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The Student Revolution

All through the land, this wondrous month of April, the student revolution has spread to campus after campus, even to the most conservative and the most apathetic. Last year confined to Columbia and a few other campuses, this spring's revolutionary wave has hit all types of campuses, from mighty elite Harvard to working-class San Francisco State, from poor-boy Queensborough Community to formerly conservative Catholic Fordham. This is a wave that must be considered, that must be understood, for it clearly heralds a mighty and accelerating phenomenon in American life.

Many of us, including this writer, thought that the dearth of student revolutionary activity last fall, after the high point at Columbia the previous spring, meant that the campus revolution was fizzling, and was in serious trouble. But, beginning in the late fall with San Francisco State and then Berkeley, the student rebellion has reached a crescendo this spring which few of us have ever dreamed could be possible in America. Of course, the pattern of student activity--of all types--is to start slowly in the fall and reach a peak in the spring. But this year's peak is so far above last year's that the permanence of the student revolution seems evident. And all reports state that each succeeding class is more revolutionary than its elders, that freshmen are more radical than seniors; finally, the sudden emergence of radical high-school movements throughout the country again ensures the deepening of the campus rebellion in the years to come.

How, then, should we respond to this remarkable new phenomenon? There are two typical responses to *any* revolution against State power anywhere, whether it be campus, Negro, or national liberation front. These are the Conservative and the Liberal. The Conservative "answer" is to shoot them down, to use maximum coercion, to bring in courts, police, armies, missiles, you name it, anything to crush and kill. This response accords with the conservative view of the State generally, which is to preserve and cherish the State's rule at all costs. The Liberal "answer" is to cozen and sweeten, to co-opt with petty and trivial reforms fueled by great gobs of Federal tax-money. In the end, if the revolutionaries persist and refuse to be either beaten or bribed into submission, the liberal, too, turns to State coercion, but with more hand-wringing and more do-gooding pieties. In the end, he will use almost as much force as the conservative, but his "humanitarian" patina often makes him even more repellent to the true libertarian.

In our judgment, neither of these tactics--apart from their morality or immorality--is going to work. The conservative tactic, in fact, is precisely the one that has led to the greatest victories for the revolution. The model

proceeds somewhat as follows: a small group of radicals presents their demands; the demands are brushed off by the Administration; the radicals seize a building and/or strike; the Administration calls in the cops, who wade in and beat and club and arrest; this naked manifestation of State brutality polarizes and radicalizes the campuses, pushes almost all the moderate students to the side of the radicals, and the revolution is on. This was the pattern, for example, at Columbia, at San Francisco State, at Harvard. The liberal tactic is by far the most dangerous for the revolution--most clearly successful at this year's sit-in at formerly sedate Sarah Lawrence--but this too is increasingly failing, witness Cornell and the City College of New York. What, then, would be the successful tactic in dealing with the student revolution? It is beginning to look as if the only successful tactic, ultimately, will be what the press calls "capitulation". It is interesting that the press and the politicians are beginning to refer to the student body of our nation as one of those "aggressor enemies" that we have become all too familiar with in the past: the "Huns", the Nazis, the Commies; and now it is our kids, virtually the entire generation of them. What are we supposed to do with them, Mr. Conservative? A little napalm? Or maybe the H-bomb, a "clean" one perhaps, so it won't fall on too many of us adults? How far are you prepared to go in using brutality and suppression as your answer to all the problems of this century?

For make no mistake; a generation is speaking. Anyone who is the slightest bit familiar with the campus situation knows the total absurdity of the typical conservative belief that the whole thing is being manipulated by a few "Commies" and "outside agitators" who nip from campus to campus exerting their supposedly Svengali-like effect on the nation's youth. These rebellions are spontaneous and spur-of-the-moment; they take inspiration and heart from rebellions on their fellow campuses, but they are in no sense manipulated by any arcane forces from outside. They stem from the deepest yearnings and values of the kids on campus.

Whether or not capitulation is the only tactic that will work, it is our contention that it is the only moral response we can make. Let us approach this question by considering the usual baffled cry: What do these kids want? Capitulate to *what*?

The goals of the revolution can be broken down into two different categories: the immediate and the ultimate demands. The immediate goals are the concrete, day-to-day

(Continued on next page)

demands that emerge from the everyday crises and irritants of each campus, and each campus and each group of kids will have different variations on a very similar national theme. The ultimate demands deal with the kids' perception of the fundamental evils inherent in our present educational system, as well as a vision of what that system could and should be like in the future.

