MODERN AGE

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

Anarchy on the Campus

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TOWARD THE END of the last century, in the late 1890's, Paris, and the whole Western world were startled by a series of bomb throwings in the French capital. Men calling themselves anarchists or radicals of some other brand hurled bombs into cafes, killing many of the patrons and in one or two cases making away with themselves in the bargain. It was, in the revolutionary slang of the time, "propaganda of the deed." As Ravachol, a leading anarchist of the time, explained, the revolutionists were in despair at not being listened to; they had tried every means of verbal agitation, every means of the "propaganda of the word," but to no avail. Something had to be done to "awaken the masses," and bomb throwing, assassination, and other forms of public violence seemed to be the answer. Terrorism, says

Roland Gaucher who had made a careful study of the matter, was a "strategy adopted by desperate messianic revolutionaries to impose their beliefs or bring them dramatically to public notice."

The aftermath of this orgy of bomb throwing is well known. Some timid public officials made concessions here and there to "avoid trouble." But, overwhelmingly, the only effect was to intensify immensely the hostility and indignation of the public against the revolutionists and their ideas. Public opinion was roused to fury; repressive legislation was quickly enacted; and the anarchists found even their own slim following among the workers slipping away.

But something more sinister was happening among the revolutionaries themselves. They had had their ideals, and it

was in the name of these ideals that they unleashed their violence and committed their depredations. But their lawlessness had its own demoralizing logic. The original ideals, such as they were, became increasingly vestigial, eroded by the reckless violence; and the line between anarchist terrorist and terrorist bandit became blurred. The idealist bombers became more and more simply bomb-throwing criminals.

No one at all acquainted with what is going on at the present time in this country and abroad can possibly miss the parallel with today's violence on campus. The student insurgents—the anarchists of the campus community—have their aims and ideals; they have also come to a desperate recognition of the failure of the "propaganda of the word" to get a hearing or accomplish anything; and they have therefore moved furiously to the "propaganda of the deed," to the tactics of violence. Again, the lawless violence is showing its own demoralizing logic. The moral restraints that make human life in society at all possible are being rapidly wiped out; what would have seemed intolerable outrages only a short time ago become more and more acceptable to the campus anarchists; in the end, the point is reached where anything goes. Associations and connections become increasingly murky; the line between the student radical and the underworld hippie soon begins to fade away. The simplest decencies disappear. Moral degeneracy, barely masked in a show of threadbare moral pretensions, takes over.

It is not necessary to exaggerate the extent of this problem in order to see its importance. Admittedly, less than 10 percent of the more than 3,500 collegiate institutions in this country have been involved in campus disturbances of any kind in the past five years; and the number

of campus radicals barely reaches 2 percent of the student body, hardly 10 percent even with their active followers. Yet, campus violence, anarchy on the campus, has been, in recent decades at least, a development so startlingly new and apparently so ominous in its moral and cultural implications that it may claim our concerned attention at this time. After all, the anarchist bomb throwers on the nineties and their sympathizers represented an even slimmer segment of the population.

It is worthwhile, then, to take a closer look at the phenomenon. Let us examine it first in historical and sociological perspective. Campus insurgency is widely recognized today as the most important, in fact, as the *only* important, action-phase of the New Left, and the New Left is recognized as its obvious ideological articulation.

The Old Left, the Marxist Left, based its entire revolutionary perspective on the expectation that the advancing process of industrialization under capitalism would speed the disintegration of the fabric of society and convert masses of the newly industrialized workers into fragmented, alienated "outsiders" hostile to the social order and ready to listen to the revolutionary call. And, indeed, in the beginning it looked very much that way: The uprooted elements who came to constitute the early proletariat did indeed begin to see themselves as "dissenters" (to use the contemporary term), extruded from society with no stake in it. But Western bourgeois society showed remarkable powers of self-recuperation. And the means bourgeois society developed to deal with the threat of massive proletarian alienation was that most bourgeois of bourgeois institutions—the labor union! Some of us, understandably irritated by the often crassly self-serving tactics of the unions (they are hardly alone in this!), tend to

