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Last Leaves from the Diary of a Professor

ROYAL A. GETTMANN

(Professor Gettmann recently retired from his post in the Department of English at the University of Illinois, after many years of teaching. The following observations, made during his final year at the university, touch upon the intellectual condition of many students nowadays.—R.K.)

October 25—In a discussion of prose style I asked W.D., a senior with a major in English, why "the beauty of her face" was different from "her beautiful face." He felt a difference, but he couldn't begin to speculate about the reasons. He was powerless and speechless; he had no terms with which to describe the meaning, tone, or rhythm of a sentence. His ineptitude tallies with the fact that the old freshman Composition was changed to a course in Instant Culture with discussions of the "relevant" topics—film, sex, ballet, theater, politics, racial problems, and world views. If the introductory courses in the Humanities produce Instant Culture, then they cannot be required for advanced courses. Thus the advanced courses become diluted to Instant Culture; all courses turn out to be one and the same; all students are equal; all the arts coalesce into one.

Another case of Instant Culture: when I mentioned Collingwood's autobiography last week, J.H. said, "If it isn't in paperback, I won't read it." This utterance was packed with meanings and motives—plain laziness, inordinate egotism, ready money, rebelliousness against the bourgeois quality of a hard back, but there was also an implication of Instant Culture—that is, "all I need is a text." J.H. will never enter the door of the Reference Room of the main library, one of the great collections of the world. He will never be tempted by the bibliographies and the numerous encyclopedias, which testify to the continuous, cumulative, cooperative aspect of civilization. J.H. will never lift his eyes to gaze at the stained-glass colophons of old printers in the windows of the Reference Room, visible evidence of community and continuity. But culture can be even more instantaneous: in the snack bar of the Union a few weeks ago the shrill voice of a coed announced, "The pill is the greatest thing that ever happened. It's changed history."

January 10—C.T., aged twenty-five, with an incisive mind and a Che moustache, asked me whether he could use a "lot of four-letter words" in his seminar report on *Nostromo*. I said No and then went on something like this: "A few days ago I said that the essays in this seminar were not to be written in modish critical jargon such as 'sophisticated fiction in the low mimetic mode with a minimum of archetypal displacement.' Your four-letter words are the reverse side of this counterfeit coin. A wish to use four-letter words may spring from 1) ignorance and laziness or 2) a kind of idealism and honesty that is liable to end up in rancor and distrust. At the very least, four-letter words block the task of making discriminations and of expressing them precisely and intelligibly. This violent diction inhibits our attempts to distinguish what is appropriate and true and to recommend what is laudable. *Wow* is an emphatic utterance of ardor and admiration, but it will not promote the qualities of the object of the three-letter ejaculation." In a tone of apology and admonition, C.T. said that I was taking language too seriously. I said, "No. Words really matter. Violent language leads to violent action."

Violent language may take the form of rippling polysyllables. P.M., assistant professor in History, is trying to shut down the university with resonant pronouncements about "paroxysm of truth," "cosmic orgasm," and "surface stupidities of class attendance, grades, and curriculum." All P.M. wants is Wholeness, Honesty, and Love. And he wants them immediately, instantly, apocalyptically.

March 20—Today, in the line of duty, I visited J.C.'s class in 103 (Introduction to Fiction). Without posing a general problem in literary study or pointing to a crux on a page, J.C. made several emphatic statements about Camus' *The Stranger* and "the human condition." (The ease with which he tossed off that vogue word trivialized the "still, sad music of humanity.") His pronouncements added up to this: Crime is the doorway to morality. All this was

done in hammer-and-tong fashion. It seemed to be generated by animosity, not by affection. J.C. drew no nice distinctions, nor did he suggest connections and affiliations. He never cast a side-glance at *Crime and Punishment* or *The Red and the Black* or *Heart of Darkness*. A freshman in front of me squirmed, raised his hand, and blurted, "I don't understand this morality business. How does Meursault differ from a common murderer in the county jail here in town?" Embarrassed into momentary silence, J.C. said, "That question doesn't deserve an answer." He then picked up *The Myth of Sisyphus* and read until the bell. It will be difficult to write the report on J.C. Shall I deplore or admonish or give counsel?

