

taken as proof of education. If, on the other hand, the alumnus does not "make it" by virtue of his education, what the college has created is ambition untethered to possibility—an unhappy person likely to hold society responsible for his frustration and who, therefore, will be harmful to it.

What can be done? The educational inflation could not occur without the cooperation of colleges. It is, on the whole, within their power to stop it. They could limit admissions and rededicate themselves to cognitive learning at the college level. The best people that can be found should be selected as students and professors, regardless of race, religion, or sex, or anything else, except for those dispositions of character that make a person capable of living in an intellectual community and make it possible later as well to benefit from having lived and learned there. No more than 35 percent of the college age group should study for degrees and faculties should be reduced accordingly.

Colleges have played a decisive role in creating educational inflation, and they could stop it. However, industry, labor, and the government have connived. And there have been ideological misapprehensions. Many Americans believe in education as they used to believe in religion. They are convinced that attending college must be good and can do no harm, as they were convinced that attending church is helpful and never harmful. But education can be

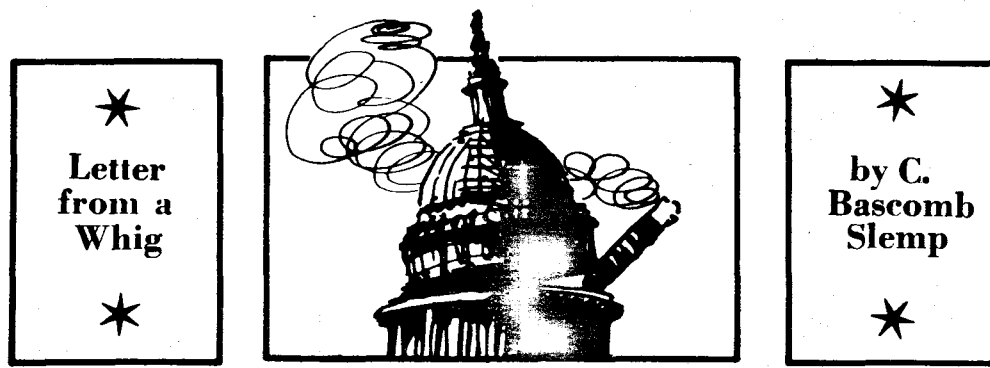
harmful if it is transformed into schooling, over-extended, and imposed on those who are not able to benefit, by those not able to educate. The very word "education" here helps to mislead people since it conflates the process of being educated—which may or may not succeed—with its successful accomplishment or product.

Labor all too often welcomes education to keep people out of the labor market as long as possible. "Education" is the cheapest way (for the unions) of doing so. The government has found it easier to yield to the pressure which industry has not opposed. Education transfers much of the cost of apprenticeship to the taxpayer—even if it is a comparatively inefficient way, in many cases, of preparing for the business at hand. Last, though not least, business has used degrees, however irrelevant to the tasks at hand, as a sifting device in hiring. Yet in many cases the preference for college graduates is irrational. Such a preference should be regarded as "discriminatory," in the invidious sense, whenever the college education has no demonstrable relevance to the job to be filled. To demand that an applicant have a college education (when it is not relevant) is discrimination just as an irrelevant preference for race or religion is: irrelevant discrimination in terms of educational credentials ought to be prohibited legally just as racial discrimination is. Selection on any basis other than the qualities relevant to the job is "dis-

crimination" and should be made unlawful. It matters not at all whether the selective process is meant to irrelevantly exclude or include groups (sexual, racial, religious, educational) in any proportion, including the proportion in which they occur in the total population. The latter irrelevant—and unconstitutional—inclusion is now sponsored as "affirmative action" by, yes, the federal government. So much the worse for the federal government.

Parents, finally, cannot escape a share of the blame for the present situation. Many students reach higher education without ever having been led to accept the authority of persons or institutions, and without having been asked to do anything requiring a major effort. This is why many talented students find it difficult to accept intellectual discipline, and to accept the authority of those who profess and transmit it. Authority can be transferred to those who stand *in loco parentis* only if there is parental authority to be transferred. Many students never have experienced it, and therefore find it hard to accept the authority of the law and the university.

Rehabilitation will be hard for them, for society, and for the universities. But it is not fostered by refusals to exercise authority and by acceptance of anyone and anything. Universities must become selective in what and how they teach, in hiring and keeping professors, and in admitting students. □



## Of Ex-Veeps and New Veeps

(WASHINGTON)—That was a week, that was! Vice-President Agnew resigned, pleaded no contest to an income tax evasion charge, was fined \$10,000, and received three years of unsupervised probation. U.S. District Court Judge, Walter Hoffman, called the (former) Vice-President's no contest plea the full equivalent of a guilty plea. Thus ended what had promised to become another log cabin American success story. From poor boy to Baltimore County Executive, from Maryland Governor to Vice-President (Spiro who?) of the United States, Agnew's political future once seemed limitless.

