

Intellectuals — Then and Now

What is an intellectual?

No one has ever been sure, but today's observers are sure of one thing—the intellectual is now needed by the country, and needed badly.

This fact has been pointed out graphically by Russia's leap into space last fall. Since then, the emphasis has been heavily on science and brain power as a vital American natural resource.

Harper's Editor John Fischer, in a strongly-worded piece equal to his February probe "Should Ike Resign?", delivers a few blows for the intellectual in the March number. And Fischer signals a "change—gradual, almost unnoticed, but in the long run profoundly significant—in the status of the American intellectual."

A little of the intellectual's rating in pre-Sputnik society is reflected by Fischer, who illustrates the traditional forces opposing the acceptance of the breed—its own inherent contempt for lower intellects and the natural resentment of a man who does hard physical labor toward the man who doesn't.

The intellectual has long been set apart from society in a certain sense, perhaps because he has considered it his duty to serve as an articulate critic of that society. He gets paid for making value judgments—for marking off the good from the bad; for insisting that Bach is superior to Irving Berlin, no matter what the Trendex rating says; for putting a finger on the stained and shabby spots in the social fabric; for reminding people that they are living in heedless ignorance, sloth and ugliness, whether they want to hear this news or not.

Besides suffering the persecutions of the less intelligent and of conservatives, Fischer claims, intellectuals in America have taken abuse from a geographic element—those who by regional and sectional influences have opposed the East, traditionally the intellectual's Mecca.

"Today several interesting things are happening to the old relationship between the American community and the intellectual—and they are happening on both sides of the equation. He is beginning to suspect that the local culture is neither so hopeless nor

so inhospitable as he once believed; and the country at large is now conceding that he may be a useful fellow—if sometimes an uncomfortable one—to have around," Fischer added.

Technology, economic advancement and just plain old progress can probably account for these factors handily. Intellectuals are now needed, for brain power is essential to much of modern living. And the communicators, "the people who can explain one highly specialized fragment of our social organism to all the other parts", are becoming virtually indispensable.

More important than the statistics, says Fischer, is the change in the cultural climate now underway. "It started a few months ago when we realized, with a jar, that America no longer led the world in everything . . . that our way of life might be something less than perfect . . . that the critics of society, whom we had long brushed off like so many mosquitoes, might be worth listening to after all."

Two myths—that permanent cultural superiority resided in Europe and that left-wing tendencies invariably accompanied so-called "eggheads"—were cited by Fischer as mainly responsible for the intellectual's 1930 status.

Now he turns to some modern results of intellectualism's re-eminence. 1) good grades in school are no longer badges of shame. 2) private libraries are re-appearing. 3) magazines "for people who do not move their lips when they read" are growing. 4) television executives are discovering that audiences will absorb intellectually-based shows and 5) college education has become practically everyone's goal.

Fischer closes without really defining an intellectual, but includes authors, scientists, scholars, artists, and a good many "communicators"—reporters, advertising men, teachers, film directors, radio and TV men, clergymen, etc.

"A list of the signs of an intellectual springtime could be continued for pages. They are evidence, it seems to me, that 1958 may mark a kind of solstice in American history—and that from now on it may not be easy to aim at this country the old, taunting question: "If you're so rich, why aren't you smart?" "

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Let's Go North

One of the most confusing basketball seasons in Pacific Coast Conference history ends this weekend.

When the conference drew up the home-and-home scheduling plan used this season, they had this thought in mind—fans in each member school's area would like to see every team in the conference.

Although this season's race has been better balanced than the 1957 conference race, the conference attendance figures have fallen. In fact, ever since the present plan replaced the old Northern and Southern Division set-up three years ago, fans have attended games less frequently.

Most coaches of Northern clubs favor the old plan with their squads meeting the other ND teams four times a season.

We like this plan for three reasons:

1. Fans attend these Northern Division contests more regularly. The result is better basketball for more people.

2. Traveling expenses are lower. The

Northern teams would avoid those long, costly trips to California.