How different was B.W.'s class! B.W. began by saying, "I've been mulling over the conclusion about Heathcliff that we reached on Monday. I don't want to finger your mind and feelings, but I now think that Emily Brontë, up to the death of Cathy, doesn't want us to condemn Heathcliff or approve of him." After a few words he said, "Now let's turn to the question we were to think about for today. Many a novelist has told his story twice. How does the second generation in *Wuthering Heights* shed light on the story of Cathy and Heathcliff?" B.W.'s class meeting was not a rancorous debate or a jumble of personal impressions: it was a continuing conversation among people who respected one another. And along with this continuity there was just the right degree of certainty—that is, an awareness of which questions and materials could yield a measure of certitude and which ones demanded a degree of uncertainty.

April 10—In the last meeting of English 253, just before the Easter holiday, we were puzzling over *The Trial*. I had expressed my perplexity over the fact that in this novel Prague is almost dematerialized, that there is no hint of the sweeping curve of the river, the almost imperceptible bend in the Charles bridge, the harmonious beauty of the baroque squares, the heart-lifting skyline of the buildings on the hill. With *Ulysses* and Dublin in mind I asked W.D., an inconspicuous young man in the tenth row, how the date of *The Trial* would compare with the date of *Ulysses*. He answered, "I don't know. I was struck by the rightness of his tone: it was neither defiant nor abashed. In a neutral voice I responded, "Well, that's all right. I don't know how important that question was."

Today, the first meeting after Easter, I began the hour with this statement, "I believe Mr. D. has something to tell us." In just the right tone he said, "Well, all I found out was that Kafka wrote *The Trial* during 1914-15 but that it wasn't published until 1925 and that Joyce began *Ulysses* in 1914 and published it in 1922." I was all aflutter, but in a neutral tone I said, "Thanks. I thought you'd have something to tell us. Actually I don't know much more than Mr. D. It does seem that the inward-looking novel is somehow connected with the years 1914-15." I looked at W.D. with a smile. His smile was just right.

There is a melancholy postscript. Students now resent a seating chart and regular attendance. Without a chart I could not have asked W.D. a question—that is, a man-to-man question.

May 15—Taking my cue from Auerbach's *Mimesis*, I began today's discussion of *The Red and the Black* with questions about the reasons for Mathilde's interest in Julien. I maneuvered the answers into the single word *boredom* and then asked the causes of boredom in any place at any time—410, 1758, 1830, 1890, or 1970. Does boredom arise from within or without or from both? If from within, from what qualities and traits? From laziness, plain cussedness, self-hatred, disbelief, lack of confidence? Or from high-minded idealism, self-respect, innate aptitudes, exceptional talents? If boredom arises from without, what are the causes and conditions—an inflexible society which smothers freedom, debilitating affluence, crushing poverty, monotonous drudgery, institutions so weak as to destroy confidence in the future? How can we distinguish justifiable boredom from listless ennui? How can we be sure that a high-minded refusal to compromise with the grubby workaday world is not in fact a sentimental wish to disengage oneself from the strenuous participation in the historical process, the way marked by the ticking of actual clocks, not by apocalyptic leaps? How do we know that a boredom allegedly caused by stone-dead conventions is not an arrogant refusal to transmit them into traditions, which in turn revitalize us?

I brightened and sharpened these points with quotations from Wilde, allusions to Berg and Bach, references to the young Russian aristocrats after December 1825, and glances at synonyms and their origins. There was no evidence as to how the students took this

moral counsel. Except for the eyes and smile of Miss J., all faces seemed to be bland, unconcerned, undisturbed—that is, bored.

But the true measure of teaching is not the immediate response or even the applause at the end of the semester. The evidence that really tells comes five, ten, or twenty years later. In the long run—forty-three years for me—teaching is therefore a matter of faith: I still have a grain of it.

Western Civilization and Miseducation

RONALD D. SMITH

LIKE MANY OTHER educators, I am concerned with what may be called a student's need for mastery of fundamentals in any chosen discipline. Few college-level courses are better basis than the traditional "Western Civilization," although the hard and unfortunate truth is that this is seldom taught with any acknowledgement of tradition. In hard fact, the subject is most often mistaught, a plight which leaves the student unable to recognize or comprehend conservative thought, and mentally impoverished in regard to the basic roots of the Western past.

