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[Transcript from a talk given by Christine Stansell]

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Taylor
Sexual Freedom and the New Right

The following is the transcript from the talk given by Christine Stansell at the Bard Teach-in on Reaganism and repression on April 15.

In this talk, I'm going to focus on abortion, although my subject is the more general one of "Sexual Freedom in the Eighties." It should be clear that I do this because I believe that abortion is the focus of the New Right's attack on sexual freedom and, indeed, they've challenged American democracy. Because I have so much territory to cover in such a short time, I want to talk about three questions. First, what is the recent history of the abortion struggle? Second, who comprises the New Right? Third, what is the situation today? Fourth, what will we face in the next decade of the New Right wars? And finally, what can we do to stop them?

Before the late nineteenth century, abortion was one of the few available means of birth control and practiced by countless American women—so much so that, in fact, that Europeans termed abortion the "American sin." Even city newspapers, for instance, regularly printed only slightly veiled advertisements for abortifacients (drugs inducing abortion) and practitioners who performed abortions. Beginning in the 1960s, state after state outlawed abortion, in a movement roughly associated with the professionalization of medicine and the campaign of "regular" physicians to wrest the practice of "female" medicine from the midwives and "irregulars" who had traditionally dominated it. The point here is that for centuries the choice for abortion was common, an unquestioned traditional prerogative of women, only in the last hundred years has it been seen as an arena for the intervention of state authority.

Nevertheless, American women continued to seek abortions, even when they were illegal. In the absence of safe and absolutely effective contraception and of free access to what contraception existed, abortion remained as it does today, an essential back-up service. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the feminist movement fought for legalized abortion—"three abortion on demand"—as an essential precondition for the liberation of women. In its decision, Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas state prohibiting abortion. In its decision, the Court expressly denied the fetuses' "right to life" and instead affirmed women's "right to privacy." This was a matter of conscience for the individual women involved. Since 1973, there has been a quiet and steady erosion of this victory. Shortly after the Roe decision, the Catholic Church hierarchy criticized the oatination of a national "Right-to-life" campaign. Anti-abortion forces quietly chipped away at access to abortion in various federal health programs and insurance plans. In 1977 their counter-offensive picked up speed in a confrontation with the Hyde Amendment, in which Congress prohibited Medicaid funds for abortion except in cases of rape or incest, or in the "life of the woman." This amendment was Enforced by Medicaid funds even in those cases.

In 1978, various sectors of the federal labor force were denied insurance benefits for abortion. Federal funding was withdrawn from antiabortion counseling (abortion is a procedure which detects birth defects in the fetus; fetuses' rights to life forego its use because they claim it encourages abortion.) On the local level, Akron, Ohio, passed an ordinance which would be regarded as a model for discouraging abortion. Akron's law of "informed consent" required parental consent for teenagers seeking abortions, and a waiting period between the time a woman applied for the abortion and the time the procedure could be performed. These measures witnessed the fine-tuning of several clinics (to date, there have been seven so-called attempts on abortion clinics) and the harassment (including physical violence of patients entering clinics by right-to-life picketers.)

Melba v. Harris, the Supreme Court upheld the Congressional ban on Med- icaid funding, reversing its liberal sentiments of 1973 and thus denying poor women the necessary means to exercise their constitutional rights. Moreover, by declaring the state's interest in fetal life, the Court opened the way for new legislation altogether illegalizing abortion.

WHO COMPREHENDS THE NEW RIGHT?

The New Right is a grassroots movement led and financed by a coalition of Catholic bishops and fundamentalist Protestant ministers, and businessmen. Its formula for success is the fusion of religion and sexual politics—"pro-family" politics. Ideologically, this is a campaign against "secular humanism," which means most democratic reforms since the French Revolution— and for a return to a modified theocracy. Practically, their struggle is against cont'd on pg. 2

MAY 3RDPARTY RALLY

On Sunday, May 3rd, 80 Bard students and one Bard Professor, made the long journey to Washington D.C. to participate in the march on the Pentagon protesting the U.S. involvement in El Salvador. This event was the culmination of months of organizing on the part of many, but for many more, this day marked the beginning of their work to end the U.S. intervention in El Salvador. Prior to May 3rd, El Salvador was just a news item for most people. It may have been an issue that interested their conscience, but the options available to voice their dissent were limited. Letters could be written to a generally unresponsive group of government officials, but this was seemingly inadequate. This feeling lends itself to an attitude of helplessness, which is characteristic of this era. This helplessness was counteracted by being at the demonstration and having the reassurance that so many others were angry enough to take the time and effort to get to Washington for a show of solidarity in common opposition. For many, it was radicalizing to see the Washington Riot Control Squad protecting the Noodles who chanted in unison: "We love Ronald Reagan." The feeling of unity was affirmed by several factors. First, there was a conscious effort on the part of the great majority to keep the march both peaceful and orderly. On three separate occasions the marchers were confronted with reactionary and extremist elements:—The Noodles who ridiculed our intention; the Right-wing Cuban counter-demonstrators, who fervently insisted that "Cuba get out of El Salvador," and the Spartacus League, which broke away from the march (after trying to disrupt it by marching too quickly—we support cont'd on pg. 3.
sexual freedom cont.  

from pg. 1

Gollessness and Selfishness, of which abortion is the symbol. Selfishness includes contraception, sex education, teenage sexuality, amniocentesis, feminist theory, and homosexuality. A recent "pro-family" conference, for instance, featured a condemnation of "unsolutionable" problems such as "Abortion and Homosexuality. Abortion and contraception mean "killing our young with our children. We feel like it." Abortion means "disposing of our spawn if we feel like it," euthanasia, getting rid of old people if we feel like it, and humankind—denying God.

The New Right's organizing vehicles are the anti-choice lobbying organizations on the parish level and the "electronic" church of the fundamentalists. Parish churches supply rooms for meetings, buses for rallies, telephones and duplicating equipment; clergy distribute "pro-life affirmation cards" at mass and collect hundreds of thousands of dollars each year at "Respect Life" Masses. Some of these are affiliated with 13,000 radio stations and 36 television shows. Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority, broadcasts to 230,000 radio stations and 280 radio stations in 31 states. It is impossible to indict the fundamentalists for their antiliberalism, for they have used the same tactics as the religious right to vilify abortion as a matter of conscience. The fact that the "pro-family" political forces have had so much success, then, should confirm that there are powerful institutional forces underwriting them.

In sum, then, the New Right is an organized anti-liberative movement which has taken the ending of sexual liberation and the restoration of Victorian morality and patriarchal control as the keynotes for a domestic program of totalitarianism.

The Situation of the Moment

There are now sixteen anti-abortion bills pending in Congress. They can be roughly divided into two groups. The first, the "pro-life" group, seeks to ban abortion in all cases of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is endangered. The second, the "pro-choice" group, seeks to prohibit abortion in all cases: abortion is illegal even if a woman will die because of the pregnancy, even if it's a child that is pregnant, even if the fetus cannot survive, even if a woman has been raped, even if a child is the victim of incest.