overlook the conservative and antidisintegrative service the labor unions have rendered to society. The proletarian in modern industry was, as I have pointed out, fast becoming an "outsider," hostile to the bóurgeois social order, discontented, ever ready to listen to any kind of subversive appeal. But, corporately and vicariously, through his labor union, he has come to see the established order as his own, and he has developed a strong sense of loyalty and belonging. The working people of this country, and of others like it in the Western world, have come to constitute the most conservative element in society, with no trace of social alienation or "dissent." Whoever it may be that sees himself as an "outsider" in American society today, it is certainly *not* the organized working man.

Thus were Marx's expectations and hopes——the expectations and hopes of the Old Left—frustrated by the march of events. Not all old Marxists have understood what has happened, nor do many understand it even to this day: They still keep on talking of the "revolutionary working class." But the New Left seems to have caught an inkling of this development. Implicitly in action and even explicitly in thought (insofar as the New Left can be charged with thinking), they have written off the working class as the bearer and agent of revolution; a few pious phrases remain here and there, but no more than that. The New Left has looked around to find what was the really alienated, "outside" element in this country; and they found it, they thought, among the intellectuals, especially among the students and especially among the black students. Again we must be careful. Only a tiny handful of American students are alienated in any real sense, and no larger proportion of black youth, if indeed as large. But a few score thousand alienated radicals among some five and a half million students seems more

promising than nothing at all among some twenty-five million organized workers and some sixty million wage workers all told.

The New Left, therefore, has come to feel, with a show of plausibility, that it has some scope for its revolutionary activity, especially if it can manage to exploit the genuine complaints and grievances that have become so pressing on American campuses.

There is just one major difficulty with this revolutionary reasoning, and that is that, whereas the workers who were to be revolutionized unquestionably possessed overwhelming and decisive power in society, students have no effective power whatsoever. No less sympathetic an observer of the student Left than Al Milano, a Brooklyn College graduate who was director of the Legal Rights Department of the National Student Association, acknowledged this ruefully in a public interview in March of last year (Newark Star-Ledger, March 16, 1969). Students, he said, were "powerless, powerless people." In a flash of insight, he even traced their violence and insurgency to the fact that "powerless people" unable to effect their purposes by words "tend to react in a very paranoid way"—his term, not mine. Let us not be confused by the so-called "concessions," wise or unwise, trivial or more important, that student action is alleged to have extorted from college administrators. College administrations, like public authorities elsewhere, have often tended to be weak and indecisive, and most of the concessions, however unwise, seemed somehow to be in line with the trend of the times and have been rather willingly acceded to. But realities are realities. A general strike of radical workers could well revolutionize, or at least paralyze, society; but a general strike of the radical intelligentsia, so long as order is maintained by the public authorities, would, I am afraid, actually be welcomed

by the American people, and a general strike of radical students even more. Radical students on strike, I have heard more than one labor leader say, should be promptly expelled to make room for students who really want to study; and I remember one acquaintance of mine, a not unintelligent man either, remark upon a possible strike of intellectuals, with the disgusted comment, "Well, at least, they'll stop yapping for a while, won't they?"

No. The students, although a segment of them do show a certain vulnerability to radicalization, are a nugatory social force in modern bourgeois society. The New Left seems to be staking its revolutionary all upon a social force that has no effective revolutionary power—that has the power, at most, of making a nuisance of itself, of effecting some degree of temporary disruption, but never really more. Indeed, if the weight of the younger generation could be made to show in the political scales, it would—as Seymour Martin Lipset, John Roche, and others have suggested—count more on the side of conservatism than of radicalism. The revolutionary hopes that the New Left has placed in the student youth are no less illusory—and even more naive—than the fading dreams of the Old Left.

