
EDITORIALS



YOUTH IN REBELLION

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

These are mournful days in the faculty clubs of America. The profs, so many of whom have made politics their religion and *gauchisme* its inspiration, are finding themselves lecturing to classes whose students sport an inscrutable abundance of Reagan-Bush campaign buttons. How to account for the scandal? Youth is supposed to be a time for hoisting the black flag and hollering for anarchy and liberty. The majority of American youths are supporting Ronald Reagan and the clock-stoppers.

Seasoned political observers are as puzzled as the profs. The presence of Reagan supporters on college campuses is particularly mysterious, for it was not long ago that the campus was the preserve of radicals, and now many radicals hold forth from the lectern. Are college students as immune to the radical hooey as non-college youth?

Some observers insist that young voters, having suffered through the Carter Administration's episodes of indecision and weakness, are fetched by what they perceive as Ronald Reagan's "strength." Others stress the different moods conjured up by the candidates,

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.

with youth opting for Reagan's optimism and self-reliance over Walter Mondale's gloom and dependency. Still others don their Freudian robes and rumble orphically over the allure of the President's "grandfatherly" image—though some consider the image to be that of a venerable uncle. Finally, there are those observers of solid disposition who see the young's support for Reagan-Bush as a vote for "selfishness" and "narcissism."

Doubtless all these explanations have their merits, at least until we get to the last, whereupon I mutiny. I doubt that today's youth are any more susceptible to baseness than any other generation, and I suspect today's youth are just as liberty loving and given to lapses into thoughtfulness. As editor of *The American Spectator* I visit college campuses frequently, and from these anthropological expeditions I have concluded that today's youth are unsatisfied with the false pieties and other ideas bequeathed them by their radical predecessors. Moreover, considering the frayed condition of such aspects of their lives as the educational system, their dissatisfaction is justified.

Simply stated, today's young have

been entering a world that extends to them diminished possibilities. After more than a decade of high taxes and low productivity, the America of the early 1980s has not been as abundant with opportunities and riches as the America of the recent past. Given the choice between Mr. Mondale's call for higher taxes and more sacrifices and Mr. Reagan's policy of lower taxes and more growth, the young voters quite naturally favor growth.

They know that they face a very tough time just matching their parents' standard of living. Even if a second Reagan Administration keeps the government from growing more onerous, it is going to be tough. With Mr. Mondale in the White House the fortunate few might improve their economic positions, but not the majority. Is it "selfish" and "narcissistic" for the majority to want to provide for itself? I think not.

The fact is that a new car and a new house are farther beyond the grasp of today's youth than they were for recent generations of young people. Today's youth understand this and recognize that the increased taxes and government regulations promised by Mr. Mondale will move homes and cars still farther from their grasp. Furthermore

this generation of young people is the first to be exposed to all the social engineering experiments implemented when utopian liberals gained the ascendancy over our educational and political systems. These young people have been bused from school to school, propagandized by all the pontificators of reform, made into guinea pigs for each progressive enthusiasm that could take over their school system.

My guess is that they are a little weary of it all. Some observers may consider them bleak reactionaries, but as I see it they are merely typical young Americans seeking personal liberty and self-reliance. Nor are they necessarily mindless. The young people I have seen are engaged in a search for ideas that is characteristic of youth. This fall a rising generation of writers is producing a spate of intelligent books arguing against the liberals' gloomy no-growth ideas. If today's young find satisfaction in the ideas of such writers as Charles Murray, the author of *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980*, and George Gilder, the author of *The Spirit of Enterprise*, there could be still more lugubriousness in the faculty clubs. And this election could become one of the great political watersheds of the twentieth century. □

I REMEMBER MARIO

Every now and again the average, tax-paying, God-fearing American, flipping through his newspaper or glancing at his TV screen, comes away feeling that he is a stranger in a strange land. How many felt this way last month when we were confronted with news stories heralding the return of Mario Savio, the "silver tongued orator"? Do you remember the "silver tongued orator"? Did you want to?

Mr. Savio's oratory was perpetrated twenty years ago at the University of California at Berkeley where he was an accessory to what was called "the Free Speech Movement." His season of

glory lasted but a few months, perhaps a year, certainly not much longer. Then time rushed on by. For a while he was a bartender. More recently he was a middle-aged student. Upon becoming eligible for Social Security he might still be a student.

Nonetheless there he was last month back at Berkeley's Sproul Plaza with the press duly embalming the event and sentimentalizing it as only the American press can. Apparently our media intend to relive many of the epic dramas of 1960s youth culture whether we like it or not, although each is to be expurgated of all the sordid details



so that Americans from every walk of life can sit back and enjoy. In August we relived Woodstock, very little being made of its unappetizing aftermath: drug addiction, venereal disease, petty criminality. Last month it was Berkeley's Free Speech Movement; and again no mention slipped out about the malign results, in this case the damage done a great university.

That the vast majority of Americans today do not give the first hoot about the 1960s counterculture seems not to matter. Each commemoration is going to be served up in a warm bath of nostalgia as commemorations of the Glenn Miller Orchestra might be served up in nostalgia. Truth be known those who serve up these nostalgic commemorations are hugely self-indulgent, and it ought not to escape commentary that precisely this sort of

100 percent American self-indulgence is what ultimately sank the Free Speech Movement, leaving Mr. Savio derelict and forgotten.