On April 23, the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution began hearings on the question of when human life begins. These hearings are to provide testimony pertaining to the human life amendment and the various human life statutes, which define human life as beginning the moment an egg is fertilized in the uterus. Besides banning abortion, the various bills would also ban "partial birth" and some kinds of birth control. The New Right insists that controversy over a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus will lead to "abortion" a "person." If a human life law is passed, fetal life will be permanent, superseding a woman's life. Abortion will be classed as a felony in all states and as premeditated murder in some. Only anyone aiding a woman in obtaining an abortion will be liable to prosecution; microwave will be investigated for evidence of possible "criminal" intent.

The political side of the coin of diminished access to abortion is sterilization. Among poor women in their childbearing years, sterilization has steadily increased. In Puerto Rico, as of 1978, 36% of all women of childbearing age had been sterilized. Between 1972 and 1977, a 100% rise in sterilization occurred in New York City hospitals, which primarily serve black and Hispanic patients. These figures may represent new chiseled poor women forced into seeking as well as sterilizations performed without their knowledge or consent; with no access to abortion as a back-up service, women in desperate economic situations may be having to choose between no children at all, or, rather than to incur the risks of a pregnancy.

Finally, the Family Protection Act, the Magna Carta of the New Right, is pending before Congress at this moment. The Family Protection Act contains 35 provisions designed to "protect" the family's privacy. Provisions which assert traditional rights of control—of parents over children, of adults over teenagers—are interwoven with provisions which affirm racism and unenlighten. The Act prohibits federal programs to stop child abuse (for the protection of "family privacy") and programs to help battered wives, prohibits schools with federal funds from boycotting educational materials that would tend to denigrate, disparage, or deny the role differences between the sexes. It prohibits federal funds to schools which seek to teach "values or norms of behavior which contradict the demonstrated beliefs and values of the community," requires notification of the parents of all minors seeking information on contraception, venereal disease, and abortion, exempts homosexuals from the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and denies federal funding to any group considering homosexuality an "acceptable lifestyle.

Proposals for the 1980's

The New Right's success will depend heaviest on young people and their ability to be sexual as they choose. Young people are the most vulnerable to authority, since they live with their parents or in colleges which continue to take a modified in loco parentis role. They also have less personal connections and less money to gain access to the sexual blackmarket in contraceptives and abortions which we can expect to develop in a period of economic depression. We will return to back-alley abortions, with their complications (including sterilization) and deaths. Depending, on one's connections, illegal abortions may cost as little as $100 and as much as $1000. Federal money will be withheld from schools and institutions advocating or tolerating sexual freedom—that is, sexuality outside the confines of marriage and hetero-

sexuality. Increasing numbers of poor women will be sterilized in their twenties. geometry will be hounded out of jobs, especially in the public sector gay life—such as the police—will be severely repressed and forced underground. Testing for fetal birth defects will be illegal, so your people who desire children may have to undergoing sterilized and deform-

ed babies. Birth control will only be available illegally. In general, sexually active people will live in a climate of fear and shame.

What To Do

The greatest danger is apathy and passivity. This generation of college students, emerging in a situation of sexual freedom that was a victory of the radical movements of the 60's, your ability to be sexually active people—to live in coed dorms, to procure birth control, to live in houses with members of the opposite sex to whom you are not married, to be gay, to get married to one of the above, if these are not given. People fought for and won your ability to choose in these matters.

Practically, you can support the work of the Feminist Alliance, which distributes the table below on a weekly basis, several days a week where you can inform yourself on what's happening in the battle for abortion rights, your support of the right to choose to your Congressmen. More generally, in thinking and controlling ourselves we must offer a "counter-moralism" to the right. Too often, people assume that the Right talks about "morality" while feminists talk in a moral vacuum. Instead, we need to stand firm behind a moral vision of sexuality for men and women as a positive, life-affirming experience which shouldn't be limited to procreation and marriage. An essential element of the "humanity" as desired by the Right is the acknowledgment of the body and its legitimate creative potential for a passion for a world in which those claims—for comfort, food, shelter, aesthetic and cultural expression—are honored. Humanism— in both its feminist and Marxist form— will be the main opp of "hedonism" which denies that people are disennobled or obsessed souls, whose bodies others can legitimately dominate in the name of a higher goal—God, the Church, Political Personhood, the Family.

As Ellen Willis has written, "pro-family propaganda plays on deeply ingrained feelings of guilt and powerlessness to which few of us are immune. It reinforces the messages we received in early childhood—that our sexual desires are bad, that freedom is immoral, that we're incompetent to run our own lives, that we need both protection and punishment from the 'Fathers.'"

What is at stake is democracy. People who don't believe they have the right to manage their own intimate lives are not going to fight for economic self-determination, or the right of the Third World peoples to national self-determination, or the right to self-government in any form.
The blues and jazz, once an integral part of the political struggle of the sixties, is replaced by blatantly sexist disco.

While such cultural trends have been influenced by the political-economic scene of the South, the decline of the rural-based farming population which provided a political base for the black movement of the 1960's, Marable indicated that an indigenous and authentic black culture was supported by the culture of political movements. That is, in contrast to those cultural forces producing an other-directed corporate culture, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power and cultural nationalism of the Left gave rise to the manipulation of the personality towards the culture of the corporate world. Therefore, in an era where the nuclear family and religion are declining as social influences which can combat the hegemony of the state, political movements have an important role in either aiding or combatting a culture autonomous from the State. The moral majority serves to project a corporate based attack on women since the abolition of reproductive rights reinforces a stable social order (or repressed one which 'domesticates' women) necessary for accumulation and profits.

The political movements of the 1960's on the other hand, provided people with a more autonomous culture, less controlled by the corporations. The Left, Black Nationalism, Movement and Women's Movement all were at odds with the corporate vision and the cultural attitudes prevalent in the Moral Majority. Even though those movements were manipulated by the media in a variety of ways they still were able to publicize their vision of political freedom for women and blacks, the importance of personal expression and sexual freedom, the need to oppose militaristic nationalism, and intervention in the Third World, and the importance of creating collective institutions based on democratic participation which placed human rights over property rights. Since such attitudes helped mold a culture independent from corporate ideology and the social attitudes which support it, the Left's collective vision and anti-militarism were important forces for building a new society free from the corporate-State axis. Yet, in tracing the collapse of this vision we find the power of the State. The mendacious attitudes of the counter-culture, opposed to collectivism, were promulgated by the media and in popular culture, the anti-intervention in Vietnamese politics of liberals and their allies in the media.

