

victorious in the absence of radical programs for full employment, abolition of slums, the reconstruction of our educational system, new definition of work and leisure.

There is a role for radicals in the liberal causes of today, be they reapportionment or civil rights. Our actions can help assure that these goals are not hopelessly watered down. Civil rights must not become tokenism; War on Poverty must not be a bureaucrats' war on the poor. But we can only act effectively within the framework of an alliance with other progressive forces.

We can provide idealism while others are obsessed with practicality. We can develop independent alternatives while others are working for a consensus. In short, we must not be an appendage of other liberal groups. But we must be allied to them! And our programs will be accepted to the extent which they are well-developed and viable. Instead of saying merely "let the poor control the War on Poverty," it should be the job of the New Left to have people come to meetings and make suggestions, instead of boycotting the "Establishment" war on poverty.

This is a program for people interested in action, not blind rebellion. The test of the maturity and viability of the New Left is whether or not it *prefers*, deep down, beating its head against the wall to getting something done. If the New Left refuses to understand what political power is about in a democracy, it is doomed to failure. Its members will probably salve their disillusionment with the comforts of middle-aged apathy. But if we go out with a real program of tangible results to be gained from political participation, bringing to the cause the enthusiasm that only youth can muster, we can do a great deal.

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### 3. PHILIP G. ALTBACH:

## THE ILLUSION OF A STUDENT REVOLUTION

1965 WILL BE KNOWN as the year of the student revolution on American college campuses. The amount of publicity devoted to the student movement during the past academic year has been unprecedented, and to judge by its scope, the American campus has been shaken by student unrest on a variety of issues, from Vietnam to university administrative and academic policies. While it is true that the amount of student protest has been substantial in the recent past, particularly in comparison to the sterile decade of the 1950's, the "student revolution" is more a creature of the mass media than of true mass movement. It is doubtful that the recent rash of demonstrations will have any on-going politiciz-

ing effect on the student community, and it is entirely possible that next year might see a total lull in student social action.

The fact that the mass media, as well as more serious journals and commentators, have paid so much attention to the student movement during the past year may, however, have some lasting effect. Even if the situation on the campus remains essentially unchanged, educators and the general public may be more aware of the problems of higher education at a time of transition. For the first time in decades, college administrators have to justify their policies to concerned faculty members and interested trustees. Although it is clear that Clark Kerr's "multiversity" is here to stay, it is possible that these new educational monoliths may come under careful public scrutiny. Even if this is the only result of the "revolution" of 1965, it will be of vital importance.

As for the student rebellion itself, it is unlikely that this year's outbursts of discontent have been much greater in intensity than those of the past few years. Student demonstrations which last year would have received only local coverage have now been reported in *The New York Times*, and analyzed in such august publications as *Life* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, not to mention the *Nation* and *The New Leader*. The recent Free Speech Movement, which rocked the University of California recently, received massive publicity, while similar sit-ins at the University of Chicago several years ago received scant attention from the press.

The Students for a Democratic Society, probably the largest campus social protest movement at the present time, has also been the subject of much analysis and publicity. Yet, two years ago the Student Peace Union, a group with similar aims and programs, a larger membership and more campus affiliates than the SDS now has, was largely ignored by the press. This year's student Vietnam demonstration in Washington, organized by the SDS, with the support of the rest of the campus "left" groups, received far more press coverage than a student disarmament demonstration several years ago, which attracted almost as large a participation.

The student civil rights movement, which has been active on the campus for several years, has actually lost ground this year. Campus CORE and NAACP groups have lost much of their strength, and even SNCC, the most activist-oriented of the civil rights organizations, probably has fewer supporters this year than last. The fact that many white middle class students have ceased to participate in the civil rights movement removes one of the few remaining bridges between the Negro mass movement and white liberals and moderates.

What is more important, perhaps, is that the nature of the student movement has substantially changed in the past year. In a sense, the middle has fallen out of the movement. Groups like the Student Peace Union, which fostered discussions concerning peace and disarmament, as well as militant demonstrations, have lost their popularity. Moreover, the SPU emphasized a rational evaluation of Cold War issues, thereby encouraging independent thought and discussion critical of the American government's position on most issues as well as of the Soviet Union and China. The Young Peoples Socialist League, another organization which placed emphasis on critical discussion, has

also lost much of its popularity. YPSL's fairly moderate democratic socialist approach to politics seemingly has been eclipsed on the campus.

