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# Harvard's *Dégringolade*

John LeBoutillier: *Harvard Hates America: The Odyssey of a Born-Again American*; Gateway Editions; South Bend, Indiana.

by Walter Trohan

Ours is a society in which high esteem was once given to the search for truth in our institutions of higher learning. This search was conducted in an atmosphere as dedicated as that of Plato's groved academy, but one hal- lowed by the measurement of social values against spiritual unity. Perhaps none of these institutions is more in- fluential, if not more venerated, than Harvard, which has turned out more presidents, more philosophers, more Nobel Prize winners, more writers, more poets and more professors than any American hall of learning.

But it is a long way from the college of Charles William Eliot, and his five foot shelf of the world's great literature, to the university of John LeBoutillier, where four-letter words are intoned in ivy-mantled classrooms and red radical- ism is often more honored than the crimson badge of the institution. The not-so-old Harvard was designed to promote independence of thought and mind, whereas the new Harvard thrives on regurgitation and imitation of the liberal line, according to its recent graduate and undergraduate, who is so obviously literate and challenging.

Only about half of this slender but explosive volume is devoted to Harvard and the rest to politics, which is con- cerned with how the Republican Party lost its soul and how it might regain the kingdom of the elected. The academic section commands our attention, be- cause all who are attending college or

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have left, more or less recently, will find matching experiences in their own schools, if only they have the honesty and courage to say it in these days of regimented conformity, which has be- come the cult of culture.

Dr. Eliot became president of Harvard in 1869 at the age of 35. He labored for forty years to make it a great uni- versity. Before his death in retirement in 1926, the cultists had begun their transformation of thought by inquiry into thought by conformity, which so distresses Mr. LeBoutillier, who wrote his book in his 23rd year and is now only 25.

In Eliot's later days, many professors abandoned spiritual unity and turned to the calls for social justice, voiced in the storm and bloodletting of the French Revolution. It was easy for them to for- get the reign of terror in their absorp- tion with the goals of demagogues, and no less easy to forget that the cries ended in the despotic empire of Napol- eon. Naturally, it was not difficult for many of these cultists to embrace the revolution of Lenin and to forget its resulting mass purges and slave labor camps, which have ended in the only surviving and aggressive empire of our day.

The objectivity of the 19th century was abandoned for the calls for social justice of the 17th. Truths were jetti- soned as ephemeral; history was re- written, courses were reshuffled. In all fields, teachers were enlisted in what was held to be a war for social progress, even though what was offered was rooted in the failures of the guillotine.

W hen LeBoutillier passed through the gates of the Harvard yard, with their invitation: Enter To Grow in Wisdom, the first professorial voice he heard was one calling for the election of George McGovern in 1972, partly because the senator was calling for the imposition of a 100 percent tax on in-

heritance. This same professor, LeBou- tillier learned some minutes later, was the third largest contributor to McGov- ern's campaign, having given or loaned more than \$250,000 of his wife's in- herited sewing machine millions to the man dedicated to end inheritance. Le- Boutillier found that another faculty member, given to scatological outbursts against America, owed his home, car and fine clothes to his wife's father, the chairman of the board of a huge Wall Street bank. This same teacher railed against America and bowed to Marx, Hegel, Mao and their peers in a course supposedly devoted to such 19th cen- tury developments as slavery in America and the English industrial revolution.

The sale and use of pot and other drugs on the campus, the cuddling of homosexuals and lax grading for favored students was shocking enough, but it was the interjection of personal opinions by professors and invitations to contro- versial characters or groups to lecture on the campus which launched the new Harvard student on the warpath. This, of course, is not confined to Harvard. Liberal students and professors, LeBou- tillier concludes, are not "ideological soldiers engaged in a lifetime commit- ment to some ideal, but rather they are insecure people desperately searching for some sort of identity." He adds that in almost every case, "the loud and ranting voices calling for radical changes in America were not the voices of dedi- cated sacrificing ideologues; no, they were really the voices of a generation searching for something that would provide an umbrella under which they could find security and legitimacy." No doubt conformity is the womb to which the uncertain seek to return. He em- phasizes that not all of the students and faculty he knew at Harvard were as bad as the instances cited. Yet on the day of his graduation with honors, his house master urged him to take a few steps to the left, and the good man

did not mean physically. As an undergraduate, Mr. LeBoutillier was startled at how the general condemnation of the American system was combined with the remnants of snobbery he found surviving in the old line campus clubs. As a graduate student he was appalled by the reverse side of the coin in the highly-regarded Harvard Business School, where he found instruction and discussion geared to the conviction that profits are the ultimate attainment, ethics and morality are discards, and bribery can be considered a virtue along with other questionable practices.