Putting aside the fact that many college freshmen (or even seniors) are either ill-prepared in the humanities or miseducated generally, my experience has taught me that the student seldom makes with ease an intellectual adjustment from mere clichés to the study and relevance of ideas. It is one thing for the student to read what the historian's narrative text says of Greek beliefs or the ingredients of the inter-war generation; it is another thing for him to read Plato or Franz Kafka. And if the latter enriched source-approach is employed, it is still true that inadequate or biased instruction can negate many of the historical lessons to be learned. It must not be forgotten that the vast bulk of today's college students are members of Ortega's masses. They are often indifferent to the fruits provided by past generations which make their lives comfortable. Not feeling the same reverence for tradition as did earlier

generations, they frequently exhibit a Pavlovian negative response to conservative ideas or, because of current inconsistencies of definition, equate conservatism with classical liberalism.

Experience over the past several years in dealing with the fundamental ideological contributions of Western civilization has convinced me that the following slanted approach is too often employed. Healthy treatment is offered to the Greeks as democrats and especially because they were, alas, thinkers. In comparison, attention to the Romans can be reduced by 70 per cent because they were doers; so eight hundred years of existence counts for less. It is common to include St. Augustine with special emphasis upon God's unfolding plan (Council of Orange, 529, notwithstanding) for it is easily resurrected when one meets John Calvin and predestination during the sixteenth century. Economic aspects in the Church-State controversy receive careful attention along with the rise of towns and trade, for all three form a fine cushion to the growth of strong monarchy and Machiavellian politics of the Renaissance era. One has then only to reform the Church twice while carrying the thread of humanism on through to the scientific revolution and the age of reason. In political concepts this leads to Thomas Hobbes, who, when asked for contrast, makes the Lockean contract theory of government sound all the more logical. Emotionalism then forms the required foundation needed for concepts of natural law, and from this base it is easy to move through Romanism to Concorcet's optimistic view of progress, and ultimately to the secular and equalitarian themes of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.*

IT IS only then, after the extremes of the French Revolution and the fall of Napoleon, that the student finally meets Edmund Burke. And though the latter's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* remains the most thorough and coherent expression of conservative thought ever written, a substantial degree of historical perspective has already been lost. The student has not been encouraged to view such concepts in the light of class struggles in Athens, the ingredients of the Pax Romana (which made that age for Edward Gibbon the time when "the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous") or the proof of the past which has historically exposed man as a creature who needs restraints upon his passions.

It is possible to select specific conservative attitudes toward man and his society which provide a common political-social denominator running from Plato, Aristotle, and the "Old Oligarch," through Cicero, Pliny the Younger, St. Augustine, Aquinas (*De Regimine Principum*). Thomas More, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Burke, Disraeli (*Vindication of the British Constitution*), and to the present. The point is that it seldom done, while at the same time the application of dialectical-materialist formulas to each age of history flourishes in repetitious abundance.

There is still another instructional inadequacy which has the net result of starving the student of conservative historical explanations while he is loaded with naturalist, scientific, or materialist ones. When he does wrestle intellectually with Burke, he will be asked to digest the views of several others simultaneously. Hence Burke is grouped with Metternich (conservative in thought, pragmatic and occasionally reactionary in deed), Joseph de Maistre, Adam Muller (reactionaries in thought), and Hegel (freedom only in the individual totality of the state). While such a grouping is excellent if the purpose is to illustrate contrast, that is usually not the impression which carries from the grouping. The consequence is to have severed Burkean thought from logical historical precedence and to have blurred the English conservative's views or man's nature, change, and truths taught by historic experience. For the student the whole situation becomes even more confused when, operating under modern influences by which the terms conservative and liberal are applied, he is expected to discern the rather sharp differences between the traditional views of Disraeli and the principles of classical liberalism, or between the political-economic attitudes of Gladstone and those of the Marquis of Salisbury.