THE CAUSES FOR A RADICALIZATION of the student movement are not too difficult to find. The policies of the American government in both Vietnam and in the Dominican Republic have been quite unpopular on the campus. It is fair to say that, in spite of its relatively good record on domestic issues, the Johnson Administration has almost totally antagonized the college campus. Not since the leadership vacuum of the Eisenhower era have liberal-minded American students been so disenchanting with the administration. A feeling of frustration, of failure to create a "dialogue" with the Establishment, has pushed the students into the streets.

Moreover, the present student left is much misunderstood by the mass media. As has been pointed out, numerically, the campus left is no larger today than it was a few years ago. Student radical organizations probably have fewer campus chapters than a year ago, even though some of these chapters have been particularly active. The two largest movements, the Students for a Democratic Society, and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, are more amorphous groupings than organizations. Unlike previous student organizations, these groups have very broad policy statements and a wide range of concerns, thus enabling small factions to use these groups for their own purposes. In their reaction to loyalty oaths and "red baiting," the mainstream of the student movement has gone to the other extreme, and permits any elements, regardless of views or motives, to use the banner of the student movement for their own purposes. Thus, it has been possible for a small faction such as the "May 2nd" committee, a creature of the pro-Maoist Progressive Labor Movement, to set the tone for many anti-government Vietnam demonstrations. While it is clear that the leadership of SDS is clearly left-liberal in its orientation, it has simply been unable to maintain adequate control over its organization.

The small left wing splinter groups have been successful in achieving publicity, though in little else. Such organizations as the DuBois Clubs, May 2nd Committee have a very limited membership, and what members they do have are highly concentrated in such centers as New York City and San Francisco. The influence of these groups is non-existent on most of America's campuses. The press, attracted by their "ultra" political and social views, and their non-conformist behavior, has given these splinter groups publicity far out of proportion with their influence on the campus. If the past is any indication, these groups will disappear from the campus within a semester or two, and will have achieved very little in the way of attracting members from the student community or of building any kind of movement.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT finds itself without ideology, and virtually without intellectual roots at a time when serious thinking must be done on educational issues and on problems of international politics. The "activists," alienated by increasingly bureaucratized colleges and universities, and by seemingly irrational governmental policies, have dominated over the more thoughtful ele-

ments in the student movement. These elements certainly make for interesting newspaper copy, though they do not necessarily build a meaningful student movement. It is interesting that much of the impetus for the present rash of student demonstrations has come from the two groups most maltreated on the campus—the undergraduates, who hardly ever see a full professor and are merely numbers on IBM machines, and the first and second year graduate students, who are often under the not too benevolent thumb of a senior professor more interested in cheap labor than in education. They were mainly responsible for the renowned Free Speech Movement at the University of California, which in turn sparked many of the other student revolts this year.

The student movement in America does not really deserve the name of a movement. While the student communities in other countries have toppled governments by their actions, America has no tradition of student political activism. The present movement provides no exception to this rule. Student activity has been sporadic, it has lacked coordination, and has been diffused over a wide range of issues. It has lacked both organizational and ideological cohesiveness. Indeed, much of the activity which has made headlines is more of an emotional response to outside stimuli than a conscious program for protest and social reform. The leaders of the student movement have not sought to provide the kind of programmatic outlines so necessary and have certainly not given any ideological basis to the movement. Even the leftist sects, which are wedded to one brand of Marxism or another, have been almost totally pragmatic in their approach, merely taking advantage of whatever discontent cropped up on this or that campus. The leadership of the Students for a Democratic Society is a good example of this: these people, for the most part younger graduate students, intellectually fairly serious and free from outside political control, have encouraged the student movement to wander from issue to issue, feeling, with some justification, that what was “swinging” on one campus, might be dead on another. As a result, the energies of the students have been dissipated in many small struggles, and no cohesive movement has been formed. The probability that the momentum which has been built up during the present academic year will be carried over to the next is slight under these circumstances.

The right wing student movement offers an interesting comparison with the present predominately left-oriented student movement. In 1960, the right wing students under the leadership of the Young Americans for Freedom, with substantial financial support, made an attempt to take over the liberal-dominated National Student Association. Although they were unsuccessful in their attempt, many commentators on student affairs saw the YAF and the button-down young reactionaries as the wave of the future on the student front. To everyone's surprise, the whole conservative student movement disappeared from view the very next semester, and not a word has been heard from it since. It is entirely likely that this year's crop of leftist organizations will suffer the same fate.