### Continuing Bitterness

In what was billed as his final television speech to the nation, the (former) Vice-President reasserted his innocence and indicated that his resignation was not "an admission of guilt, but a plea of no contest, done to quell the raging storm." And although Agnew had only the highest praise

for President Nixon (and his vice-presidential nominee, Gerald Ford) during his television speech, in an earlier interview with the *Nashville Banner*, Agnew stated that intense pressure from the highest levels of the Nixon Administration had forced him to resign. Agnew thus failed to still what many see as the continuing bitterness among Agnew partisans over the former Vice-President's being hounded out of office by "Nixonites."

Vic Gold, Agnew's former press aide turned syndicated Washington columnist, and *Washington Post* journalist David Broder, were on CBS immediately after the Vice-President's speech for one of those instant analysis sessions the Vice-President had so often criticized. Neither Gold nor Broder had much to say, except that they were "confused"; and Gold, to his credit, stated that these instant analysis sessions serve little purpose. (Gold had also reportedly jumped out of his chair when Agnew had praised the President for the support he had given to him.)

### What Is the Lesson?

The events which forced the Vice-President to resign are undoubtedly both a personal and a national tragedy. What apparently had begun as an anonymous phone call to the Internal Revenue Service about political graft and corruption in Baltimore County (a long-time Democratic stronghold) quickly mushroomed beyond what anyone had really expected. The victim of this investigation has, in fact, been the Vice-President, and not the Maryland Democratic Party. And for those who know Maryland politics, this is an irony which has not gone unnoticed.

For our politicians and our social pundits there could be no more opportune time for the July Fourth rhetoric which usually accompanies such events. But the true tragedy is that while many will speak of the moral code elected officials should live by, not all will believe their own eloquent hot air, and even fewer will live up to it.

Now is the time for everyone to quote Lord Acton's perennial truism that "all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." But what is the lesson? I guess it's that they just don't make things like they used to, including party machines. As Plunkitt of Tammany Hall observed, good politics means loyalty, all the way to the prison gates.

### Successor Named

With the Vice-President's resignation the debate quickly focused upon who would be nominated as his successor. The Democrats, in a true spirit of reconciliation, promised Nixon hell's fire if he attempted to

nominate an aspiring 1976 presidential candidate. Few expected Nixon to listen to the threats of the Democrats. Indeed, when Nixon requested Republican leaders from around the country, as well as the GOP House and Senate members, to submit nominations for potential candidates, few expected this to be more than an exercise in public relations.

House Minority Leader, Jerry Ford, was the overwhelming favorite (reportedly by a margin of two to one) of congressional Republicans for the vice-presidential nomination. To the surprise of many (even though Ford had been widely rumored to be the frontrunner and the entire Michigan congressional delegation had been invited to the White House nominating ceremony that night), Nixon did nominate Ford, but it is a choice that is not so surprising. Ford was first elected to Congress in 1948 and he is considered to be a "close" friend of Nixon's (he has been an unswerving Nixon Loyalist). Nixon reportedly wanted Ford as his running mate in 1960, but Henry Cabot Lodge with the support of President Eisenhower was able to prevail and get the vice-presidential nomination in that year. Jerry Ford, like Senator Dole of Kansas had done as Chairman of the Republican National Committee, had worked hard for his fellow Republican colleagues. He spoke for them in their districts and he helped them raise money. As House Minority Leader, Ford had performed remarkably well, considering what a few Republicans have called the "creeping CREEPism" syndrome of the Administration.

Many Republicans have applauded Ford's nomination because they fear that the worst is not yet over for Nixon. The

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ordered the President to hand over his White House taped telephone conversations (a decision which Nixon will appeal before the Supreme Court). There is also the question of the \$100,000 Howard Hughes contribution to Nixon (through his long-time associate Rebozo) which has yet to be traced and explained, and some suspect it was used for personal benefit. Consequently, many GOP officials wanted someone who would receive approval quickly so that in case of presidential impeachment the presidency would not fall by default to Democratic House Speaker Carl Albert. Another fear expressed (unofficially) was that any person who joined the Nixon team would be irreparably tainted and thus would have election problems in 1976. Ford, a somewhat colorless but loyal Party figure, seems to be the best solution to both problems and thus satisfies many Republicans. For reasons of their own, Democrats too are elated. One Democratic congressional aide gleefully stated that had House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.) orchestrated the effort to nominate the Vice-President, the Democrats could not have hoped for a better choice than Jerry Ford.

