

Transformation and liberation

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emasculation and his subordination to authority. For this privilege he is compelled to pay tuition, out of his own funds, or those of his parents, or from a meagre scholarship, and advised to toe the line, both intellectually and socially, if he is to survive the rite de passage. The absurdity is that society needs him desperately—out of the overcrowded labor market in his school years and in the role of manager, administrator, bureaucrat and professional when he has acquired the relevant skills and the appropriate attitudes. In return for an offer of a high income and high prestige at a later time he is forced to endure, while at university, the lowest standard of living in the society as a whole. The threat implicit in this relationship almost invariably works — any challenge to the status quo will result in failure to survive the rite de passage and consequent permanent relegation to the class of the expropriated and exploited.

The central instrument for control of the student class, within the university itself, is the grade. The astrological aura surrounding our current fixation with the quantification of quality would make even the Babylonians blanch. The notion that it is possible to fix a number upon an essay in politics, philosophy or literature is manifestly absurd. Yet faculty are required to do it — not only by the burgeoning bureaucracy within the universities and outside them, but also by students themselves who rightly recognize that the next forty years of their one and only life may well hang upon the difference between 69 and 70, even when the grade is for a course in Chemistry 101 and their major is Philosophy. It is only an outright rejection of this anti-intellectual and bureaucratic device (similar in design and impact to the South African "pass", which all blacks in that benighted country are required to carry), by the totality of the student body, which will free us from this fetishistic enslavement.

However, in talking about the instrumentality for the control of students, it should not be forgotten that the core relationship, which makes this possible in the first place, is the very definition of the university as a three estate hierarchy in which the First Estate is the Administration, the Second Estate is the faculty, and the Third Estate is the

Student Body. As long as this trichotomous distinction is accepted, students, and to a lesser extent faculty, will remain subordinated in a fief type relationship. Instead of contemplating "tinkeristic" reforms in the forme of representational participation, the whole pattern, in its entirety, should be challenged, both ideationally and actually. Student power and faculty power is surely negated by token and minority representation on decision making bodies. Such participation is welcomed by the establishment precisely because it emasculates. Transformation can be achieved only through confrontation, and then only where that confrontation is backed by power — which is the ability to impose penalties for non-compliance and to offer rewards for compliance. This leads on to the discussion, in the context of what we have said before, of Goals and Issues, Strategies and Tactics.

GOALS AND ISSUES

The project is the transformation of society, nationally and internationally, in concept with the radicals and the revolutionaries of all countries. The character of our social structure, together with the extent and intensity of intellectual colonization, renders it probable that the central agency for the realization of societal transformation is the university. What we seek then is to transform the university, in conjunction with the transformation of society, in such a way as to make it of central importance to the vital issues and problems confronting mankind. This will best be accomplished through the reaction of the university as an environment for the raising of social consciousness, that is to say, for the education of its members, mutually and reciprocally, so that, in addition to, and complementing any necessary specialized skills they acquire, they attain a level of awareness where they can, in freedom and knowledge, contemplate immensely different, extravagantly different, social relations — anarchic utopias and utopian anarchies and by that contemplation, eventually act upon them, thus bringing such dreams within the purview of Man's will. From this, ultimately, will flow spontaneous endeavours by all men in our society to transform their own lives and environment, and hence the lives and environment of all. There is adequate evidence, historical and contemporary, to confirm that we are talking of actualities — not simply possibilities.

The immediate issue, therefore, becomes the full and free participation in its life of and by all members of the university. Participation is both the means and the end of transformation. In the process of attaining that transformation the following areas are crucial:

