

Professing the Forbidden Faith

By RUSSELL KIRK

Nearly a decade ago, Professor Raymond English described conservatism as "the forbidden faith." A thoroughgoing conservative himself, Mr. English meant that in colleges and universities, and in most of the serious press, "conservatism" had become a devil-term; and to profess faith in the principles of Edmund Burke and John Adams had become a hissing and an abomination in the eyes of what Dr. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn calls "the Holy Liberal Inquisition."

Well, matters have mended somewhat since, so that the Liberal Inquisition now is forced to confess the relative respectability of conservative opinions. For all that, in American institutions of higher learning professorial conservatives are conspicuous by their rarity. Dr. Morton Cronin writes that on many campuses, they are the Uncle Toms of Academe: they content themselves with saying that they're not ashamed of being black, and so are tolerated by the liberal hierarchy.

Faculty Friends

Yet conservative students can find friends and advisors among the faculty on nearly every campus, if they seek. Curiously enough, nowadays there probably are more conservatives in departments of natural or physical science, or mathematics, for instance, than in departments of politics or economics or English.

Not all the faculty conservatives will choose to call themselves "conservative"; and on prudential issues, their opinions will vary. Yet in the broader and better sense of the term, these scholars stand for "the old and tried, as against the new and untried" (Lincoln's definition of conservatism); they are conservators of our culture and our civil social order.

At Harvard, for instance, the conservatively-inclined student will find such sympathetic minds as those of Douglas Bush in English literature, Crane Brinton in history, or William Yandell Elliott in politics. At Yale, one may name Samuel Flagg Bemis in his-

tory, or Cleanth Brooks in literature, or Henry Wallich in economics. At Northwestern, there are Eliseo Vivas in philosophy, Eric Heller in German literature, and William McGovern in political science.

At Chicago

At Chicago, one finds several members of the Committee on Social Thought, eminent among them John U. Nef, F. A. Hayek, and Frank Knight; in English there, Richard Weaver; in economics, Milton Friedman; in political science, Leo Strauss. State universities, too, have their conservatives: Frank Grace, of the department of political science at the University of Michigan, for instance; and at the same university, Stephen Tonsor in history, and (emeritus) Louis Bredvold in English literature.

Private liberal-arts colleges often have on their staffs some interesting conservative scholars — though sometimes in isolation. Take, for examples, Raymond English at Kenyon; Jerzy Hauptmann at Park; Peter Viereck at Mount Holyoke; Reginald Lang at Carleton; William Fleming at Ripon.

There are to be found, also, particular departments of a generally conservative cast. At Post College, in Long Island, the department of history and political science is notably such; or the departments of political science at Georgetown and Notre Dame; or the department of sociology at Emory.

Generally speaking, college and university presidents tend to be more conservative than their faculties. Among the better-known college presidents who are intelligent conservatives, I venture to list F. E. Lund at Kenyon, George C. S. Benson at Claremont Men's College, R. A. Nisbet of the University of California at Riverside, Robert Morris of Dallas, and Richard Connolly of Long Island.

So brief an article as this necessarily ignores many of the better people of conservative views. Very hastily, nevertheless, I add the names of Francis Graham Wilson at the University of Illinois, Ross Hoffman at Fordham,

John Hallowell at Duke, Gaetano Vincitorio at St. John's University (Jamaica), Richard Starr at Emory, Thomas

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Molnar at Brooklyn College, Ernest van den Haag at New York University, John Lukacs at La Salle College, Frederick Wilhelmsen (on leave) at Santa Clara, and — well, a hundred others.

Even if the conservative student can't ferret out one Tory professor on his campus, at least he can read important books to prepare himself for the clash of opinions with his liberal teachers.

I commend especially Francis Wilson's *The Case for Conservatism* (University of Washington Press); my own *Conservative Mind*, and also my *Prospects for Conservatives* (both Gateway Editions); Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* (University of Chicago Press), and F. A. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, in the same series; J. A. Lukacs' edition of Tocqueville's *European Revolution* in Anchor Books; Bredvold's and Ross' *Philosophy of Edmund Burke* (Ann Arbor paperbacks); and a forthcoming Anchor anthology of Burke, edited by Peter Stanlis of the University of Detroit, author of *Burke and the Natural Law*.