The danger of the 1980's is that the forces of the right will fill the cultural vacuum by accelerating the process of other-directed media manipulation and corporate values through social movements and trends that could support fascism. The cultural vacuum is precisely the lack of values which are anti-corporate, pro-democratic, and help
U.S. 1981 = GERMANY 1932? cont'd from pg. 3, develop an autonomous personality motivated by tradition and values independent of the pressures and manipulative symbolism. The basis for American fascism can be seen precisely in the same kinds found within both the fascist movement itself, or at least we can argue that social attitudes speak of 'repressive tolerance' to fascism. These trends are precisely those which defy an autonomous personality structure: conformity, subliminal "punk" and meaningless rock music, disco dance, political apathy and the disalienation of the positive aspects of the 1960s counter-culture movement, as well as the incorporation of the political values of the New Left into scholasticism. We also see a "new breed" of hard student, an academic autocracy whose social moves, dress code and intellectual aspirations reproduce the forlornly conformist and conformism the integrator into the corporate order. The dangers that such trends could give rise to symbolic manipulation and plebeian-political appeals which lead to fascism have been described by Todd Gitlin in The Whole World is Watching.

In a society of great social inequality, of impersonal, commoditized relationships and mass manipulation, it becomes possible for celebrities to arise who stand for something more than their own celebrity. Their relation to mass audiences is not charismatic in the sense Max Weber intended. Instead, they are not an audience for new authority, but instead to new authority and heights receptivity to pseudo-authority. Charisma can now be manufactured as a mysterious aura, as "star quality", in the relation between the charismatic and subliminal, and the corporate order is incorporated through the mass media. The moral majority directly responds to these trends with its electronic justification of reactionary superstructure. However, the pressing question is the relationship between our community and sexual social trends. On the one hand the liberal arts curriculum is at odds with the demands of the corporate order since the former still uphold the values of democracy, freedom, creativity and autonomous intellectual work. Thus, President Benham has upheld the liberal arts institution as the correct antidote to the other-directed characteristics of modern capitalism (see: "Children of a Lonely Crowd," Charge Sexual Tenser). However, in the process of replicating liberal arts traditions this college also reproduces the careerist mentality through specialization in majors, the Senior Project, and the Moderation process. We still uphold the grading system and while Bard is not noted for its competitive-ness it does produce trainees for professional occupations compatible with the social classes necessary to function in the middle class world. Since most of our future lives will be in the system as the system is middle class this seems only natural.

The problem is that the liberal arts education does not raise directly the social questions which define the potentialities for a friendly American fascism and corporate dominance over the whole of society. Such questions can only be fully understood within an anti-capitalist, feminist and radically different cultural critique. Such a critique can only grow and develop in an autonomous culture free of corporate control such as can be found in political organizing in the left, women's and minority movements. Finally, the university system and this college fail to produce a culture which is fully autonomous from the needs of corporations and can expose daily the consolable and terror on which society is based. Liberal ethics and scholastic dialogue stand as one-dimensional symbols when compared to the psychological tendencies of conformity to both curriculum, careerism and reactionary culture. The intellectual or artistic journey through Bard is at best an individual trajectory free from cynicism, but not responsible for its consequences: Bard makes better lawyers, doctors, art dealers, engineers, managers, and professionals for the State.

American Folklore: Reagan Threw $22 Billion Dollars Across The Potomac

Sexual Harassment on Campus

It has been called to the attention of the Feminist Alliance that a female student was sexually harassed by her male professor this semester at Bard. The professor misused his position of authority to place this student in a situation where he was emotionally manipulated and sexually threatened. His abusiveness and sexual manner of speaking, his powerful position as a professor, his twisting a close, creative, educational relationship into a sexual one, placed this student in an intimidating and vulnerable position in which he sexually exploited her.

This is not a unique situation. There are multiple instances not of overt sexual harassment, but also of more subtle intimidations and sexual expectations on the part of several male faculty members. We wish to stress that this extends further than an isolated incident; a great number of women have been denied full and equal access to purely intellectual relationships with their professors. Our society teaches us that this exploitation is somehow natural, probably invited by the woman consciously or not, and in a sexually "liberated" environment such as Bard College, perfectly acceptable. Because of these attitudes women are made to feel foolish andlmature about making a public complaint about their harassment, and are treated as if they are over-reacting or prudish.

Sexual harassment is any type of gender-based discrimination or sexual overtures—verbal or physical—that makes you feel uncomfortable or vulnerable. We, the members of the Feminist Alliance, are available to provide advice, information, support, and action for members of the Bard community. We're in the process of setting up a formal procedure for dealing with such incidents, regardless of how minor they seem. We encourage correspondence and testimonies pertaining to experiences of harassment on the Bard campus. All such correspondence will be held in the strictest confidence, but we must ask that they be signed so as to prevent abuses of a system designed to protect people.

Bard Feminist Alliance
‘McDonald’s Windfall Profit Act’

by Helen Cordes

CONGRESS PONDERS DROPPING STUDENTS FROM MINIMUM WAGE LAWS
BUSINESS: CUTTING FULL-TIME STUDENT WAGES WILL CREATE MORE JOBS
GREASERs: MORE STUDENTS WILL BE PART-TIMERS;

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CBS) — Don't we know what kind of worker is best in retail businesses? He prefers someone who has a high school education or higher, takes a few showers a week, and is a student. White, who is vice-president of the American Retail Federation, also would prefer people who fit the profile to work for less. In response to White's and others' objections, Congress is now thinking of making it easier for businesses to pay students less than the legal minimum wage.

The minimum wage, of course, was raised from $3.10 an hour to $3.35 an hour only last January 1st, when students on College Work-study programs became eligible for minimum wage for the first time. Most off-campus businesses employing students have always had to pay their workers the minimum wage, but that all could change if one of three bills now in Congress pass. The bills allow employers to pay teenagers and full-time students of any age (or lower) of the $3.35 minimum.

About 500,000 student workers already get sub-minimum wages under special government exemptions. Colleges and businesses can win the right to pay students sub-minimum wages if they get exemptions from the departments of Education and Labor. But both employers complain that government regulations and departmental sloth make applying for exemptions from the law not worth the effort.

Current legislation now would let employers hire an unlimited number of students at $2.85 or less per hour, and would restrict them only from letting students work more than 20 hours per week.

"Suppose a restriction on the student (wage) program was loosened," observes Conrad Fritsch of the Minimum Wage Study Commission, a government authorized consulting group, "there has been a dramatic increase in the number of businesses applying for exemptions. In 1977, when businesses were allowed to employ six instead of four students at sub-minimum wages, the number of firms applying for exemptions leapt from 963 to 5,600, Fritsch says.

Fritsch concedes that, "There is something to what businesses say. It does take time for the department of Labor to process their applications. There are not enough application reviewers, and there's a lot of paperwork. A new student exemption, however, would mean 'a lot more students would work for sub-minimum wages,' Fritsch claims.

Union poitingicking, though, has probably stopped enactment of any of the three bills so far. The Reagan administration is backing off the idea, while representatives of fast-food chains and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce declined to testify at recent congressional hearings.

Their reluctance, some unionists say, derives from their fear that a student exemption would mean amending the Fair Labor Standards Act. "Businesses know the unions will push for an increase in the minimum wage," Fritsch says, "if the amendment process starts, says Michael Tiner of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

"The administration doesn't want to touch the act," agrees Charles Brown of the Minimum Wage Study Commission. "They'd rather try and hold the line on minimum wage, and let inflation do the dirty work."