The immediate demands deal with concrete cases of the particular university either being repressive or tying in with the military-industrial complex and the war activities of the government. The prime goal is to sever the universities' all-pervading tie-ins and linkages with the government and its war machine. This year's major protest demanded the abolition of ROTC on campus. ROTC has become intolerable to our youth; the spectacle of military training insinuating itself as a legitimate part of academic life and of the educational process, the realization that ROTC is training officers to enslave their fellow soldiers and to murder *en masse* in Vietnam, has become too obscene for any of our articulate and self-respecting kids to tolerate. And these kids never forget that the ROTC is training an elite officer corps who will be employed to enslave and command that hapless mass of youngsters--among whom will be many from our campuses--who will become enmeshed in the toils of the draft. One of the events that radicalized the ordinarily cool Harvard student body was an arrogant speech by President Pusey defending ROTC on campus as supplying a much-needed Harvard elite to our officer corps. This sort of pretension of the right of Harvard men to rule was much too blatantly despotic for the libertarian instincts of the present student generation.

This year ROTC; last year the protests were against the university's intimate connections with the Institute of Defense Analysis (Columbia), and against the university allowing its facilities to be used for recruiting purposes by the armed forces and its mass of murderers, and by corporations such as Dow Chemical heavily involved in the production of napalm, an instrument of this mass murder.

Everyone gets excited over student disruptions, sit-ins, a few bread crumbs left in rooms, a few blades of grass trampled on; all this leads the general public to a frenzy of denunciation of the "violence" committed by the students. But where oh where is anything like the equivalent frenzy directed at the monstrous engines of violence, slavery, and mass murder against which the kids are directing their protests: the army, the draft, the war, the police? Why not try to tote up the balance sheet of violence committed by both sides and see what comes out?

We are particularly puzzled by that legion of "libertarian conservatives" who condemn the kids unreservedly for "initiating violence". But *who* has initiated violence? The kids, or the universities that collaborate in the draft and the war machine, who eagerly obtain funds from the taxpayers for all manner of research and grants, including research for germ warfare? The tie-ins between government and the universities link them inexorably, as witness the acts set forth in James Ridgeway's recent *The Closed Corporation*. Particularly grotesque was the Randian argument, put forward by Robert Hessen in a widely distributed article, that Columbia was private property and that therefore the students were and are everywhere violating the sacred rights of private property; in addition, there is a definite sense in the Randian approach that our university system is really pretty good and that the rebel students are in the process of busting up a sound and virtuous institution. Apart from the various specific tie-ins with the State which the Columbia rebels were pinpointing (such as the IDA), nearly two-thirds of Columbia's income comes from governmental rather than *private* sources. How in the world can we continue to call it a *private* institution? Where does private property come in?

In fact, Columbia, as most of our universities--and of

course *all* of our frankly state-owned universities such as San Francisco State or Berkeley--is governmental property, paid for by government though run by corporate leaders tied in with government. And *government* property is always and everywhere fair game for the libertarian; for the libertarian must rejoice every time any piece of governmental, and therefore *stolen*, property is returned by any means necessary to the private sector. (In libertarian theory, it is not possible to *steal* from someone who is already a thief and who is only losing property that he has stolen. On the contrary, the person who takes stolen property from a thief is virtuously returning it to innocent private hands.)

Therefore, the libertarian must cheer any attempt to return stolen, governmental property to the private sector: whether it be in the cry, "The streets belong to the people", or "the parks belong to the people", or the schools belong to those who use them, i.e. the students and faculty. The libertarian believes that things not properly owned revert to the first person who uses and possesses them, e.g. the homesteader who first clears and uses virgin land; similarly, the libertarian must support any attempt by campus "homesteaders", the students and faculty, to seize power in the universities from the governmental or quasi-governmental bureaucracy.

Randians retort that public universities, too, are under the rule of legitimate authority because these authorities are elected by the taxpayers, who therefore "own" these campuses. Apart from the fact that university trustees are scarcely elected by anyone, this is a particularly grotesque argument for alleged libertarians to use. For it brings them squarely back to the virus of Social Democracy against which they began to rebel decades ago. The government "represents" the taxpayers indeed! If this were true, then any kind of libertarian viewpoint goes by the board, and we may as well all become Social Democrats, applauding any conceivable activity of government so long as an elected government performs the deed. Surely the basic libertarian insight is that the taxpayers do *not* rule, that, on the contrary, they are mulcted and robbed for the benefit of the State and its cohorts, and therefore the idea that the "public" or the "taxpayers" really *own* anything is a fundamental lie palmed off on us by the apologists for the State. It is not we but the *government* rulers that own "public" property, and hence the vital importance of getting all this property from the "public" to the private or "people's" sector as rapidly as possible. "Homesteading" is often the easiest and most rapid way of accomplishing this goal.