For a brief and brassy hour he had a place on the national scene. While most of his fellow students were at class preparing for the future he was leading demonstrations and getting arrested—once the gifted orator was jugged for biting a cop on the leg. Along with the other radical fly-by-nighters he was boomed as a prodigy populating "the brightest generation in our history." Naturally within a few fleeting years all these geniuses had vanished from center stage. Today those who spent the 1960s intelligently preparing for the future are stepping forward even as the erstwhile radicals continue staggering about, wondering where Ronald Reagan came from and

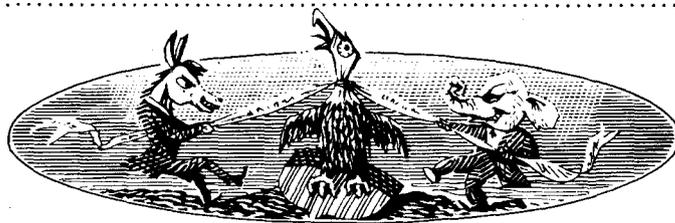
why so few Americans listen to the Beatles. Well you are only young once, and the sight of Mr. Savio weeping in Sproul Plaza last month over some has-been singer who was a wow twenty years ago reminded me that youth is not only a time for sowing wild oats but also for preparing for adulthood.

Begun in the fall of 1964 as a popular protest against officious university bureaucrats, the Free Speech Movement soon fell under the control of Stalinists and Trotskyists. Its demonstrations against university life were repeated all over the country, as was the movement's collapse into hedonism and anarchy. The tough ideologues of the left began by manipulating the zombies of the already established drug culture, but the America of the 1960s was not the Moscow of the last Czar. Soon the

revolutionary types found themselves being seduced by the drug culture and the idiots of sexual utopia. In time, the becalmed ideologues wandered into the cults and the personal growth therapies—though I have known some who became excellent shyster lawyers and shady businessmen. God knows where they all ended up, but I never pass a middle-aged bag lady or her male equivalent without thinking of the bright ones of the 1960s.

As has become the custom with the resurrected heroes of that decade, Mr. Savio last month associated himself with all the virtuous deeds that supposedly followed. He did not take credit for any of the social problems that grew ever worse in the 1970s. Nor did he explain why, if he and his friends were so successful, we have heard so little from them these last 20 years. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



THE COSTS OF ARMS CONTROL

by Tom Bethell

The topic is arms control. Do I hear groans? It is dull, I know, and I promise to do my best. But it's important, too. My interest in the arcane topic was aroused by two nearly simultaneous and unrelated events: the arrival at the White House of Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, who fulfills the classic definition of a diplomat (someone who goes abroad to lie for his country); and the General Motors-United Auto Workers negotiations over a new contract for the labor union.

Now, in the case of GM vs. UAW, we have a real and purposeful negotiation. Let us ask ourselves this simple question: Why did GM enter into it? (Bear in mind that it ended up agreeing to certain provisions it would rather have sidestepped: establishing a job security fund, and so on.) The answer, of course, is that GM had much more to lose if it had not entered into negotiation. The union would have gone on strike, and instead of losing something tolerably small, GM would have lost something intolerably large (namely, total production).

Thus the UAW extracted from GM

a compromise, by virtue of its ability to threaten a more burdensome cost. Likewise, of course, GM threatened UAW with an equally severe cost. If UAW hadn't shown up for talks once the old contract expired, GM would presumably have been free to hire non-union workers.

What I am trying to establish here is the underlying basis for negotiations in general. You negotiate with your adversary, and arrive at a compromise, when the other side has the capacity to impose a cost greater than your negotiated concession.

Now back to Gromyko and arms control. The question is: What cost does the Soviet Union threaten to impose on the U.S. if we do not enter into arms control negotiations with them?

Well, what? In order to find an answer to this simple question, I decided to enter the arms control debate at the most popular or "high school" level, as it were—the level at which it is presented to us by *Time* and *Newsweek*. At the time of Gromyko's visit articles were published in both magazines in each of two issues (cover date, October 1 and 8)—four articles

in all. Two of these were cover stories. In these 26 pages of copy (13 for each magazine) I would presumably find the answer.

But therein I found no straightforward statement of Soviet-imposed cost. *Newsweek* told us that "sources in Moscow were acknowledging that arms talks are a necessity," expressing the cost that we are imposing on them, and that "the Soviet military has begun to lobby for the resumption of negotiations" (ditto). This was followed by:

The Reagan administration also has tangible reasons for wanting arms negotiations, apart from the imperatives of presidential politicking. The European allies are almost desperate for arms talks; NATO's fragile unity could crack if Reagan appears to be dragging his feet. Congress also is applying pressure; if Reagan wants money for his pet weapons projects, such as the MX or his "Star Wars" missile-defense system, he will have to give arms control the old college try.

These are all self-imposed costs, of course. The Soviets do not enter into the picture at all. "Arms control negotiations" based on such a rationale are really negotiations with ourselves. On one side are the appeasement-oriented State Depart-

ment doves and their media parrots; on the other side the more realistic Defense Department "hawks." The Soviets are not a *separate* side; they simply weigh in on the State Department side. (Gromyko complained at one point, "The tug of war between the groups that determine U.S. foreign policy has been won by the militaristically minded.") →