3. The present conference scheduling plan lacks tradition. After 32 years of Northern Division scheduling, fans are accustomed to watching their old favorite teams—Oregon, Oregon State, Washington, Washington State and Idaho.

Reverting back to the old scheduling plan would hurt the Southern clubs financially. Their basketball plants just don't hold the same number of fans that gymnasiums on the Oregon, Oregon State and Washington campuses do. Undoubtedly, the Southern schools would not favor this plan, which is an ironic reversal of their football interests.

The Northern Division scheduling plan is probably inevitable, favored or not. With Southern California, UCLA and California intending to withdraw from the conference, only the five Northern Division schools and Stanford will remain. This just might be a blessing in disguise—for Northern basketball, at least.

Footnotes

The cover of January's Quill, a journalist's magazine, shows a man in a high altitude pressure suit over the caption: "Outer Space—A New Frontier for Journalism." We agree, though somewhat wistfully as we look at The Emerald's 1911 model press.

C.O.D.?



HEY, BURWELL—I GOT A TUTOR WITH MY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE!!

Charles Mitchelmore

Solution for Leaders— Try Participation, Too

How do you decide what a student leader is, and, more important, how do you decide if you are one? President Wilson would like to know.

He brought the question up in a preliminary discussion of "The U and You," the freshman conference designed, according to one of its co-chairmen, for "orientation and leadership" purposes.



The "Frosh Leaders" (dorm presidents and class officers) decided when they began plans for the conference that the orientation and leadership benefits of the program should be limited to the Frosh Leaders (meaning themselves), with pledge class officers thrown in for good measure.

But (and fortunately) after some reconsidering by the planners, the meeting was opened to all potential leaders — the whole freshman class. The result, the co-chairman said, was a signup of about 100.

Back to the opening question: how do you decide if you are a student leader? Do the 100 who signed up for the leadership and orientation benefits of tomorrow's show consider themselves student leaders? Probably not.

But more significant, do the planners — the Frosh Leaders and their duly-appointed steering committee—consider themselves student leaders? And do their guests, the panelists and discussion starters who will do much of the talking at the leadership-orientation sessions, consider themselves student leaders? Probably, yes.

So what makes a leader? The military, or rather the military as represented by a senior ROTC text, lists certain musts for "effective" leaders: the ability to communicate effectively, a high degree of intelligence, calmness in the presence of stress (supposedly for military leaders only, but what do you do when your co-chairman doesn't show up?) and a real understanding of personal motives.

Still feel like a student leader? Well, don't go running to Webster for consolation. A "guide,

conductor; also head of a group" may put you on firmer ground, but are you actually still a student leader?

Then does being pledge class treasurer or sweater honorary member or decorations co-chairman make you a student leader? Accurately now, no, it doesn't.

The term student leader should be an honorary one (awarded with more care than blue or white sweaters). For the most part those who are most concerned by this discussion are merely participants, not leaders in student life.

Hairsplitting? Perhaps. But with the beginning again of the concern over justification of activities, why not do some spade calling in original definitions? After all, the real purpose of student activities is to provide opportunities for extra-curricular participation.

Leadership may be a by-product, but there is such a thing as having too many student leaders and no student participants. That's the problem now. We're plagued with people who think

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Letters to the Editor

Emerald Editor:

It is time for the administration to begin realizing that the University of Oregon is an institution of liberal and professional education, and not a reform school for high school graduates.

Each student that comes to Oregon is expected to maintain satisfactory grade requirements and to abide by necessary state and University laws. If he doesn't do this, then he should be dismissed, leaving room for students who are willing to do so. The job of the University is to provide the facilities for education and to enforce the rules.

The present attitude of the dean of women seems to be that each freshman is her personal responsibility, morally, and that she should baby the student through four years of college. This is not the job of the dean of women or of the University.

These girls are sent to col-
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