Recently, student radicalism has come in for considerable psychological scrutiny. I merely mention Lewis Feuer, especially in his recent book, *Conflict of Generations,* and Bruno Bettelheim, in a number of influential studies. A picture emerges. The indefinite prolongation of childish imperiousness, nourished by a popular middle-class style of child-training, which tends to dismiss fixed routines and schedules in favor of a permissiveness that puts a premium upon childish whim and caprice, has helped produce a generation of which a significant proportion do not seem to have learned how to defer their desires and submit them to some sort of rational consideration. When they want something, they want it—in characteristic infantile fashion—*right now!* Instant gratifications, or they will go into a violent tantrum! "We want the world—and we want it *now!*"; so runs a slogan recently painted by student radicals on the walls of the London School of Economics (see photo in *Times Literary Supplement* (London), February 27, 1969. Those bearded youths who hurl their "non-negotiable demands" in the face of an abject administration and threaten violence and disruption—give the university "three hours to live" if they are not granted, on the Cornell model: how far are they in their behavior from a spoiled two-year-old who has never learned what reality means over against the imperative pleasure-principle, demanding instant gratification? Thus do infantilism and sinister nihilism converge and fuse, as the psychologists tell us—and not for the first or the last time in our experience either.

This psychological paradigm of instant gratification or else wild tantrums is an illuminating one. It needs, however, to be set in the sociological context and subordinated to the moral dimensions of the problem to do full justice to the situation.

A special problem is presented by black violence on a number of campuses, which seems to be growing whereas white student disruptions appears to be on the wane. In a frenzy of emotional idealism, but quite understandably, many college and university authorities have been scouring the Negro communities to recruit black students without much regard to qualification or competence. Once in college, these black students find themselves thrown up against white students far better equipped for the academic life with whom they must compete. They very quickly and very naturally develop gnawing feelings of bewilderment, envy, anger, and embitterment, directed

against what they call the White Establishment and its alleged representatives. This is the "shock of integration" to which Bayard Rustin and other responsible Negro leaders have been calling attention.

The black radicals, too, have their "non-negotiable demands" to be instantly granted, or else! These demands generally center around black autonomy on campus and privileged sanctuary in academic life in the form of a completely autonomous and black-run Black Studies department, setting its own rules and standards, academic and disciplinary. Operating with the radical ideology of "black power" and protected behind the ramparts of their sanctuary, they would not have to meet the competition of those better prepared for the demands of college life. John Roche has shown how this pattern worked itself out in the Brandeis sit-in some months ago, and others can testify to the very similar developments on a dozen other campuses. It is hardly necessary to point out how campus life, the academic integrity of the institution, and the interests of well-qualified Negro students all suffer from this kind of power-play, with its sinister train of violence, intimidation, and disruption.

And yet, over against this dark picture, it must not be forgotten that the great majority of student radicals ultimately do settle down to a perfectly respectable, conventional bourgeois existence in the suburbs, with hardly a vestige of the earlier radicalism. A number of such cases, many of my personal acquaintance, come to mind, but naming names is, at best, an invidious exercise.

This should not lead us to suppose, however, that student insurgency, even apart from the fury of some black student groups, is today an insignificant affair, a kind of belated childishness, with only a marginal impact. This would be far from the truth. Student radical insurgency loosed, and has promoted, a wave of cultural nihilism and moral degeneracy, in line with certain long-range tendencies in the West, it is true, but sufficiently startling even against this background.