IT IS SOMETIMES said that a handy technique for avoiding undue confusion is for both student and instructor to remove from their minds current terminology when discussing conservative and liberal thought in the nineteenth-century context. Not only can such a procedure lead to intellectual discomfort, but it can create further misunderstanding. I am reminded of the student who, during the Presidential campaign, after having described Senator Goldwater as something just removed from a Neanderthal, requested of me before an advanced class that I confirm her presumption that Burke

would favor American racial integration. The fact that the young lady incorrectly believed the Senator to be a segregationist was not the relevant point. What the student wanted was my concurrence that a) Burke's ideas placed him in favor of integration and b) that Senator Goldwater, being not so inclined, was not a conservative but a fraud.

Now, just as it is fruitless absurdity to believe one can properly psychoanalyze King John of England seven centuries removed, so also it is shoddy historical analysis to read into Burkean expressions rendered in 1790 the views he might have held had he lived through the 1950's. However, there are clear indications to be gleaned from the *Reflections* which have application to the students' question. The qualified aristocratic formula which Burke prescribed for authoritative or influential participation by individuals in the decision-making institutions of society rests specifically upon "virtue and wisdom." And if these are to be the essential qualities, then it follows that they are applicable to the person who exhibits them regardless of skin color. It is also to be presumed that these rare but irreplacable commodities have the same viable utility in an all white, an all black, or a racially mixed society. Burke's support in the Commons for legislation aimed at recruiting and training Indians for civil service in that colony was a step toward putting his ideas into practice.

FOLLOWING this line of argument, the Burkean conception of a stratified society, with the weight of historical experience added as support, demands different roles for different members or groups in that society. But the crucial criteria for determining the individual's station in said society must be the talents he has to offer and the degree to which he appreciates the same historical absolutes; hence skin color is not to be suggested among relative factors. Thus, the actual question intended is whether or not Burkean beliefs would concur with a societal arrangement which relegates an aggregate of the population beyond a fabricated pale, and which by this arrangement excludes them from opportunity to place their virtues and wisdom in contention for positions of leadership in that society. The answer is that Burke would oppose this type of *segregation*, but without having spoken specifically on the process of *integration*. It is true that a multiple form of societal subdivisions

(segregation if you wish) is consistent with Burkean thought, but any such subdivision based upon racial or ethnic traits must rather be associated with the Gobineaus or the Houston Stewart Chamberlains.

Questions of this type are, to be sure, academic. But the ingredients and ultimate answers carry a remarkable relevance for current problems and situations wherein one seeks historical lessons or the guidance of seminal minds of the past. My assertion is that they are too often met by the young and impressionable mind, but only occasionally with objective or intellectually honest instructional evaluation (to say nothing of incompetence). Just how such instructional deficiencies might be removed is indeed another question. One can hope that a rejuvenating answer may be supplied in the near future.

Some Thoughts on a Teachers' Strike

JAMES FITZPATRICK

THE RESIDENTS OF the Lakeland School District in northern Westchester County, New York, were greeted with an illegal strike by the Lakeland Federation of Teachers (local of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO) on what was to have been the opening day of the 1970-71 school year. The strike lasted seven days, the longest of any teachers' strike in our state that term.

An illegal, seven-day teachers' strike might have been newsworthy ten years ago, when they were less commonplace. I don't propose to have any "inside" information which will make this one newsworthy. But there are some interesting thoughts, from a conservative point of view, that surfaced during the days I spent in a near-to-deserted high school—in my new role as a scab.

I became a "scab" with some reluctance. There were no teachers in my assigned school; there were no students—and no work for me. In reporting to work I was not really serving my students, or doing my job. I was just obeying the law. It was a good enough reason for me. And I was also proving to myself that I would practice what I preach in class about "law and order" and the obvious connection between civil disobedience and the chaos and anarchical threats tearing apart our colleges and cities today—when the chips were down. I felt good. I worked up the "courage" to face the pickets. I explained my position to my putative colleagues in calm tones. They, for the most part, treated me with respect. I seemed to be doing what a good conservative should.

What about the position of our civil employees and the right to strike? It's an important question for conservative theorists, because it has become increasingly clear that many of our civil servants would like to think of themselves as conservatives. But, believe me, no matter what conservative theory states, they *are* going to strike if they feel that they are not being treated fairly.

