

The Unpossessed

DO THEY KNOW what they are doing to their country, these professionals of reflection and expression called intellectuals? Do they think that by having set themselves apart from the major venture in which America is engaged they have become a separate and sovereign estate? No matter whether connected or not with the campuses, there are enough of these unpossessed people to inflict the punishment of loneliness on those of their peers who refuse to go along. Their following is large among the paraintellectuals down to the most modest levels of the communications trade and among young people, students or dropouts, who used to sit in and now march on—to the Pentagon, for instance, or to the induction centers.

True, this genuinely peaceful country has had two civil wars, one called the War of Independence and the other still called in the South the War Between the States. Civil conflicts of the most bitter nature preceded America's entry into the two World Wars and left unforgettable marks on many a public figure. But not one of the civil conflicts was kept raging with increasing fury by so many and so varied segments of the population while American soldiers were fighting an enemy openly supported and armed by our country's most implacable opponent.

WHY? If there is a link between that external opponent and the disaffection among our own people, it is up to the government to produce the evidence of it. Private citizens who are not ashamed to be patriots have more than enough to do in searching for the causes of these unprecedented national disturbances. The search can well start by looking inside ourselves, for there is scarcely

anyone who can claim complete innocence. Who has not thought that, like past commotions, this one, too, would run its course? America has proved to be the beneficiary of many immunities. No other great industrial country had been spared class war. There had been hostile reactions against any large-scale foreign immigration, but the Melting Pot was supposed to have done the job. Even those of us who knew how inept the metaphor was, and how different were the handicaps each national and religious group had to overcome, nevertheless cherished the prospect that the Melting Pot could work for, of all people, the American Negroes.

True, even in comparatively quiet times, a Hamlet-like question was asked: Have we a national purpose? There is no relatively young country that has not been afflicted by such doubts. Usually they are answered by tomes of what could be called a sort of sociological autobiography. Toward the end of the Eisenhower era, the question about our national values or goals was raised again, and a committee was appointed to report on the matter. Recently, on a TV program, the Johnson administration was accused of having deprived the nation of its purpose by insisting on the war in Vietnam. This kind of indictment, with a number of variations, is constantly to be heard. On that particular TV program, the indictment came from no less an authority than that voluble verbalizer Richard Goodwin.

All trash aside, this country is too mature, too burdened with responsibilities to indulge in the adolescent game of racing after its basic value. The Americans are not the chosen people, and no sane American has such a notion. But it just so happened that in this vast section of the

world a heterogeneous collection of people developed ways of living and of growing that have proved to be well suited to human nature. It also happened that the Americans have been somewhat reticent in explaining to themselves and to others how they did it.

Now, in facing its most ruthless imitator, this knowledge must become fully articulate. Unfortunately, the large majority of intellectuals, and particularly in the academic community, have assiduously cultivated noncommittalism.

The intellectual community cannot be considered as the major cause of the present disarray. Those to whom a personal responsibility can be attributed are the ones whose frivolity would never have come out so glaringly had not the Presidential election of 1960 brought them into a position where they could enjoy the glitter of power. Then the atrocious death of the young President made them dedicate their energies to the stultifying notion that power was their due.

THE INFLUENCE of these few men is not as great as their vanity. Yet it must be admitted that merrily, in a spirit half of fun, half of revenge, they have done harm to the nation. They are taken seriously abroad, listened to at home by their colleagues and students. Should the New Left acquire any degree of power, they will have no cause to rejoice. Should an anti-intellectual revulsion occur, the nation would greatly suffer.

It is somewhat unnecessary and most unpleasant, but nevertheless proper, to name at least two of the men I have in mind: Professors Galbraith and Schlesinger, the chief Mandarins at the court of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.



A Belated Effort to Save Our Cities

MARTIN NOLAN

SISYPHUS, King of Corinth, was repaid by the gods for his wickedness in life by a punishment that has fascinated observers from Homer to Camus. In the lower world, he was forced to roll a large rock uphill; as soon as it neared the top the rock always rolled back down again. The task of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is somewhat comparable. The department's main problem lies in atoning for the past mistakes of America. Its officials are trying to expiate the carelessness, if not the wickedness, of American attitudes toward cities and their surrounding land and in particular to correct the harmful results of Federal policies of at least three decades. The vastness of this first corrective task and the realization that little else can be done before it succeeds make HUD's burden heavy indeed.

Each new urban program has been designed essentially as an antidote, not a cure. Increased aid to mass transit attempts to redress the imbalance caused by the indiscriminate growth of Federally aided highways; the rent-supplement program tries to erase the barrackslike brutality of public-housing projects; the Model Cities program attempts to humanize

urban renewal, which had too often erected luxury apartments or office towers without improving the housing of the poor people it displaced.

The feeling of futility in most discussions of urban problems in the United States is due not only to the scope and volume of these problems but also to the fact that America came to a full realization that it was an urban culture only in 1965, when HUD became a cabinet agency. Earlier cabinet agencies had been given missions with less urgent timetables. The Department of the Interior was founded in 1849, before the nation's great westward expansion; Agriculture in 1889, before vast technological changes came to farming; Commerce and Labor in 1903, before Henry Ford started his Model T production line. But HUD was chartered *after* foreign and farm immigration made America a nation of cities and, more importantly, after

the more sudden emigration to the suburbs during the two postwar decades. Both of these mass movements were unsupported by any planned public logistics, a lack that many HUD programs are trying to correct.

HUD PROGRAMS that have brought some cohesion to suburban growth include aid for mass transit, open space, metropolitan planning, public-works facilities, and water and sewer systems. These programs, all fairly new, are comprehensive, well planned, well executed, and popular. They are also of primary benefit to suburban communities, whose growth and very existence have been dependent on Federal policies. The Federal Housing Administration has, since 1935, issued more than \$84 billion in mortgage insurance, creating suburbia and helping to entice middle-income families from central cities without due compensation to the cities. This prejudice against cities and in favor of suburbs is the most grievous Federal sin for which HUD must atone.

Not surprisingly, the future of FHA mortgage policies is the largest source of external criticism of HUD and the focus of its greatest inner discord. When HUD was formed from the con-