ONE CAN SAY THAT THE AMERICAN STUDENT MOVEMENT is almost always faced with the inevitability of failure. In the developing nations where the student com-

munity is part of the elite group, it is small enough to muster and mobilize a mass following. In the United States, the student community, being 5,000,000 strong, does not constitute an incipient elite, and is much too large to be coordinated into any meaningful movement. Furthermore, America has no tradition of student political activity. Student politics, whether on the right or on the left, has always been confined to a fairly small minority. Finally, there is no mass of educated unemployed in the United States which in other countries has been a potent cause for student unrest and insecurity.

The only new issue which has been injected into American higher education in the past decade is the transformation of the college into a multiversity. This issue has, in turn, engendered a good deal of concern among educators, and more recently among students as well. The roots of the Free Speech Movement at California and the less publicized, but equally crucial, campaign at Yale to retain a popular professor who was fired for failing to publish sufficient scholarly articles, lie in this new innovation. The students' contribution to the discussion on the future of education, dramatized through sit-ins, has been substantial and will doubtless help to make educational planners and administrators aware that many students are increasingly alienated from the educational process and that a substantial amount of discontent does exist on the campus. Whether the students will be able to alter the basic direction in which higher education seems to be headed is another question.

IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE STUDENT REVOLUTION OF 1965 is largely a creation of over-eager publicists. Much of the attention which has been given to the student movement in the recent past is unjustified in the light of the actual role of the student movement on the campus, and in comparison to its former activity and size. The left wing of the student movement has in particular received undue attention, whereas the strong and active Christian groups, among others, have been almost totally ignored, even though these student groups provide indispensable personnel for student civil rights work.

If history is any indication, the current rash of student activity does not necessarily mean that there has been any lasting change in the campus. The current spotlight on the student movement may, however, be to the good. If some of the important questions facing higher education raised during the demonstrations can give the impetus for realistic discussion, they will not have been in vain.

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## Harold Laski and the Soviet Union

MARCH 24 MARKED THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY of the death of Harold J. Laski, one of the twentieth century's most renowned Marxist thinkers and political activists. With his death, The London School of Economics and Political Science lost a professor with a superb ability to communicate knowledge and Marxist insights, intelligently, passionately and charmingly, to his students. The Executive Committee of the British Labor Party lost a dedicated theorist instrumental in shaping the Party's socialist character. Socialist and liberal leaders throughout world lost a friend and confidant whose logic and grasp of history made his advice invaluable.

Not all intellectuals and scholars were enamored of Laski. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., reviewing Laski's *The American Democracy* (*New York Times*, June 6, 1948), charged that Laski, "was committed to the straightforward doctrine that nations based on private ownership are bad things and nations based on state ownership are good things." It is regrettable that Schlesinger would write such an oversimplified version of Laski's creed. Obviously, it was not just Laski whom Schlesinger was chiding but socialist doctrine itself. Time alone will tell who was more correct—a Laski who claimed that there can be no freedom where there is not equality and no equality where the means of production are privately owned, or a Schlesinger who was optimistic about the democratic dynamic, at home and abroad, of American capitalism.

It is understandable that Laski finds his critics among non-socialist scholars. Unfortunately, however, there are *socialists* who defame his memory by charging that he was soft on Soviet Communism. Sidney Hook, for example, wrote in the *New York Times* a number of years ago that "Laski in the last ten years of his life became an apologist for the Soviet Union." Let us consider this charge by reviewing his published words since 1940.

In *Reflection on the Revolution of Our Time* (1943) Laski wrote that the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat became the Communist Party dictatorship and this became the dictatorship of an oligarchy which, "in Stalin's hands carries on the Byzantine tradition of Czarism." He accused this leadership of monopolizing the instruments of propaganda, of increasing the use of the secret police, of choking off discussion within their party, of manipulating the truth so that various problems were simplified and personalized into a melodrama of heroes and villains, to be canonized or purged. As for Soviet foreign policy, Laski described the German-Soviet pact of 1939 as a "cynical maneuver" which made World War II inevitable and a "shameless exhibition on Stalin's part of complete indifference to the fate of the working class outside the Soviet Union; and the attack on Finland, like the absorption of the Baltic Republics, was an example of strategic imperialism." As much, however, as Laski loathed the many instances of Soviet tyranny, he was opposed to the view that there was little to choose between Fascism and Communism. To him, they were significantly different in pedigree, purposes and results, and