Still, exemption opponents, who deride the legislation as the "McDonald's Winfall Profit Act," expect renewed lobbying for the exemption soon, and certain victory for it if the Republicans gain control of the House of Representatives in 1984.

They'll be lobbying for three bills in particular. Sen. Orrin Hatch's (R-Ut) version allows businesses to pay teenage or full-time student workers 75% or less of the legal minimum wage. Two others — by Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill) and Rep. Carroll Campbell (R-S.C) — call for 85% of minimum wage levels. The student bills, Tiner contends, will "put full-time students in competition with every other teenager.

They'll do worse than that, says Frank Viggiano of the U.S. Student Association. "The bills would encourage students to hide their full-time status or even reduce their status to part-time," in order to make more money, Viggiano predicts.

Deceit become almost mandatory of older students. "It's a job of Viggiano. "The fastest growing sector of students is now women over 35, many of whom have dependents and who can ill-afford to have a large cut in pay. Many of these people have heads of households, and would be forced to drastically reduce their course loads.

Fritsch, on the other hand, feels student sub-minimum wages will change the whole university scene.

"McDonald's Winfall Profit Act"
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BARD COMMUNITY

Steve Bunnell

Having read the last issue of The Bard Reporter, I am appalled by the gullibility demonstrated by its readers. I must sincerely praise them. The Bard Reporter has accomplished something which no newspaper at Bard has been able to accomplish, and that is currency. I have attended Bard for five or six years. I have seen the staff of The Observer befuddled every year by the same problem of time lag between an event and getting a description of it in print. Since The Observer is published roughly four or six times a semester, it loses credibility as the events it reports are often times old news. But now a newspaper has appeared that publishes frequently enough so that it has the potential to clarify various issues before they become twisted by the local rumour mill and overzealous graffiti artists. The editors of the Bard Reporter should be highly commended on their industrious attention to matters of current interest.

The fact that their editorials are made up of unattributed re-workings of opinions expressed by certain members of the administration does not in any way puzzle me. I, perhaps naively, have always been of the opinion that a newspaper, if it could be called a newspaper, must maintain a certain level of integrity and distinguish opinion from fact and news.

The two editorials I call to question are, "A Disturbing Pattern," and "An Acceptable Level of Violence." These editorials portray opinions as facts and fictions as truths. The latter editorial states that a faculty member was suspended last year by two students. This is a slandersome lie. If the writer had taken the time to review the charges brought against the two students he would find that only one student was accused of macing the professor. The other was accused of using abusive language. The author of this article did indeed use abusive language in the incident and firmly believes that one should not use abusive language to faculty members under any circumstances. I have since apologized. The author of the editorial remains nevertheless a transparent liar whose talents are better put to use, writing slanderous graffiti instead of committing his/her hearsay and lies to print, a more honorable and unforgiving medium.

The former editorial, entitled "A Disturbing Pattern," is, incredibly enough, loaded with more distortions and lies than the first. This editorial states that "both Smith and Bunnell in effect got off on a technicality." This technicality being the fact that the Grievance Committee did not make a transcript of the meeting and, furthermore met too soon to ensure that the stipulations of "Due Process" were followed. The right of "Due Process" is outlined in the Joint Statement of Student Rights that is contained in the Bard College Handbook. This statement is filed with the Commissioner of Education of the State of New York under Mandate 6045 of the New York State Education law. The statement "got off on a technicality" is ludicrous as the Grievance Committee allowed both Smith and Bunnell to remain in school and legal action was taken only when the President of the College saw fit to abrogate this decision. Furthermore, the editorial states that we reversed his decision to expel Smith and suspend Bunnell because their rights were not followed by the Grievance Committee. Apparently Mr. Botstein recognizes these procedural rights in the Joint Statement. However, it also states that in the Joint Statement the Committee's decision is final. The President of the College has no right, implied or otherwise, to reverse a decision made by the G.C. The President violated the very rights of students he is so adamant about preserving. Frankly I have no argument with the G.C.'s original decision. "Due Process" violations aside. But putting the blame on the Grievance Committee as the editorial does is much like putting sole blame on a cow for destroying Chicago in the Great Fire. The President may be said to have made his decisions by custom, but custom is in no way a legal, valid, or honorable way in which to exercise power. Although the President asserts that the Joint Statement is not legally binding, he filed it as if it were in the Bard College with the Commissioner of Education.

Personally, I am disgusted by the Bard Reporter's libelous use of my name in order to support banal and idiotic editorial homilies. The irresponsibility and stupidity of the editors only aggravates these hideous creatures that they imagine lie in wait for us to stumble home after a night at Adolph's. Despite the compliments they shower on their efforts, their gross misrepresentations should be condemned as, in another word, reprehensible.
TESTOSTERONE POISONING AT BARD

"Boys will be boys," yes we've all heard that tired line before. But how this has become a convenient cliché excuses our poor contemporaries in their futile efforts to overcome their biological drive! We've sympathetically listened to many sad male friends who simply "can't help themselves." Is this an irreverent biological condition that only affects a chosen few, leaving others unaffected? Or is it a learned behavioral pattern resulting from social processes unsafely placed on men? Before drawing any conclusions it might prove helpful to observe the different manifestations of this disease. An effective place to start would be to ask what Bard could offer such grand specimens?

The first example that comes to most minds is that of the beer guzzling, much man, for whom one chick just isn't enough. This sad creature comes in all shapes, forms and colors. His adopted habitat at Bard is Adolph's. In the interest of fair reporting and in the name of science, we took a sip down the road, to examine this creature in "action". Dressed inconspicuously, we meandered around Adolph's trying to draw a little attention as possible toward our purpose. After a few water-downed gins and tonics and a couple of short dances to the static-ridden jukebox, our first specimen strolled into view. Literally. With an appalling stench of alcohol he shouted over the following: "Do either of you chicks get a butt? The quick surveillance of our breasts revealed a moderately high level of testosterone at large in his system. After producing the requested cigarette, we clearly engaged him in conversation about the attributes of casual sex, without arousing his suspicion. Noticing what was asserted, however, we quickly realized that his testosterone level was far higher than we had first estimated. On this basis he would be a prime sample of extreme testosterone poisoning (T.P.).

"The maniacal conversation with whom we shall call "Psycho Mike" proved extremely revealing as to the nature of the dread disease. "A" began an explicit account of the animal magnets that unleashed itself within him during his nightly stay at Adolph's. When we asked him if he thought his drive was socially or biologically induced, he replied quite definitely. "After a couple of rounds, the gin does suggesting in sight clothes becomes physically impossible to ignore. The mere presence of the female form brings out a drive that I can not morally suppress. I become a victim of my natural impulses." It was quite obvious that this extreme case of testosterone poisoning was purely physical and this specimen would forever be a prisoner of his own physique.

Shaking our heads sorrowfully we began the difficult search for a more moderate case of T.P.