Harvard made LeBoutillier a Republican. He became interested in the senate campaign of Lt. Col. Leo K. Thorsness, a Hanoi prisoner of war who walked out of Hanoi on his feet to challenge George McGovern. Without experience in fund raising, LeBoutillier collected more for the war hero by his letters and phone calls from his Harvard room than did the candidate's state organization. He was invited to become a finance chairman at the age of 20, perhaps the youngest in political history. This feat also attracted the attention of the White House, to which he was summoned in the 1967 presidential campaign, but where he found little to attract or inspire him.

LeBoutillier entered the Harvard Business School after deciding to make a career of politics. He believes that lawyers have failed and that government should be run like a business; therefore, it needs men of business training. He holds that labor leaders have, all too often, mistreated and deceived their membership; that religious leaders are often old, tired and bankrupt of ideas, although never before have so many young people believed in God; professional men—in law, business and medicine—are being criticized, as never before, for greed and lack of ethics, and educators are being distrusted, which was not so until recently.

His remedy is to find, educate and elect leaders that have faith in America

and its world role, which is to bear a light "unto all nations." LeBoutillier describes himself as a Republican for historical reasons, naming and dwelling on David Wilmot, the Pennsylvania congressman, who introduced the provision designed to keep slavery out of the territory taken from Mexico, and Galusha Grow, another legislator from the same state, who fathered the Homestead Act. He holds these forgotten figures to be men of dedication and soul, like Abraham Lincoln, whose counterparts are needed today. His enthusiasm for Wilmot and Grow is understandable, yet slavery would have been ended without Wilmot's prod which was never passed, and western lands would have been thrown open to settlement without Grow. Neither was alone in his cause. Many hated slavery and many wanted public lands thrown open to settlement, including such Democratic stalwarts as Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who lost his senate and house seats because of his growing opposition to slavery, and Horace Greeley, now remembered for his, "Go west, young man." Thus, it may be that LeBoutillier adopted Grow to give a historical background to his own program for political reform. He contends both major parties have failed the people and offers what he presents as the New Homestead, a program above and beyond the New Deal and the New Frontier.

This program, he insists, is necessary to enable middle and lower class American families to acquire homes, to help the deserving obtain higher education, to assist in meeting rising health costs and to provide for new types of government under which new mechanisms would be developed to allow Americans a greater participatory role in their local communities. He would promote local planning and development districts, consolidate districts to bring suburbs and their big city neighbors closer together for mutual benefits, introduce new roles for the government to help areas in trouble and establish ten regional councils under

which various government activities would be closer to the people they serve. Finally, he would seek to strengthen families and place them in control of the government.

Needless to say, this program will draw as much criticism from politicians as his criticism of Harvard, and the educational system it has sponsored, will draw from the academic community. Both can be reproached for immaturity. LeBoutillier can expect no embraces from those dedicated to the principle that all problems can be solved by throwing money at them, or from those who contend that they can solve the problems of the rest of us better than we can by waving their graduate degrees.

LeBoutillier will be compared, no doubt unfavorably, to William F. Buckley, Jr., who looked on his alma mater, after his graduation in 1950, and found it wanting. Some may label LeBoutillier the new Buckley, but others will brand him as more violent and angry. Which is in keeping with the nature of things; as time goes by, everything becomes worse—even the Ivy League Schools. □

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## Commendables

### On Frost's Legacy

*Frost: Centennial Essays III:* Edited by Jack Thorpe; University Press of Mississippi; Jackson, Mississippi.

If art is not to be used as a stepping stone to reinforce the actions and habits of an artist's life, if the interpretation of art should not be solely based on specific events that occurred in an artist's personal life—critics and literary historians would have little to do. The third volume on Frost, initiated by the centennial of the poet's birth, achieves that delicate balance of discussing the man and his art without stating that one is directly responsible for the other.