It is particularly amusing that the one act of students which upset the most people, and especially called upon their heads the charge of "initiating violence", was the act of the Cornell black students in bringing rifles and ammunition on campus. Laws were immediately and hysterically passed imposing the severest penalties on such action. But what's wrong with carrying guns? Does not every American have a constitutional right to bear arms? And these weren't even *concealed* arms, so why the fuss? Surely the *crime* comes not in carrying weapons but in using them aggressively. Libertarians and conservatives know this full well when they quite properly call for the repeal of gun laws, restricting the right of everyone to bear arms. Why does everyone forget all this when Negro students bear arms? Could it be that for many "libertarian conservatives" racism runs far deeper than devotion to liberty?

Another broad type of immediate demand is the ending of the university's use of the property-killing power of eminent domain to oust ghetto poor from their homes (major charges at Columbia and Harvard). Surely the libertarian, opposed to urban renewal and eminent domain, can only applaud this goal. A third type of widespread demand is an insistence on simple academic freedom--an insistence that the university is a place for freedom to express radical political views without harassment. The

San Francisco State rebellion was touched off by the university's firing of instructor George Mason Murray, a Black Panther, and this year's Berkeley strike by the attempted firing of Panther Eldridge Cleaver. The current Queensborough Community College rebellion was touched off by the firing of a Progressive Labor member of the faculty, Don Silberman. In all these cases the rebels are fighting for an elemental feature of what makes a genuine university.

Again, conservatives might protest that the trustees have the right to fire anyone they please. But, as we have pointed out, this is not so in the vast bulk of our universities that are openly or covertly governmental. The trustees of those colleges that are genuinely private have the legal *right* to fire anyone, it is true; but so then do the faculty and the students have the right to quit, to demonstrate, or to strike--in protest against the kind of a university where the trustees would do such a thing. And here again, any person concerned with education and freedom of inquiry must agree with that vision of a university where academic freedom rather than trustee dictation prevails.

Another crucially important demand concerns the ways in which the university reacts to the other demands of the rebels: that the State *must not* be called in to decide the issue. Again, everyone gripes at the disruption of the educational process caused by canceled classes or a barricaded door. But the really violent destruction consists in calling in the police, the brutal cops with their mace and their clubs and their tear gas. It is no wonder that police brutality has been the major and almost instant catalyst of radicalization on campus. There can be no education, no dialogue, no community of scholars, where there are helmets and clubs and bayonets. "Cops Out!" is an elemental and crucial cry that erupts from the embattled rebels, and it is one that any person of elemental good will, let alone a libertarian, must commend. Even more despotic is the new and sinister instrument of Statism first employed this year by Columbia University: the court injunction. The labor unions knew precisely what they were doing when they lobbied to pass the Norris-LaGuardia law outlawing the use of injunctions in labor disputes; libertarian theory requires the extension of this principle to abolishing injunctions everywhere!

For the injunction has two profoundly tyrannical features: (a) it moves to prohibit someone in advance from specific actions that, for libertarians, are totally legitimate. Thus, Mr. X. is enjoined by the courts from demonstrating at College Y because the courts have concluded that X might engage in an illegal action. But to move thus in advance of action is totally illegitimate; a libertarian legal order moves only against people *after* they have proceeded to commit a crime, and not before. And (b) the alleged violator of an injunction gets thrown into jail by the judge at the latter's discretion, without a jury trial, without a proper defense, the right to cross-examine, etc. Furthermore, the judge can keep jailing anyone whom he adjudges in "contempt of court"--whether for violating injunctions or for any other reason--as long as he feels like it. The whole area of "contempt of court" is one where judges can reign by their whim unchecked by law or rights. The entire field must be swept aside in the system of libertarian law.

Along with the demand for keeping the State and its minions out of campus disputes comes one for general amnesty, both civil and criminal, in the courts and in the university. Again a perfectly legitimate demand, especially since in the

"There are but three ways for the populace to escape its wretched lot. The first two are by the routes of the wine-shop or the church; the third is by that of the social revolution."

---Mikhail Bakunin, 1871

Letter From Washington

By Karl Hess

My Taxes

On April 15, I sent the following letter, accompanying my filled-out 1040 Form, to the Tax Collector:

The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America establishes a bill of particulars in regard to intolerable infringements, abuses, and denials of political power which belongs to the people.

The Federal government of the United States of America today is guilty of exactly every sort of infringement, abuse, and denial stated as intolerable by the Declaration of Independence.

I cannot, in conscience, sanction that government by the payment of taxes.

Further, the Federal government of the United States of America has established as a principle, and ruthlessly by the power of its officials enforces as a practice, that it can demand the primary loyalty of the people, that it can exercise all political power on their behalf, that it can wage war without their approval, and that it can and should establish the standards of their behavior and the goals of their lives.

I could not in conscience sanction such a government by the payment of taxes.

Finally, the Declaration of Independence, in the clearest possible language, tells Americans that when a government becomes destructive of the ends of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that it is the right and the duty of the people to abolish such government, to "throw off such government."