Unfortunately it seemed that every male we encountered was yet another victim of the extreme stage. At our wit's end we gave up and opted for the Whahula, determined to find a moderate case. Our perseverance did not go unrewarded. No sooner had we restarted ourselves at the bar when we were summoned to join the four men at a nearby table. "Can we buy you girls a drink?" asked a bright-eyed blond. Two pitchers of limeade and two packs of cigarettes later we were asked by bright eyes and a friend to accompany them back to their respective rooms. After an unpleasant scene consisting of our explanation of "just wanting to talk friendly conversation over a couple of drinks" and their accusation that we were "two teases taking their money under false pretenses" we departed (alone).

From this ordeal we concluded that the moderate case is a social manifestation of T.P. quite possibly resulting from the capitalistic doctrine that "you get what you pay for". After repeating much of the article to T.P. victims or males with over high testosterone levels, we decided to investigate the other extreme; males with a low degree. This disorder, known as Testosterone Deficiency (T.D.) is also a minor epidemic at Bard. Victims often submerge themselves in political activities. This civic involvement serves as an escape from the social scene. This became apparent when we attempted to question some of the more obvious cases and were told we were too busy to answer your questions, I have to stop government intrusion in El Salvador...? One T.D. victim, after giving a similar excuse, added this after adding "maybe later, why don't you come up to my room?"

Nuclear Power Is Safe

Dear Sirs:

At least the man at Indian Point told us; one big clean X-ray, a little color T.V. ...Hey, even in the dark a little, you know (winking and putting us all on the back). Oh yes, we know...

Thanks,
All Of Us

TO THE EDITOR:

Well, spring is here, the buds are flowering, and more than a few people feel the over-powering perfume of the new-born garden, but from the thought of having to sit through another season and watch all the newly-paired mates in full heat. Add to this the homosexual fantasy-fights or Mark Charles Binner and his various love-boys, and you have a situation that can only degenerate.

It's not lost hugs, kisses, and other pretty shows of affection that are particularly irritating. These are the domain of the newly-in-love, and given, the life-span of most bard relationships, it's just about all they've got, so I won't begrudge it to them. But breast fondling, hands in jeans, and all those amourous ideas! Give me a break, allready! Sex is a great, beautiful, wonderful thing, I could do it for weeks on end, but, confronted with seag food, hangovers, and my own sordid problems, an un-impressed sexual meal would be a pleasant change. If you feel you have to tell everyone that you, Jane/John Doe, is actually managing to get laid on a regular basis, then I suggest posters, announcements, perhaps a special broadcast on WOCH. How about painting it on a face of Stone Row?

But seriously folks, let's face it. Bard women aren't bastards. Bard women aren't Jessica Lange, so let us be done with poor imitations. Take your hands off your thighs, and please pass the pepper.

-- In the pursuit of gracious living

Letter to the Editor:

The United States, despite its shortcomings, provides an unequalled arena of opportunities and freedom. The cornerstone of this free, Democratic society is its public education system. In recent weeks and months that free public education system has come under severe attack, in the name of economy and the need to fight inflation.

The proposed cuts in federal spending in education across the country, and in particular in New York State, will have a devastating impact. Every single school district in New York State will feel its impact; and in speaking about school districts, we are speaking of our most precious commodity, our children, who will be the leaders of our future democratic society.

Congressmen and women need to hear from citizens who are concerned about the loss of programs and opportunities for our youngsters. While the proposed federal budget would reduce school spending by nearly 30 percent, federal aid would reduce school spending by nearly 30 percent. For New York alone, the cuts to schools represent over $657 million. The burden of replacing programs will be picked up by local and state taxes or the needs of children will simply go unmet.

It is one thing to bring federal spending under control; it is quite another thing to turn away from the needs of millions of children. It is also false economies to reduce federal spending on schools by 30 percent and shift the replacement burden to local homeowner who pay school taxes.

Sincerely,
Edwin J. Robisch
NYS, President

THE MARK CHARLES BINNER COLUMN

Apologies are extended for the absence of my column in the last issue. However, I would like to thank Peru "Aristoarchos" Sandgren for mentioning my name in a similar tone in his letter. As an object of praise, or one of scorn, it makes no difference - give me press attention or give me an obituary!

**WHANOHAS FROM THE INCIDENT AT SIMON'S BOOK**

The music was really deep. (Thanks boys. Twist it up a double and crank open a few brews on me) I congratulate Wayne Robinson for making that stride on his Senior Project in Films... "Your Star." (****) reviews go past the capital of the re-enactment of the Reagan assassination attempt. Marvelous performances were cranked out by itself as an outraging musical. John Bull as the repressed ex-Nazi, John W. Hinkley and David Simmonds, Doug Gray, and Karen Sorensen in their portrayal of secret service men... "SNAP OF THE NIGHT" award goes to the disrespectful Bard student who Nissolved the windows for a janitor, and (in response to complaints of immoral carpet) tossed a little beer on him.

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *
Gonzo Goes Bonzo

Now that our President is on the road to complete recovery, it is time for all concerned Americans to ask a few basic, soul-searching questions. What a sick nation we've become - how rotten our moral fiber is - how terrible and twisted the American psyche has become - when every American, no matter how poor his birth or how low his station in life, can no longer aspire to shoot the Presi-
dent. In our great national pastime about to become yet another preserve for well-heelred scions of the idle rich? At this point I'll confess that the above paragraph does not express any opinion I actually hold. It was written so that Washington would think this was some Marxist propaganda with a leaning of pinko sick humor, and automatically print it. I now invite my local American leaders to join me in prayers for our chief executive. OK? Let's exorcise some of the issues raised last week.

I say where a lot of these Peace Activists were attempting to utilise a few inadvertent slips by our Secretary of State to launch another attack on him. Of course their accusations are groundless. Haiti actually stood between our system and anarchy when he gave his briefing. Suppose that, instead of quoting the 1966 act of suc-
cession, as he did, he cited the earlier law under which the President pro tempore of the Senate came after the President and VP. In other words, suppose he said that Strom Thurmond was "in control" until Bush got to Wash-
ington and Reagan got out of the oper-
ating room. No black American would have been inclined to accept it - quite understandably. The nation would have been plunged into a state of fear far worse than that which prevailed briefly on March 9.

Similarly, I don't like the abuse heaped on the Secret Service and FBI for not finding out what Hinckley was up to before the President was shot. Shit, are they supposed to keep track of every rich weirdo that gets into his head to kill the President? We must have several dozen people at Hard Rock alone who've harbored the thought at one time or another. But - let's face it - at least Hinckley supports every American's right to bear arms as specified in the Constitution. And that's something these rich kids at Harri don't support...

I would sooner invite John Hinckley to show me wasnen for Sunday dinner with me than invite a hard student. After all, the only drugs he uses are Valium, none of this illegal junk. Which brings us to the most irri-
tating thing of all - the way in which pseudo-anonymous signed letters, attacking my old friend Mark Bitter, has been published by the spineless Editor. The le tiger implies that Mark is un-trustworthy, among other things. Well, truth be told, I trust Mark so much that I've found him my own hand-guns since December. I trust that, once we figure out who this pointy-
headed pseudo-intellectual "kristo-

t миллионых" is, Mark will use my firearms to show his anonymous adversary that he won't be pushed around. No shooting, you know. Just some heart-to-heart talk, with the .38 on as most expressive silent partner in the discussion.