We know only too well that the whole structure of civilization is erected on a dual foundation—the rule of law and the preservation, transmission, and extension of culture, of the funded spiritual and intellectual achievements of mankind. The student revolutionaries have never had much use for the rule of law, which they are wont to denounce as "bourgeois legality." But, in the beginning at least, they did profess a high regard for culture; their early statements, and even some of their brochures, are sufficient evidence of this. Indeed, their attack on the American university was largely based on the allegation that, in its disgustingly bourgeois spirit, the university was betraying the genuine tradition of culture. But, as student radicalism became more and more anarchistic, more and more reckless, and as it fell more and more under the influence of the crude philistinism of a handful of radicals, it became increasingly hostile to the very idea of culture and desperately determined to tear it down. Let me give you one or two recent examples to illustrate this frantic anticultural fury. At San Francisco State College, Professor John H. Bunzel, who surely never expected that any radical student would ever object to him, found a bomb outside his office and had his classes constantly disrupted by jeering students. A leading member of the S.D.S. and the Black Students Union was good enough to explain to him the reason for this harassment: "You are a perfect symbol. You are over forty; you are white; and you hold a Ph.D. degree" (*America*, March 22, 1969). At the University of Chicago, a few weeks before

student rebels (incidentally, in this case, all white) chanting "fascist pig" forced the suspension today of the special disciplinary committee convened . . . to deal with the ten-day occupation of the school's administration building. . . . As soon as Mr. Oaks (the committee chairman) began to speak, a male demonstrator shouted: "We're having our own hearing . . . Anyone with short hair who is over thirty will not be allowed!" . . . "Please be quiet," Mr. Oaks said, "this is a public hearing . . ." A demonstrator shouted, "That's Dallin Oaks, chief of the pigs!" . . . "I appeal to your fairness," Mr. Oaks said. "Fairness! Fairness! Fascist pig!", the demonstrators shouted . . . As the demonstrators filed from the building, they sang God Bless America, completing the song with a shout, "God Damn America!" (*New York Times*, February 9, 1969).

This at the University of Chicago! Increasingly, this is the mood and temper of the frantic student anarchist insurgents. Were it not for the lack of space, and my natural digust, I would multiply accounts of such incidents. Who can help recalling, from experience or reading, the venomous outbursts of the Nazi culture-barbarians or the older anarchist abuse of the cultured and educated "aristocrats"? This, too, has become a mark of the New Left, something which would have outraged, (and, in its time, *did* outrage,) even the most radical representatives of the Old Left, who, after all, were civilized men.

Something of the temper of this student anarchist assault on civilization can be seen in one of the more extravagant "unofficial" student publications under New Left inspiration described by Gene F. Bradley ("What Business Men Know About the Student Left", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 46, No. 5, September-October 1968).

Laugh at professors; disobey your parents; burn your money . . . [so runs the exhortation]. What is needed is a generation of people who are freaky, crazy, irrational, sexy, angry, irreligious . . . , people who burn high school and college degrees; people who say "To hell with your goals!" . . . people who lure youth with music, pot, and acid; people who break with the status-role-title-consumer game; people who have nothing material to lose but their flesh . . .

Even some of the New Left would be appalled at these words, but even they must recognize that this is the direction in which they are heading, even if they are still limping behind.

Most sinister, perhaps, is this systematic erosion, and hoped for eventual demolition on the part of the student anarchist radicals, of the moral foundations of society, of the most elementary public decency, and of the very structure of public order. Without these essentials, society could not possibly hope to survive. Without fundamental morality, there can be no stable public order; and without stable public order—as the celebrated theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, so well points out ("The Religion of Abraham Lincoln," *Christian Century,* February 10, 1965)—there can be no justice, no freedom, no culture.

Stable public order is not easy to achieve or to preserve. John Maynard Keynes, of Keynesian economics fame, who was a keen observer and a shrewd judge of human affairs, was wont to point out that "civilization [is] a thin and precarious crust, . . . only maintained by rules and conventions skillfully put across and guilefully preserved . . . [by] traditional wisdom and the restraints of custom" (*Two Memoirs,* London, 1949, p. 98). It is precisely this that the new anarchism is trying to break down. The insurgent student anarch-

ists are engaged in a crusade to destroy everything upon which civilization, civilized society, rests.