- 1) **Plant:** — the establishment, maintenance and expansion of the physical facilities of the university. In terms of the environment of the university and its relations with the neighbourhood, as we see from the experiences of the University of Chicago and Columbia University, this is of the greatest importance.
- 2) **Funds:** — The raising of Money and its allocation within the university. The quality of faculty, the range of courses available, the library facilities in different areas of inquiries and the amount and conditions of fellowships depend obviously on the distribution of funds.
- 3) **Academic Freedom:** — This issue arises both within the university itself and in the relations between the university and the government. It usually involves interference with what is being said, either inside or outside the classroom by either students or faculty. The most common violations of academic freedom in Canada involve the attempts by university administrators to suppress the student press and otherwise to control student intellectual and political activity.
- 4) **In Loco Parentis:** — While the latter should by now be a dead issue, we still have university administrations intruding themselves into the personal lives and behaviour of other members of the university — particularly students but sometimes faculty as well.
- 5) **The Curriculum:** — The range of courses, their quality, content and arrangement; the practice of grading; the institution of examinations; the role of faculty; library facilities; lectures and seminars; size of classes, etc. The participation of students in their own education is their own education. Together with the question of academic freedom, its preservation and extension, the transformation of the quality of contemporary university education is vital to this generation.
- 6) **The Power Structure:** — The over, as well as the tacit, relationship between the university on the one side of the corporations, the military, the police and the bureaucracy on the other. This relationship becomes most offensive with the appearance on campus of recruiters for the war machine.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The extent and role of student participation in the wide range of decisions and activities daily undertaken in any university is clearly not a matter for debate so much as it is a matter for action. The essential question is to whether to mobilize, ad hoc and temporarily, around particular issues, to demand and exercise participation in common structures on a minority basis, or to seek a common forum in which parallel structures exist on the basis of parity. Most official student organizations have opted for anything but parity with the result that they easily have been outmanoeuvred, outflanked, outwitted, out-talked, and outvoted.

Courage, vision and will are central ingredients in social action designed to change established institutions — the willingness to take the risk of incurring the penalties which the establishment carries in its repressive repertoire, the capacity to perceive a future state which makes the present deprivations intolerable and possible penalties bearable; and the determination not be swayed either by the invocation of symbols lauding a return to normalcy, law and order, "good government" or by the threats or actual application of penalties.

Those who seek to stimulate social action in the university community should embark first upon a general education campaign designed to raise the level of knowledge and awareness usually flows a heightened social consciousness. The choice of electoral or non-electoral activity depends upon the tractability of the authorities, the issues which are at hand, and which move the campus, and the extent and intensity of social consciousness.

It is obvious that (should this ever be possible) action with the support of the majority of students, is the best basis for successfully making demands. Invariably, the Canadian situation is such that the majority of the student body is either indifferent or passively in support of the status quo. This condition is to be expected because of the effectiveness of the socialization process of which the student is the end product. Those who seek to transform, therefore, are almost invariably in a minority; they must act accordingly.

An examination of contemporary events, and their description in a growing literature, reveals a variety of techniques — as yet not fully refined — for bringing about social change and resisting repressive authority. These techniques range from petition and persuasion at the one end of the spectrum to civil disobedience and obstruction at the other. On a scale of escalation these techniques would move through the following; petition, picket, demonstration, march and rally, strike, passive resistance, obstruction and dislocation. It must be recognized and constantly borne in mind that sometimes only the most extreme acts will provoke the Establishment into those actions which make crystal clear and reveal completely the fundamentally repressive nature of its beliefs, structure and control. All social action should be considered with greatest care, in full consideration of the ethics of the action contemplated and the wrong that one seeks to right, the possible consequences for individuals and groups involved directly and indirectly, and the likelihood of success and failures as well as the forms that such failure may take. I flatly assert that the use of violence in certain forms and in certain circumstances can be and is justified. To assert otherwise is either moral snobbery or hypocrisy.

Let us be aware then:

that we live in a time of extreme suffering and awful potential, that we now confront the need and the opportunity to eradicate this suffering and to negate this potential; that history is nothing more than the actions of men, acting individually and in concert; that we can make our own history and remake ourselves through an act of the will; that we have the choice, which we make whether we act or whether we do not act, (nothing can absolve us from the judgment of history in this regard) and that accordingly we make our choice every day that we live.

We are enslaved by our conception of man's nature and our resultant fear of man. We must struggle toward the articulation of a Utopian vision and hasten to achieve its realization. In that passionate struggle we will transform and hence realize ourselves. In seeking the unattainable we attain it.

We must set ourselves the goal of liberating ourselves at home, in concert with those struggling to free themselves abroad. In doing this we must recognize that the world is nothing if it is not a madhouse, that the inmates must seize the keys to their prison from their wardens, thus freeing themselves from the mystification of the present and preparing themselves for their self-realization and liberation as they define their own future.

It will be said that I am pleading for Revolution. I am pleading for Man's creative realization of Himself as a Liberated Being.