Fairly? Aren't they? Many economists would argue convincingly that salaries have made far greater gains in the public sector than

in the private. In the case of the Lakeland strike the school board's last pre-strike offer contained a maximum salary of over $17,000. That does seem fair.

But the teachers voted a strike. I couldn't believe it. I asked around for explanations. "We've got to show them they can't push us around," I was told. "I've been yearning for a fight like this for years." "The teacher has to assert himself, to guarantee he'll have a voice in how the schools are run." "We've got to be examples to other teachers in other districts—we've got to move against the Taylor Law." "The people think we're a bunch of little old ladies. Two weeks and we'll break them." "We want to go back to work with our heads held high."

Notice the drift. The complaint wasn't money. Powerlessness, lack of dignity, abused manhood, hurt pride seemed to be the stakes. Or was it really money?

THERE WERE suspicious overtones. This was the first year for the AFT as bargaining unit. They had won a special election just the year before. They were out to show their muscle. If they were not able to negotiate a truly superior contract, the union's drive to expand into other districts would lose impetus. The domino theory. In addition, one of the district's most famous residents was Albert Shanker, head of the powerful New York City union, the United Federation of Teachers. Shanker became a kind of mysterious presence, a *bête noir,* for the local taxpayers. He never said a public word about the negotiations, never appeared with the negotiators, but he was there, always there, threatening to drain the coffers of all they held. Everyone knew it, everyone said. (And, of course, he was. If he wasn't, the union should be censured publicly for not having consulted one of their brightest stars.)

Were the Lakeland teachers, then, being used to spread the union's power? I thought so, and thought I was clever when I intoned, "Does the union exist for the good of the Lakeland teachers, or do the Lakeland teachers exist for the good of the union?" Many of the teachers I asked didn't know the answer for sure. But they had to "stick together," they said.

The *scene* played a part, too. For most of the teachers, this was the first taste of "activism." For many it seemed exhilarating. The feeling of community grew. A cause, a purpose, a crusade, for the

"good of the children" and for the "teaching profession in this country" was launched. You could see nobility beaming from the pickets' faces. They *were* just like the teachers on the TV shows.

That sounds cattier than I mean it to. Here's the point: the teachers had become bigger than themselves; they were in combat—for each other, for the children, for the country, for mankind. Really. Threats of jail, taunts from angered parents, smug remarks from the kids, were not going to get them back to work.

Of course there was some irresponsible talk. How do you argue with someone who leans up against a late-model sports car, his face all tanned from a summer of tennis, and argues that he can't see why he doesn't *deserve* fashion designer clothes, and winter cruises, and summers in Greece, etc., etc. The market-place economy answers that if your skills don't create the demand; you don't deserve these things. Let's be honest . . . how many people earn their salaries by the law of supply and demand these days? Certainly not anyone in *any* union. The existence of a union is an indication that the *demand for* is too little and the *supply* too great of people like the union membership. So that leaves us with some real food for thought. What does a teacher deserve?

Most of the people who make big money in our country are involved in the production of material wealth. They *make things*, and then share in the wealth accumulated by sales. Civil servants never make as much. The President's salary, for example, is only a fraction of what big corporations pay their decision-makers. Professionals—doctors, lawyers—often make big money without producing wealth, as such. But they make it by market-place rules. They compete. They have to make it. They can fail. They can go broke. Now, there are some teachers whose animus is directed against capitalism and the free-market economy; some who feel that in the socialist countries their relative position would be above that of the businessman, and who really feel that there has to be some new system of government—one that will grant them salaries and prestige above that of the bourgeois executive. But the majority of teachers are not of that ilk. They just want to live well. Many of the newer teachers come from wealth-producing families—with money—so "living well" means more than it used to. Especially in these days of inflation. As a result, we're left with the certainty that teachers' demands are going to be real. They are not going

to sit back while communities attack inflation by saving the tax dollars that make up their salaries. They want the give-and-take of genuine collective bargaining.

