.e., in the Levittowns and other developments. If you simply went to the developments and looked at the seemingly identical houses, you couldn't help but notice that each house was different because the people who lived in the houses were different.

When I raised this point with my intellectual betters, I was inevitably told

that no matter what I had seen with my own eyes, no matter how much evidence of diversity I saw every day as a meter-reader, no matter how much empirical evidence piled up to disprove the fashionable doctrine—the doctrine was right. Americans were conformists; proof that no matter what I had seen with my and, by God, let's have an end to quibbling! Were there not dozens, nay, scores of books laboriously fashioned by professors and other holy men which proved we were conformists?

The "ticky-tacky" song craze finally ended but the intellectual malady it represented lingers on. The gap between the fashionable ideas of the intellectual and the realities of America life has, if anything, widened. All the more reason to be grateful for the existence of Eric Hoffer, the major thrust of whose career from *The True Believers* to *First Things, Last Things* might be summed up in the phrase, "a lot of what intellectuals know just ain't true."

Hoffer is the intellectual counter-puncher *par excellence*. While the establishmentarian intellectuals think, he counter-thinks, throwing aphorisms like jabs, blinding them with his intellectual foot-work and, all in all, having a good time for himself. It is as if a bar-room brawler got in the ring with a professional boxer and proceeded to beat the hell out of him.

Oddly enough, for a few years he had a certain vogue among the intellectuals. His appearances on CBS with Eric Sevaried were immensely popular. But the Hoffer fad soon ended when it was discovered that he had all the wrong (i.e. unorthodox) ideas on race relations, the war and LBJ. Most unforgivable of all, to card-carrying literati, he insisted on publicly exposing his love for the United States of America.

It became all too much for the potentates of the media and the *Gauleiters* of the intellectual magazines. Here, after all, was the man they had been looking for: the proletarian intellectual, the natural man who read Montaigne, Roosevelt's common man, but one who knew big words, egalitarianism incarnate. And, to their surprise, he turned out to have all the wrong ideas. Instead of worshipping black militants he said they should stop yapping and start working; instead of hating the racist hard-hats, he said they were more deserving of praise than their intellectual masters; instead of humbly paying

obedience to the power-hungry intellectual types like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (who had highly praised *The True Believers*), he ridiculed the very idea that intellectuals should have a leading role in governing our society. According to the Liberal theory, any self-instructed, formally untutored longshoreman who showed intellectual brilliance would fit in nicely, thank you, among the pages of the *New Republic*. But as always, reality played a trick on the certified public intellectuals and Hoffer proved to be a maverick. The intellectuals dropped Hoffer and continued their search for a proletarian intellectual, this time one who would play by the rules.

And what of Hoffer? He continues on his merry way, saying things like the following:

"The cores of our cities are packed with people who lack the enterprise to take advantage of opportunities, and the character to resist temptation."

"The trouble is not chiefly that our universities are unfit for students but that many present-day students are unfit for universities."

"Crime in the streets and insolence on the campus are sick forms of adolescent self-assertion."

"The common people of Europe eloped with history to America and have lived in common-law marriage with it, unhallowed by the incantations of men of words... The intellectuals and the young, booted and spurred, feel themselves born to ride us."

"Indeed, the uniqueness of modern America derives in no small part from the fact that America has kept intellectuals away from power and paid little attention to their political views."

"It seems that every time a millionaire opens his mouth nowadays he confesses the sins of our society in public. Now it so happens that the rich do indeed have a lot to feel guilty about. They live in exclusive neighborhoods, send their children to private schools, and use every loophole to avoid paying taxes. But what they confess in public are not their private sins but the sins of society, the sins of the rest of us, and it is our breasts they are beating into a pulp."

Hoffer is, obviously, one of a kind. He has a way of saying obviously sensible things in an outrageous way. Since most of our anointed thinkers have made their careers saying outrageously silly things in an obvious way, Hoffer is a man to be revered. Admittedly there are times when, to use his own words, he has "an old man's tendency to snort at the self-important young," and other times when he lets his righteous anger dictate his thoughts. In running from the folly of American intellectuals he seems to me at times to swing too violently to the other side and overpraise working people, seeing in them civic virtues even they wouldn't claim to possess. At times, his attacks on intellectuals often seem to border on attacks on intellectuality itself. But these are quibbles. Hoffer has courageously refused

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