The process is insidious. The student radicals of the New Left began with what, in political society, is the not unknown practise of fabricating grievances so as to use them as issues to whip up frantic mob emotions in their cause. Mark Rudd, the Columbia S.D.S. leader, confesses, or rather boasts: "Let me tell you [he says]. We manufactured the issues. The Institute of Defense Analysis is nothing at Columbia. Just three professors. And the gym issue is bull. It doesn't mean anything to anybody. I had never been to the gym site bebefore the demonstrations began. I didn't even know how to get there" (*National Review*, November 5, 1968). The issues don't matter; it's the disrupting that counts; and the issues are there, or are manufactured, so that they may be used to make trouble and disrupt.

At Harvard, the "overwhelming opinion among faculty members questioned," reports the *New York Times* (April 11, 1969), in its account of the recent disturbances, "was that the extreme wing of the Students for a Democratic Society would have acted out its disruptive plan in any case," no matter what the issues were or whether there were any issues at all. Franklin L. Ford, the distinguished historian, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, put it this way: "We've been given almost an exact date, with only the issue left open." Whatever issue comes to hand will serve as well as any other. The only question is: How well can the issue mobilize masses of students and be made to serve the revolutionary purpose of disruption? "Creative violence" is what anarchist theory calls it; out of total destruction will come the new world! There is no doubt about the violence and destruction; the new world that is supposed to come

out of it is something else again.

Well, as I have said, first came the revolutionary manipulation of grievances and issues. Deliberate disruption of university life followed through sit-ins, occupation of campus buildings, obstructive picketing, arson, bombings, and such other devices to force the will of the insurgents on reluctant faculty, administration, and students. It was not long before attacks on policemen and the use of explosives became standard operating procedure for the student insurgents. So-called "guerilla tactics," in imitation of the idolized Che Guevara, began to be employed, although the Columbia S.D.S., out of bitter experience, after a while showed their disillusionment with such methods. "Molotov cocktails" (incendiary bombs) and lethal bombs of various kinds quickly made their appearance. I have already mentioned the bomb planted in Professor Bunzel's office. About the same time, a black student, a freshman at San Francisco State, a member of the Black Students Union, attempted to place a bomb on that embattled campus. It exploded in his hands, he was blinded, his hands were torn off, and his chest was crushed in the attempt. His associates of the Black Student Union promptly proclaimed him a victim of vicious "white racism."

Every moral value, every moral standard, every moral tradition is now being recklessly flouted by the student anarchists, who, at the beginning, were so ready to adopt a self-righteous moral posture. A trivial, though rather disgusting, example of what student radicalism has come to— I quote again from the *New York Times* report on the University of Chicago incident. "The demonstrators broke free . . . [and] cornered the assistant dean of students James Vice . . . One girl demonstrator ran her fingers through the assistant dean's hair and murmured, 'I just

love vice' . . ." These are the high-minded idealists we are sometimes told about!

I have barely mentioned what, at first sight, must surely seem the most outrageous aspect of student insurgency— the brutal denial of the elementary rights of the vast majority of nonradical students who came to college to study. These students, whose rights are surely primary, have been largely inarticulate until recently. They are not by nature given to protests and campus action, even in their own defense. But they, too, will have their day.

On the other side, the faculty is beginning to stir. Absolutely essential to the academic enterprise, no one will deny, is academic freedom. Over a generation ago, in 1930, the well-known philosopher, Arthur O. Lovejoy of Johns Hopkins, a founder of the American Association of University Professors, laid down the classic definition of academic freedom:

> Academic freedom [he wrote] is the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher institutions of learning to investigate and discuss the problems of his science and to express his conclusions, whether through publication or in the instruction of students, without interference from political or ecclesiastical authority, or from the administrative officials of the institution in which he is employed, unless his methods are found by qualified bodies of his own profession to be clearly incompetent or contrary to professional ethics. ("Academic Freedom," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1930, Vol. I, p. 284.)