The disadvantage of negotiating with anti-strike laws hanging over their heads is proving unacceptable, to teachers and civil servants in general. *But don't the teachers understand that they are supposed to be less powerful than the local governments that pay them?* That that is the reason why anti-strike laws were written? You conservatives know that governments, being representative of the people, would no longer be sovereign in their domain (and no longer governments) if organized pressure groups were given legally recognized coercive power over them; you know that the most basic reason for governments is to protect society from the depredations of organized pressure groups. You could make your point by saying that if the organized pressure group trying to bleed the community of money by threatening young people was the Mafia, or the Barbary pirates, or the James gang, the issue would be clear. A government has to have the coercive power when the chips are down or it ceases to rule, you might argue.

But that kind of theorizing just does not go on in the minds of the teachers I talked to. They just don't think it "fair" for the local governments to have so much power over them in wage negotiations, Again, they feel powerless.

How should conservative rhetoric read, then? Should it undertake to preach the theory of government to the civil-service unions? That might have worked at one time. (I don't think so.) But it won't any longer, primarily because governments themselves have refused to treat the illegal strikes as genuinely illegal acts. Time and time again, especially in our big cities, they have negotiated with the striking workers as if they were dealing with responsible bargaining agents, instead of criminals. (Notice how the word "criminal" sounds. It just doesn't seem to fit a striking teacher or mailman. In the public mind, too, the strike has become an exasperating annoyance—but not a crime.) A day's pay is lost and a day's pay is fined, but the negotiations continue and restore any lost respectability. Legitimate governments just don't negotiate, openly, with organized criminals.

So what are we left with? Another situation where the written law is winked at and life goes on with an unwritten law, an understanding. Conservatives themselves have approved of this kind of compromise in other areas. Integration laws in the South come to mind. Conservatives do not advise an immediate and unbending follow-up to the civil rights acts and court decisions directing an end to segregation—and rightly so. It is plain that a law cannot be imposed upon a community without regard to a contrary community vision of right. Laws have to be part of a community's pattern of belief if they are to be laws for free men.

That same atmosphere seems to be developing around strikes by civil servants. They are part of the *scene.*

And this leads to the main problem. Once the strike becomes a recognized possibility, it becomes a necessity, a tool for the bargaining parties. School boards, for example, can use the strike the way business executives do—as a way of cushioning the impact of the settlement, of saving face. It makes the settlement with the union less of a surrender. The local governing bodies come to *need* the strike to protect their elected offices. What kind of elected official would give away the taxpayers' money unless he was forced to? Not one who wants to be re-elected, or considered for a better position.

In the Lakeland strike the school board was given an opportunity few government bargaining units have had. They could have broken the strike. Two days before settlement an overflow crowd of parents and taxpayers, estimated at about two thousand, cheered enthusiastically at every spoken hint that the school board would not "sell out" by "giving in to an illegal strike." Many people in the community felt that the parents would keep their children home for weeks more rather than give in.

But the board negotiated a new contract two days later. Dan Sanders, Albert Shanker's neighbor and right-hand man, negotiated the final session for the local union.

It was to be expected, I guess. There really is no reason for a suburban school district to fight Armageddon; not after John Lindsay *et al.* have negotiated their ways into an armistice.

So what should a law-abiding, conservative civil servant do now? Obey the law? Without reservation? What will this one do? Maybe the same thing. But it won't be a knee-jerk.

The Mentality of the New Left

THE RIGHT TO SAY WE, by Richard Zorza. New York: Praeger, 1970. 214 pp.

Reviewed by **Allan C. Brownfeld**

THE NUMBER of volumes explaining and analyzing the student protest movement is proliferating at a rapid pace. Some are polemics in favor of the protesters; others are unrelenting attacks upon them. There are also volumes which attempt to be "objective," which point out the valid criticisms as well as the invalid tactics entered into by young rebels.

Few of the volumes we have seen, however, could in any sense be called primary sources for understanding what is really happening on our campuses. Most are *about* young people, rather than being the literature *of* the young. If you want to truly understand Christianity you would do well to read its source documents, and the same is true of Communism, or Buddhism, or of any other movement or philosophy.

The New Left is far from being clearly defined in either the political or philosophical sense. Yet, this very lack of definition serves, in many respects, to define it. The recently published volume, *The Right To Say We: The Adventures of a Young Englishman at Harvard and in the Youth Movement,* represents an important contribution to understanding what college students are thinking and doing. Its value may be despite itself, not necessarily because it succeeds in presenting its own "message."