One these Reds get tired of baiting Haig they'll probably insist upon Hinckley being given a non-manda-
tory sentence for "humanitarian" reas-
s. I don't buy that. John had his

ON SOME RECENT SUBRAGATIONS

Survey in a landscape thousand, Self-appointed: Which way to Italy? Seal them up! No! Notice caution signs! How prudence awards itself big prizes for big o try a gain.

The yesh of gun books master, The yesh won't wash in the pond, The yesh can't cut this distance lane, Hole-in-a-rut. Take one out, 'mother fallin. "I rained that day."

May some find solace at Woodrink-in-Plaisante, post-office two hills announcements of par-


dise at Futz & Chauncy. But problems with his funds, is rigid, my sorted row and all, who-like-him, an example at a kheule at the grid-la- square. Inquire, our Precedent for this is winisible and: thus, one

must take full responsibility for all the decisions which as-you-know fall within my leaves-me-no alterna-
tive in a situation where opinions are divided and credibly are at stake and others have expressed the view that

1964

In the mood to be critical, Hyper-critical Hypocritical Malicious A-political An object of ridicule

must damn well betterhalf some of them others on hand.

1964

*i a year or so ago.

the observer may 12, 1981

COMMENTARY CONT....
UNCLE VANYA

Michael Stiller

Andrew Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," a play set in rural Russia, was adapted by Milan Slovak, played to Broadway audiences on April 11 through 13, under the direction ofしたらなカラス。The play concerns why the mislabeled aristocracy of this pre-revolutionary era in Russia. Decade-long characters' eccentricities and idiosyncrasies are self-righteous and bored. To hear them tell it, a whole, "uncle Vanya" was rescued only when he was given a new lease on life. It is not entirely harmless in its intensity. "It's like being in a soap opera again!" and "A striving, "...Funny little beast of prey..." In act III, with the hilarious sight, really annoying (in my case) should any "real life" tragedy, but, aside, from these high points, and some quieter moments, the play didn't cut it. The play lacked in directorial interpretation, (a problem Mr. Kilsh has exhibited in the past), and while some characters were played well, others were inconsistent and yet others were deplorable.

Andrew Joffe played the title role of Ivan Petrovich Vatovskiy (Vanya) and did so with a consistency and concentration unusual to Bard actors. Andrew has been known to act as "the center of the stage" at Bard and this was his first chance at a more serious role. He played the country bumpkin with polish and spotlight. Always in the moment, Joffe's performance was clear and without the usual Bardic inflection and pace, the melodrama seen in Bard productions. This is no easy trick. The character of Vanya does lend itself to cheap dramatics, especially in the third act, but Joffe fell prey to none of these. When the time came for it to rain and snow, but convincingly and with a pathetic vulnerability. He was the only actor in the play that really allowed me to forget the fact that I was in a concert with him every day. On stage he was Vanya, not Andrew playing Vanya. Joffe seemed real and believable.

Susan Nicholson, in the role of Yelena, Vanya's daughter by a previous marriage, was better in this play than in anything else I've seen her in, but seemed generally forced in her portrayal of a young, beautifull woman who is bored in the country life she is being forced to endure and feed with the self-indulgent whisperings of her post-monopausal husband. Vanya, the only one who speaks to everyone else and altogether boring! She seemed tied to her lines and emotions in her delivery of the lines, the most part her voice seemed a monotone void of pitch and she seemed to be more or less reading than trying to act bored in the play.

The part of Mikhail Ilievich Astrov, the country doctor, was played well, if not excellently, by Eric Michael Schaeffer. After seeing Uncle Vanya Leon Bostock recently told TASS that he couldn't understand why the play was even cast in the play, Jerry N. Mill, no fake graduate for you. In the first act, Schaeffer seemed to want always to be in the moment and lacked a certain conviction as he drifted in and out of character. His overall performance improved, I think, over the three nights I saw the play, in the latter acts. He did manage to find some gags and his performance was not without its high points. In the third act he was especially good distractedly talking about the weather after Vanya finds he and Yelena in each other's arms in the library of the Serednyov estate. This scene always brought laughter and response from the audience and seemed to be where Schaeffer struck his most comfortable balance between himself and the character he portrayed.

Eric Michael Schaeffer, in the role of Alexander Vladimirich Serebrovsky, performed well (but also inconsistently) in his portrayal of an old, droll, gout-ridden pedant of a retired university professor married in the twenty-seven-year old Yelena. His character formation was good although it can be said that (aside from the Borodin- Aesop voice used) the pomposity and dogmatism he employed are characteristics exhibited by Eric. Schaeffer became somewhat hokey in the second act during Serebrovsky's long self-glorifying tirade, and he seemed to be overdoing it a bit, but in the end it worked. If he played to the audience, then they seemed to respond well.

Katherine Hallett played the part of Sofia Alexandrovna, Serebrovsky's daughter by a previous marriage, her acting of the role seemed to be precisely that-acting. Controlled and unbelievable, her performances mirrored themselves over three consecutive nights as she used the exact same physical and vocal manifestations time and again as if she had learned them all by rote. She seemed to be entirely trapped by the script instead of mastering it, and while her performances did receive some applause from the audience, they seemed mechanical and shallow to me.

John Franklin Beacher, as Ilya Nylych Polegloin, was not up to par. Beacher's portrayal of an impoverished cont'd on pg. 12

"PIECE OF SHIT"

Well, tizzle, you asked for it. What do you call "piece of shit?" and while we're here, let's address its offspring, that self-indulgent, bunny-cute, and fuzzy edit. The study was even cast in the play, Jerry N. Mill, no fake graduate for you. In the first act, Schaeffer seemed to want always to be in the moment and lacked a certain conviction as he drifted in and out of character. His overall performance improved, I think, over the three nights I saw the play, in the latter acts. He did manage to find some gags and his performance was not without its high points. In the third act he was especially good distractedly talking about the weather after Vanya finds he and Yelena in each other's arms in the library of the Serednyov estate. This scene always brought laughter and response from the audience and seemed to be where Schaeffer struck his most comfortable balance between himself and the character he portrayed.

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Judgement day...Judgment Outfitters, Inc., of Lehi, Utah, advertises (in Christianity Today) that its Deluxe Survival Kit includes "enough long-lasting freeze-dried food to supply a family of four for three months, fifty gallons of pasteurized water, a completely stocked medical case, and a .537 Magnum revolver in case your neighbors attempt to take advantage of your Christian foresight."

- Nobody here but us seroprophates...Computer experts have coined the term "sero prophotes" to refer to programmers, technicians, and other human beings whose function it is to serve computers.

- Selective Scargles...Republican Representative Jim Retallik of Sun City, Arizona, says he would abandon his opposition to a bill in case of a colored man raping a young girl, and she becomes pregnant," but he would not support abortion if the rapist were white.