It is in the spirit of that Declaration, and in comradeship with men everywhere who seek freedom and to throw off such governments, that I now refuse to pay the taxes demanded by the government in the attached form.

vast majority of cases the kids have done nothing wrong according to libertarian doctrine. Somehow, the curious theory prevails that "it's okay to disobey a law or a rule, provided you're willing to take your punishment", and therefore amnesty very often meets widespread resentment. But the whole point is that the kids, and libertarians too, don't recognize the justice of the particular rule or law, and that is precisely why they violate it. So therefore they should not, at least according to their lights, be punished. Besides, Mr. Christian Conservative, what's wrong with mercy?

If the bulk of the immediate demands of the student rebels is proper and praiseworthy from the libertarian point of view, what of the ultimate demands? What do "they" want, down deep? Mainly it is what we touched on earlier: (1) the demand to transfer power from the trustees to students and faculty; and (2) the severing of the university from the government-military-industrial complex. Both demands are interconnected; for the students perceive as few others do, that the American university is a critical and vital part of the ruling system, the instrument by which the Establishment

(Continued on page 4)

trains the rising generation to become cogs in the military-industrial machine. The new rebels want no part of being such cogs; and all libertarians must bless them for their revulsion against the educational *status quo*. The students see that the only way to remove the universities from their "brainwashing" and apologetic role on behalf of the State and its allies is to transform the very nature of the university into student-faculty rule. And why not? As we have seen, for governmental universities this is an eminently libertarian demand, a necessary means for transforming governmental into private property. But, in addition, it is a worthy objective for genuine education, and there is no libertarian reason why even legitimate trustees cannot transfer power voluntarily. Such eminent universities as Oxford and Cambridge are essentially "producers' co-ops", owned and directed by the faculty. Student-faculty power means a shift back to the university, not as servitor of the military-industrial complex, not as apologist for the State, but as a genuine community of scholars searching for and discovering the truth. This is the vision that animates the student revolutionaries, and it is a noble vision indeed. Considering what our universities have become, it is also a vision radically different from the *status quo*: hence it is revolutionary.

It is particularly ironic that conservatives and libertarians should be so distressed at the prospect of students having a say in the universities. After all, a free-market proponent is supposed to favor "consumer sovereignty", and what are students but the consumers of the educational product? Why react with hatred to any attempt by the consumers to influence their education?

Furthermore, conservatives have for decades inveighed, and properly so, against the American educational system. They have seen how that system imprisons and indoctrinates the youth of America into the statist system, how it functions as intellectual apologists for the State apparatus. For decades, no one did anything about this insight. Now, at long last, that the students are reacting precisely against this system, now that they see the evil and are trying to change it, why, Mr. Conservative, why in hell are you on the other side?

The students see even more than the traditional Conservatives did. They see that, apart from other tie-ins, corporations have been using the government schools and colleges as institutions that train their future workers and executives at the expense of *others*, i.e. the taxpayers. This is but one way that our corporate state uses the coercive taxing power either to accumulate corporate capital or to lower corporate costs. Whatever that process may be called, it is *not* "free

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

---Abraham Lincoln, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

enterprise", except in the most ironic sense.

And so, libertarians must hail the student revolution, their means and their ends, their demands both immediate and ultimate. These kids, the first generation in a century to really see and understand the evils of the State, deserve encouragement and support and not our condemnation or our petty complaints. Libertarian students and adults alike have begun to realize this truth. One heartening event has been libertarian participation in some of the recent rebellions. One prominent young libertarian not only participated whole-heartedly in the Cornell rebellion, but he was the only person among the rebels to vote *against* thanking President Perkins for his liberal concessions to student demands.

The most striking adherence came at Fordham University, where the Fordham Libertarian Alliance constitutes our best-organized chapter on the college campuses--hopefully, a harbinger of the future. FLA was the first group on the Fordham campus to raise the libertarian demand of "Abolish ROTC"; SDS, dominated by Progressive Labor on that campus, hung back for weeks because of fear that the "working class" would not go along with such a demand. But finally, SDS swung into line, and the Fordham sit-in on April 23-24, which lasted over 24 hours, included members of SDS, FLA, and mainly, unaffiliated individuals. The sit-in was unpremeditated, spontaneous; there was no manipulation by a few sinister persons, let alone outsiders. Instead, everything was spontaneous, joyous, done by discussion and genuine consensus. FLA members conveyed their exhilaration at the true spirit of community animating all of the students, and their joy at the liberating act of taking control of their own lives, at acting dramatically and even heroically for a moral cause. They experienced, for that unforgettable day in their lives, the shared joy of liberation, one that, perhaps some day, all of us may share. God bless them and their generation.

Perhaps the whole thing can be summed up by a sign carried by some of the kids at an anti-war march in New York City on April 5. The sign read simply: "Death to the State. Power to the People." How can you fault a movement having *that* as a slogan?

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