Recent developments on college campuses have given new pertinence to this conception: Today, the "political interference" Lovejoy was talking about comes primarily from student insurgents. Perhaps the most striking case is what happened at

Harvard recently. A course planned at the Harvard Graduate School of Design was disrupted on February 19 of last year by a group of radical students who invaded the classroom and refused to let the lecturer go on—that is, refused to let other students who wanted to take the course do so—because it did not suit their own notions of what the course should be like. This time the university was aroused. A hundred outstanding Harvard faculty members issued a strong statement denouncing this kind of coercive action by insurgent students as a gross violation of the simplest academic freedom—the freedom, that is, not so much of the ordinary nonradical student, who is hardly mentioned, but of the faculty—and calling upon the administration to "take measures to insure the inviolability of instruction and examinations." The next day President Nathan N. Pusey endorsed this statement and demand. On March 10, another invasion of a classroom at Harvard was attempted: Four men and a woman rushed into a session that was going on and broke up the lecture. This time, the administrator was prepared. The disrupters were arrested, found guilty, and promptly (two weeks later) sentenced. The recent disturbances at Harvard have only strengthened this "hard" line of both faculty and administration against campus violence and disruption. At about the same time a group of over a hundred distinguished Columbia professors, later joined by eight hundred more, issued a statement to the same effect, vindicating their academic freedom against all outside interference, especially and including lawless student action (New York Times, April 19, 1968). Of course, the Cornell faculty abjectly capitulated to the armed terrorism of the black radicals. It is curious, though, how violations of academic freedom seem to arouse many faculty people more than the calculated destruction of morality, decency, and public

order—or of the elementary rights of the mass of students who want to study.

I do not want to overstate the case. The erosion of the moral foundations of society, of public decency, and of rule of law neither began with the student anarchists, nor will it end with them, though they have contributed significantly toward promoting it. But insurgent student anarchism itself seems to be on the wane, aside from the black bid for power, as most observers have noted. As was to be expected, the polarization of opinion has reached an acute point: a tiny minority supporting student insurgency and the vast majority of public and students bitterly opposing it. Hostile public opinion is rising; the forces of law and order are mobilizing; legislation appropriate or inappropriate, is being adopted at a rapid rate; the mass of non-radical students, whose rights have been contemptuously flouted by campus insurgents, are beginning to make their resentment heard and felt; the student insurgents themselves are beginning to lose their following and their self-confidence. Even administrations seem, here and there, to be acquiring a little backbone. Soon, perhaps very soon, it will become once more possible to consider much-needed university reforms in a calm, rational spirit, without overhanging threats of disruption, coercion, and violence. Toward that day, we must build.

The Roman Example

J . M . L A L L E Y

Only once during dinner was there any conversation that included the young gentlemen. It happened at the epoch of the cheese, when the Doctor, having taken a glass of port wine and hemmed twice or thrice, said:

"It is remarkable, Mr. Feeder, that the Romans—"

At the mention of this terrible people, their implacable enemies, every young gentleman fastened his gaze upon the Doctor with an assumption of the deepest interest.

Charles Dickens: *Dombey and Son*, Chap. XII

I

THERE ARE MANY who believe that the counterparts of the remarkable and terrible Romans of antiquity are to be found in the no less remarkable and terrible Americans of the present. Among the alleged similarity or identity of traits, these have been mentioned: a psychology that is adaptive rather than creative, a distaste for speculative thought and a tendency to measure all values by practical effects, a genius for stupendous engineering projects, a love of grandiose spectacles, and an attitude of mingled contempt and humility toward older and less vigorous civilizations. There are, though, a few obvious differences. It is probable, for example, that a Roman of late republican or early imperial times would have been bored sick by such innocuous *ludi* as the Rose Bowl Festival or the Democratic National Convention; it is also probable that any well-bred American would be horrified by the kind of entertainments associated with the Circus Maximus and the Colosseum. The taste for cruelty and violence, however, is easily cultivated and was certainly not peculiar to the Romans or to pagan antiquity. Wherever public executions have been permitted or instituted they have attracted large crowds, and the more barbarous the mode of execution the more numerous the spectators. There is a record of a young French princeling whose tutor,