- Frontiers of Free Enterprise...A Littleton, Colorado firm is selling "Genuine Western Dirt, Horse manure, hay, straw," and other unspecified ingredients. It costs 4.95 for a four ounce bottle.

- Final solution...From an editorial in the New York Daily News: "Construction of more penitentiaries and detention centers is the only permanent solution to the prison population explosion, and the public must recognize that it is going to be an expensive proposition."

- Keep cool in combat...News item in the Wall Street Journal: "The Air Force's premier fighter plane, McDonnell-Douglas Corporation's F-15, is so dependent on sophisticated electronics that battle-field repairs require diagnostic computer...these computers have had reliability problems and must be kept air-conditioned."

- THINK

THE FACE OF

Most people know of the Klan-Nazi murders in Chicago, shooting of five black women in Chattanooga, murders in Buffalo, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, police murder in Klan, the attack on Vernon Jordan, the 1981 Mobile lynching. But incidents of racist violence and intimidation are occurring daily throughout our land. We have prepared a bill of particulars. The following is just a small sampling:

- In Chicago, July 1980, a retied black man died after being beaten by three white policemen for smoking on a train.
- In Stockton, Calif., December 1980, a black parking-meter coin collector was harrased by three whites who threw rocks and bottles at him in the name of the KKK. And throughout California, crosses were burned and homes of black families were attacked by Klansmen.
- In Santa Fe, Tex., February 1981, 400 Klansmen rallied to hear a Klan Grand Dragon attack immigrant fishermen and say whites, "Must reclaim this country by blood."
- In Jackson, Miss., October 1980, Klans Klansmen marched in support of a white policeman who killed a pregnant black mother. No charges have been brought against the policeman.
- In West Virginia, November 1980, a white Methodist minister fled the state in terror after KKK threats on his life.
- In New York City, December 1980, four men, three black and one Latino were fatally stabbed by a knife-wielding white man.
- In Wrightsville, Ga., April, 1980, a white sheriff led a white mob in attack on peaceful black marchers. There has been no prosecution.
- In Decatur, Ala., no one has ever been arrested for attempting to assassinate leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in May, 1979. From New York to California, in 1981, 377 instances of anti-Semitic assault and vandalism occurred. And in at least seven states, the Klan was conducting paramilitary training camps to prepare for "race war."

Adolph Hitler, "My New Order" (Speech to Financiers and Industrialists)

"You businessmen are leaders in the economic world. You have positions of great responsibility and power, far above the average man. You embody the principle of aristocracy as it expresses itself in economic relations. That is an entirely correct principle which is in accord with the underlying law of nature...

However, you cannot simply sit back and expect that your arrangement will go on forever. Just look around you at what is happening in German political life. Democracy is on the march. Democracy: that means the rule of the majority, or numbers and masses rather than the exceptional individuals and the natural leaders. Do you think that that idea is not supported and will spread from politics to economics. Then there
TWICE

F VIOLENCE

will be economic democracy. What will happen to you. Your whole arrangement will be swept away... This thing has already happened in Russia...

What is the meaning of this in the present situation? It means that either the democratic movement will spread from politics to economics, or the aristocratic idea will spread from economics to politics. If you want to retain the present system in economics, you must do battle with the democratic idea in politics. ●

(1932)

Woodrow Wilson: "The masters of the government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States." ●

(1913)

Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The first truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to the point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism - ownership of government by any other controlling private power. The second truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if its economic system does not provide employment and produce and distribute goods in such a way as to sustain an acceptable standard of living. Among us today, a concentration of private power without equal in history is growing... The effect of this concentration is reflected in the distribution of national income... A little less than 1% of the nation's families received incomes which, in dollars and cents, reached the same total as the income of the 475 at the bottom."

Message to Congress, 1938) ●

Raymond Gramm, President, Newspaper Guild: "Fascism is a dictatorship from the extreme right, or to put it a little more clearly into cut local idioms, a government which is run by a small group of large industrialists and financial lords. Of course, if you want to go back into history, this influence of big business has always been present in our federal government. But there have been some checks on its control... We might have fascism even though we maintained our presence of our democratic machinery. The mere presence of a Supreme Court, a House of Representatives, a Senate, and a President would not be sufficient protection against the utter centralization of power in the hands of a few men who might hold no office at all."

Even in the case of Hitler, many alleged observers feel that his real power is derived from the large munitions and steel houses of Germany. Now one of the first steps which fascists must take in any land in order to capture power is to disrupt and destroy the labor movements." ●

(1936)

Paper Tigers

President Reagan has translated his political views on excessive government regulation into budget-cutting orders for 16 federal regulatory agencies, reducing some agencies with once formidable power into paper tigers. Announcing the reductions in his "economic recovery" message to Congress, the president explained that "fewer regulators will necessarily result in fewer regulations and less harassment of the regulated."

The big losers were agencies charged with issuing and enforcing health, safety, environmental, and civil rights standards. The agencies hit the hardest included:

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), charged with keeping dangerous products off the market. President Reagan ordered a 30 percent cut in CPSC's budget for fiscal year 1982 and cut its staff allowance by 26 percent.

In recent years the commission has issued rules on packaging poisons and drugs, developed standards on lawyer safety, and banned products containing cancer-causing chemicals. Republican CPSC Chairman Stuart Seidler predicted that Reagan's proposals would wipe out many of the commission's key consumer programs.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) which polices the marketplace to guard against unfair business practices, was initially slated for cuts which would have eliminated the independent commission's antitrust enforcement function. The administration finally backed off but nonetheless proposed a 25 percent staff reduction and a 40.5 percent budget cut for fiscal year 1982.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is scheduled for a 20 percent budget cut for fiscal year 1982 and an 11 percent staff reduction. SSEage treatment grants were slashed down by a savings of $1.7 billion.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has newly increased responsibilities to enforce sex and age discrimination laws.

Reagan has ordered a 12 percent cut in the agency's budget and a 10 percent staff reduction.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) was targeted for a relatively small 6 percent budget cut and a larger 11 percent staff reduction. The administration wants to shift the agency's mission from enforcing safety standards to "consulting" with industry to increase on-the-job safety.

The only big winners:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, scheduled for an 11.5 percent increase in fiscal year 1982. ●

The Synotech Software Company of Houston reports it has sold more than 10,000 copies of an x-rated program for small home computers. Called "Interlude," the program asks a series of personal questions. The replies are punched into the keyboard. "Interlude" then prints out detailed instructions describing what the people gathered around the computer should do — which range, says the company, "from basic foreplay to light bondage." Synotech president David Brown notes the computer can be especially beneficial when "the man and woman are already feeling warmly toward each other, but do not have an exact format in mind for the evening." ●
TORNADOS
If one struck, would you know what to do?