Richard Zorza, a young Englishman, is the son of Victor Zorza, the internationally known authority on the Soviet Union. He was a sophomore at Harvard during the student strike of April 1969; and in this book Zorza expresses his generation's intense and almost mystical feeling of unity and disillusionment with both the academic institutions in which they find themselves, and the larger society into which they feel their lives are "programmed."

Zorza makes many statements which, by any academic standard, would be considered outrageous. He states that "we know only too well that all the changes of recent years had come after the actions of extremists." The fact that extremism has traditionally begotten extremism in response, that violence has produced violence, that French Revolutions have more often than not ended in Reigns of Terror, is completely overlooked.

Discussing the mass strike meeting, Zorza describes a student who announced that "he wanted to get back to his physics." He proceeds to point out that "this was met with astonishment—more sorrow than anger. To most it seemed incredible that anyone should react that way when so many were, for the first time, experiencing so much; when so many were trying so hard to improve the world, including physics." How physics can be improved by occupying the Harvard Yard is difficult to say. That many in the student movement reject the life of the mind and are, in fact, anti-intellectual, comes through repeatedly in Zorza's writing.

At another point, for example, he writes that the university ". . . is only worth defending as an engine for change in society as a whole. The moment that it abandons that aim it becomes only a tool for the self-interest of its members. Then, the case for preservation becomes much weaker . . ." The author, in effect, is saying that if the university does not promote social change, and not any social change but that advocated by the New Left, of course, then its reason for existence is dubious.

WHAT TROUBLES the reader is the seeming innocence with which such statements are made and the feeling on the part of the author that these statements are virtually self-evident. Has no one informed Mr. Zorza and the others of his generation and opinion what the business of the university is meant to be?

Woodrow Wilson's concept of the university—now seventy-two years in the past—seems to have disappeared: "A little world; but not perplexed, living with a singleness of purpose not found without; the home of sagacious men, debaters of the world's questions every day . . . and yet a place removed—calm science seated there, recluse, ascetic, like a nun, not knowing that the world passes, not caring, if the truth but come to answer her prayer."

For too many, truth has often been replaced by an active involvement in the affairs of the day. The author and those for whom he speaks believe that the university is responsible for everything, and capable of all things. They expect the university to end the war in Vietnam, to eliminate racism, to decontaminate the cities.

They want, as Professor Henry Steele Commager has said, ". . . the university to be contemporary—to deal with every issue as it arises, plunge into every controversy, offer courses in every problem, be involved in everything."

Dr. Commager has contrasted the activists' attitude with the more traditional idea of the academic community: "They are unable to understand . . . that the university is the one institution whose conspicuous duty is not to be involved in everything, and above all not to be so involved in contemporary problems that it cannot deal with problems that are not merely contemporary . . . The business of the university is to preserve the heritage of the past, to anticipate the problems of the future, and to train students able to solve the problems of the present."

To Zorza the issues which brought about the Harvard strike —the question of ROTC on the campus, the question of university expansion, and of a student role in decision-making—were not important in themselves. What was important was ". . . the right to say 'we'; that right is more precious than all others to this confronted generation. It is a right that gives us an identity and allows us dignity."

Similarly, in discussing the mass meetings he is less concerned with the validity or absurdity of the charges and demands than with the emotional atmosphere produced. He writes: "We will remember the thrill of those meetings, the sense of unity, the ecstasy of commitment, the love of one's fellow man." He notes that "For once in our lives, we were all people, were all relating people in love and in hate, getting three hours sleep at night because we had to act . . . More important than our ability to intellectualize together is our ability to respond to each other."

RATHER THAN striking out at the dehumanization of the modern world, the student movement described by Richard Zorza appears to be a lemming-like generational drive in unknown directions. Harvard was not the enemy because it was vicious, inhumane, or bigoted. It seemed to be the enemy only because it was there and young people with no real life purpose, with no real sense of identity, found one in the simple unity of condition as students. What impressed this young Englishman was not the alleged "suffering" which produced the student strike, but the emotional catharsis

which had little to do with the proffered "issues." He states that: "There was the moment, at the beginning of the meeting, when I was just so overwhelmed by the humanity that was crowded into the stadium to decide its own fate that I almost broke down and cried. I had my head in my hands; it was so incredible, so total. And what was so wonderful was that everyone seemed to be feeling the same emotions."