#### Cynicism Remains

Nixon's choice, nonetheless, raises serious questions. Even though many congressional Republicans had listed Ford as their first choice, and highly regarded as he might be, many others—perhaps most—would have preferred someone else. These Republican officials complain quietly that Nixon could have better satisfied the needs of the country and the Party by appointing someone of Senator Goldwater's

stature, even Senator Baker or GOP National Committee Chairman, George Bush. The list, of course, was endless, and there was also strong support for Governors Reagan and Rockefeller.

These same officials discount the White House's targeted "leaks" which seemed to indicate that the President chose Ford so as not to divide the Republican Party (or even the country). They further doubt that Ford's nomination came in response to congressional pressure and discount the White House line that the President wants to remain neutral in the 1976 GOP presidential nominating process. The White House position is being met with such cynicism for the following reasons: Two weeks before Vice-President Agnew resigned, Nixon was already running security checks. Nixon chose Gerald Ford only after Attorney General Richardson withdrew himself from consideration (a politically adroit move for a man who probably plans to run for public office in Massachusetts). Nixon also withdrew John Connally's name from consideration after the former Texas Governor had pointed to the battle Nixon could expect from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The President, however, was apparently confident that he had the votes to get Connally nominated and he is reported to have been more than willing to force a congressional showdown. (The President's serious consideration of Richardson is also regarded by some GOP officials as indicative of Nixon's continuing insensitivity to the Republican Party's right wing.)

The White House is not the most cheerful place in Washington today and Jerry Ford's nomination has done little to change the mood decisively one way or the other. □

Karl A. Wittfogel

## Social Revolution in China

*The following essay is a slightly edited version of a lecture given at the Australian National University in Canberra. Included in the lecture are certain passages from Karl A. Wittfogel's book, Oriental Despotism (Yale, 1957).*

The modern Chinese revolution had its start in the Nationalists' attempt early in the twentieth century to replace China's traditional government and society by a pluralistic institutional structure of the western type. This attempt was deficient in numerous ways, but it aimed at what the Marxists call a "democratic" revolution. After a few decades of political supremacy, the Nationalists in the late forties were ousted by the forces of the Communist revolution.

The Communist revolution was expected to advance from a Communist-dominated "bourgeois-democratic" revolution to a "socialist" revolution as defined by Lenin and his followers. Measured by its own criteria, it was eminently successful. But what did it accomplish in terms of the criteria of the classical analysts of history and society, criteria that in large part were also upheld

by Karl Marx? What was the character of the order that had existed at the start of the Chinese Nationalist revolution? And what was the character of the order that came into being through the Communist revolution?

Aware that Marxism is the *lingua Franca* of most of the intellectuals who today promote societal change I would like to stress the Marxist approach to these problems. Marx's views on history and society largely continue the classical macro-analytic tradition; and in this respect Marxism proper is more realistic (and *classical*) than non-Marxist critics tend to recognize. However, changes that have been made in the classical substance of original Marxism to serve political purposes are scientifically untenable.

Some of the most important features of the resulting *orthodox* position are due to Marx himself. But Marx cannot be held responsible for all the ideas that Kautsky, Plekhanov, and Lenin have presented as orthodox. Some of them do reproduce Marx's classical and orthodox views, some do not. Moreover, Marx cannot be held responsible for the crude simplification of

his ideas that has often, and properly, been referred to as "vulgar Marxism." And he certainly cannot be held responsible for the deliberate perversion of his ideas that, in analogy to one of his favorite pejorative designations, "*lumpen* proletariat," may be called "*lumpen* Marxism."

Among the various reproductions of Marx's concepts of society and history, *lumpen* Marxism appeared already in the writings of Lenin. It crucially affected the socio-historical views of Lenin's supposedly orthodox followers. Implicit in all their presentations is the admission that nothing is more dangerous to the power and prestige of the Communist regime in Russia (and in China) than the application of mature Marxian concepts of Asiatic society and Oriental despotism to their "socialist" societies.

In 1842/43, and stimulated by his work at the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx became increasingly interested in certain realistic elements of Hegel's philosophy. At this time he indicated his awareness of the fact that in Asia there existed a peculiar type of despotism. Hegel's concept of Asiatic despotism, it will be remembered, involved the idea that the huge Asiatic world had not shared in the western development but that, speaking socio-historically, it had stood still.

When the revolution of 1848/1849 failed, the continental period of Marx's activity as