GETTING PREPARED

■ Know how to get emergency weather information in your community and know what it means.
■ A National Weather Service "tornado watch" means conditions are right for tornadoes to form.
■ "Tornado warning" means a tornado has been sighted. Take cover.
■ Most communities use sirens or horns to warn of a tornado warning. Know what your system is and what it sounds like.
■ Plan and practice what your family will do in a case of a tornado.
■ Have a prearranged place in your home for everyone to go to. It must be a place that cannot blow down or fall in. If you doubt your safety, do not go for shelter.
■ If you’re in a mobile home, get out. If a shelter is available, go to it. If not, lie in a ditch or other low area.
■ If you’re in a car, get out. Lie in a ditch or other low area.
■ Keep the keys where you have them. In a very few minutes, emergency crews will be looking for someone.
■ Know you have the right kind of insurance and enough of it to cover all damage a tornado can cause.
■ Make an inventory of everything in your house and keep it in a safe place away from your house. If you don’t have a safe place, it will be a great help in spending payment for your losses.

S.O.P.
To build a "good stretch," all you need is:

■ Two helmet
■ Two long, strong ropes.
■ And one elastic goal.

What Kind Of War?
Ask what kind of war is where you can be plowed down all day in muddy rice paddies while your buddies are being shot and a close-support Phantom jet who has been monitoring the action energy wraps itself around a tree and explodes and you cheer inside?

SOLIDARITY
From Polish shipworkers to Latin American peasants, the poor have organized and standing together in solidarity to build a new society. How are they doing this?

First, prophetic voices such as the late Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina are denouncing poverty as an evil which divides, destroys, and destroys people.

Second, they are proclaiming a vision of a new way to organize society in which the human person, not profit or power, is the central purpose and motivating factor.

Third, like-minded friends are gathering in small support groups to discuss and clarify their problems and share their struggles and hopes for a more decent life.

Our response to world poverty and oppression might follow this same strategy. We too, in the rich countries are called to join in solidarity. That means a relationship of equality: no superiority, no pity, no charity. It means identifying with their aspirations, seeing in them our own struggles and problems magnified many times over. It means learning from them alternative ways to organize our society for the benefit of the common person.

We are similarly challenged to denounce the ills in our society. And probably none is greater than the ill of national security. We are told that power is strength and we must be strong to survive, no moral questions asked. We are told to trust in the bomb for our security, ignoring the fact that for the first time in history, we are in danger of destroying the whole human race. We are told to blame the victims themselves for the poverty and oppression in the world today. They are classed as refugees, guerrillas or some other enemies whom we are justified in hating and destroying.

We too should have a vision that peaceful resolution of conflict is possible and people can live together as brothers and friends in a world community. We need to announce that for the first time in history, humanity has the technology and resources to provide a decent life, including food, water, shelter and education for every living person in the world today.

Finally, we too might form small support groups to sort out a confused world and determine our own concrete justifications for justice in the world today. The poor challenge us to live simply and sparingly, not hoarding, so that more food and energy resources can become available for all.

Our world is on a threshold. We will either blow it up or create the new structures and relationships necessary for a peaceful world community.
The Humanist Response

Activism for the Eighties

The college student of today is often compared to the "involved, "active" generation of yesterday. The difference is wanting. But things were simpler in the sixties. There was one big issue then, Vietnam. Now the problem is too many big issues, each of them urgent, most of them unbearably, all of them overlapping, and some of them needing a technical knowledge to understand. The inventory of big issues today is so extensive that many of the world's problems constitute nothing but intransigent problems of drug addiction, human rights, inflation, crime, shortages, pollution, poverty, environmental integrity, international terrorism, and a swarm of other major crises.

The good chance exists that what appears to be indifference among today's generation of students is really simply the overload on their sympathies, at being asked to care about too many things all at the same time. The problem appears to be frustration, followed by avoidance of the cause of the frustration, followed in many instances by a degree of guilt. Inference is cultivated by many persons to deal with their feeling of guilt, or at least an appearance of indifference is cultivated.

Game playing and self-destructive behavior of various kinds offer escape for others who do not want to face up to their sense of failing to address issues. A few will still become righteous activists completely devoted to one cause. But the moral majority of college students to today feel the same call to duty that idealistic young men and women of the sixties may have felt, know that the condition of their world needs them, and the editors of any one special interest group, however zealously served or right it may be.

Unless the breakdown of today's college generation is morally and politically insensitive in comparison to those that preceded them, this generation's refrain "There's nothing one person can do that would help" probably should be read, "I wish I knew what I could do to help."

But is there any validity to the proposition that it is up to every generation to solve the problems of the world that previous generations left unsolved?

Probably older generations invented the idea that their younger successors were supposed to solve the problems which the older generation left unsolved, as a way of avoiding the fact that each generation while solving some problems creates new ones, and thus does not progress in any absolute sense.

For the past 300 years western nations have been increasingly obsessed with the idea that they were making progress in an absolute sense. Yet one sees at a glance today how erroneous that idea is and how often advances in science and technology contribute to the history of human misery and disorder. Perhaps the nineteenth-century American poet Walt Whitman was right when he wrote that there "will never be any more perfection than there is now" — and he was a strong believer in the good will of mankind and the benefits of technology and science. Certainly it is not meaningless, if not meaningless, for some of the world's most pressing problems to be those that add to the burden of life in one society rather than a life-saving liquid. Nor can we, in today's world of volcanic social stress that are being added to steadily burgeoning world populations, any longer consider the elimination of death-control, through better reproductive control, as an innocent in the interest of mankind, unless accompanied by radical world-wide birth-control. Yet no one appears to know how to institute such control of human birth without abrogating the universally deep-rooted human rights.

The responsibility of new generations to solve old problems is a fallacy: the true responsibility in each generation is to avoid creating new disorders and problems. A great increase in cold, courageous, calculating, unselfconscious reasoning and self-interest is needed today if human culture is to survive. And just as essential as this increase of enlightened self-interest must be an accompanying decrease in respect for analysis that has no better purpose than instatement of blame for today's problems. (History as an exercise in fault-finding is no longer useful.)

But what is enlightened self-interest? It is surely not selfishness or indifference. Rather it is knowing that to that which is right for the sake of the right is right, whatever else may be right. It is also knowing that we can only have peace by abandoning the mentality of war, which conceives of other human beings as enemies and exploiters. Finally, the enlightened self-interest that is needed is a certain largeness of spirit, the largeness of knowing one's place in a universal moral order. Walt Whitman was speaking of these things in saying: "Little or big, as a newspaperman, white or black, legal or illegal, sick or well, from the first inspiration down the windpipe to the last expiration out of it, all that a male or female does that is vigorous and benevolent and clean is so much more profit to him or her in the unshakeable order of the universe and through the whole scope of it, forever." What we require of today's college students is a healthy program than the demonstrations for peace of the sixties, which were sometimes little more than mass exercises in hate.

For a whole generation to avoid the solution of problems would be truly a "radical" behavior. It would be revolutionary if a whole generation upheld the right for the sake of the right, abandoned the mentality of "them" versus "us," and urged governments to work toward the goal of universally valid moral laws as the primary goals for economic, social, and political decisions.

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"TOUGH COOKIES LADIES, BUT OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNWANTED CHILDREN STOP AT THE END OF THE BIRTH CANAL."
I believe that man will not merely endure, he will prevail. He is immortal not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.

Words: William Faulkner
Photo: Ansel Adams