Beneath the surface of what often appears to be, in Abbie Hoffman's phrase, "Revolution for the hell of it," Richard Zorza has pinpointed part of what concerns young people. He writes that ". . . if we do not win now, then this society is condemned to be turned over in all finality to the machines, the machines that will allow some life to continue, but will end in a lifeless society."

The New Left have often been compared with the Luddites, those who in England at the time of the Industrial Revolution tried to smash the machines in order to maintain man's humanity. The Yippies urge that we "pull the plugs out of all the computers," and the rebellion many in the New Left seem to be initiating is not one against America or capitalism, but against the modern world itself. Many can share their concern, but those who do must warn them that nihilism and destruction will not keep us from a coming dehumanization but will drive us toward it at an even more rapid pace.

Zorza laments that some of his young people ". . . will surrender and go to die in that special section of suburbia that is reserved for the strugglers who have surrendered." Perhaps some others will continue to fight against bureaucracy, against inhumanity, against the false gods of materialism and "progress."

But they will succeed only if they associate themselves with the best of the past. Richard Zorza and that part of the college generation for which he speaks are guilty of what Elton Trueblood has called the "sin of contemporaneity," the view that there is no relevance in the past. His book is woefully uninformed about the nature of the university and the nature of society. It is written emotionally, and its judgments are often irrational. Yet, it is these very qualities that make it so important. To understand what the New Left is saying the reader must read it directly, and ignore the often misinformed accounts of outsiders. *The Right To Say We* provides an interesting introduction.

Christianity and Our Present Discontents

CHRISTIAN COUNTER-ATTACK, by Sir Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean. New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1970
RELIGION AND CAPITALISM: ALLIES, NOT ENEMIES, by Edmund Opitz. New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1970
Reviewed by **Nickolas Lupinin**

PERHAPS THROUGH a failure of nerve among Christians, the West increasingly refuses to view its culture in Christian perspective, and so that culture becomes unintelligible. This point has been made by the late Christopher Dawson; it runs through this new book by Sir Arnold Lunn and Mr. Garth Lean.

The authors themselves refer the reader to their earlier and more thorough volume, *On Morality*. On its level, however, *Christian Counter-Attack* succeeds. The book's second part, "Counter-Attack," is especially strong. Sir Arnold's chapter on "The Conflict between Science and Materialism" is well argued. Sir Arnold's acquaintance with the scientific is formidable, so that no reader can fail to be impressed by his knowledge. As Sir Arnold notes, "The proportion of theologians who have been ready to examine, if only for the purpose of adequate refutation, beliefs or phenomena difficult to reconcile with orthodoxy has been far greater than the proportion of scientists who are equally ready to examine phenomena which conflict with the dominant philosophy of modern science, materialism."

MR. OPITZ UNDERTAKES a different task. He endeavors to show that "Christian values, properly understood and implemented by the appropriate economic and political means, generate the free society and the market economy," while "a planned economy is almost impossible to avoid, given a secular ethos." He must write of theology and religion, economics, philosophy, and history. Demanding though this is, he succeeds in working these subjects into a presentable whole.

"It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither." This quotation from C. S. Lewis is apt. Or as Christopher Dawson writes, "Christian culture is richer than modern secular culture, because it has a greater spiritual depth and is not confined to a simple level of reality."

These two books extend our apprehension of reality.

Notes on Contributors

Royal A. Gettmann, for many years a professor of English at the University of Illinois, recently retired from teaching.

Ronald D. Smith, associate professor of history at Arizona State University, has edited *Dissent: an Anthology*, to be published by New American Library this year.

James Fitzpatrick, a teacher in Westchester County, New York, has contributed to *Religion and Society* and to *Social Justice Review*.

Allan C. Brownfeld, a contributor to many serious journals of opinion, wrote the study of the New Left recently issued by the Internal Security Subcommittee of the United States Senate.

Nickolas Lupinin, who specializes in Russian history and in medieval civilization, is completing a doctoral dissertation at New York University.