

Influences colleges

High school unrest spreads

WASHINGTON—The Scranton Commission in its otherwise wide-angle report on campus unrest overlooked one basic dimension: every college student is a refugee from high school. And American high schools, as two fresh studies both financed by the U.S. Office Of Education remind us, have themselves become hotbeds of student unrest. Neither study explores any direct cause-and-effect links between high school unrest and the turmoil on college campuses—a subject that should be getting far more attention. But one in particular, released by The Center For Research And Education In American Liberties at Columbia University, clearly suggests that such ties may exist.

The Columbia-based team set out to draft new "behavioral objectives" for junior and senior high school civics courses. But in questioning some 6,700 students in New York City and Philadelphia urban and suburban schools, it turned up alarming evidence of how the typically autocratic high school can shape students' attitudes and their ways of expressing them. The majority of the students, if found, see their schools as basically undemocratic. They are barred from taking part in decisions affecting them as individuals and citizens. When their proposed innovations or their complaints about how they are treated cause conflicts, these are usually met with arbitrary action by teachers and administrators.

Students angry, frustrated

As a result, comments Alan F. Westin, Columbia professor and the center's director, "The great majority of students are angry, frustrated, increasingly alienated by school. 'They do not believe,' Westin continues, 'they receive individual justice or enjoy the rights of

dissent or share in critical decision-making affecting their lives within the school. 'Our schools,' he warns, 'are now educating millions of students who are not forming an allegiance to the democratic political system simply because they do not experience such a democratic system in their daily lives in school.'"

This particular study goes beyond the question of alienation, however. It explores how students treated like cattle in high school emerge woefully ill-equipped to appreciate opposing views, to recognize and weigh alternative courses of action, to foresee the effects of whatever course they follow—in short, to make the mature political decisions essential in any democracy.

These, of course, are the same failings for which today's college radicals are so roundly chastised. They are intolerant and impatient. They stridently press "non-negotiable demands." They use disruptive, sometimes violent, tactics. They seem to ignore the harm their verbal or physical assaults can wreak upon those whom they assault. While the Columbia study leaves such a conclusion to the reader, it seems clear that many college radicals bring with them from high school their deep distrust of adult authority and their readiness to mount protests against those embodying that authority on their campus.

Countless others, to be sure, escape political scars in high school and arrive at college with open minds only to be "radicalized" by what they encounter there. But as the sculptor Jacob Epstein once observed, an open mind is an empty mind. One can make a strong case that for these students too, a lack of high school experience in practical democracy helps

lead their campus political commitments into undemocratic ways.

The second study, from the policy institute of the Syracuse University Research Corp., reports that 85 per cent of some 700 urban public high schools all over the country suffered one or more kinds of disruption over the past three years. The number and intensity of these incidents, it says, is growing. Among the many interlocking causes of these outbreaks, including racial tensions, the Syracuse study also lists student demands for participation in policy-making.

The policy issues themselves range from student government and political organizations to social events, dress codes, smoking and—increasingly—curriculum. Through questioning principals, the Syracuse team reports that only half the high schools surveyed have voting students on student-conduct policy bodies, only 18 per cent have voting students on disciplinary boards and 20 per cent have voting students on curriculum committees.

Increased student participation

"It is one thing to be a bit chary about allowing students to participate in specific punishment of specific other students," the team remarks. "It seems almost obsolete to refuse to allow students to participate meaningfully in the actual formation of conduct policy." Both the Columbia and Syracuse studies call for steps to increase students' democratic participation in high school affairs. Teaching textbook democracy in civics class does little good, the Columbia team concludes, if the students feel that teachers and principals try to run their lives for them with ham-handed despotism.

Principals, similarly, must share

responsibility with students: "Only when students are involved in the making of policies and decisions which are of true civic concern to them, will they be learning to make the type of decisions participative citizens must make." As the Syracuse study points out, students are transients and "school officials inevitably get the feeling that they must reinvent the participation wheel every time another class comes along."

There really are taxpayers

On the other hand, the Syracuse group asserts, "it is almost a truism to point out that when people being regulated have a real say in regulations, they are much more likely to adhere to them. But even more important values ensue. Students quickly learn that the management of a public institution such as school is a complicated affair largely because of the variety of legitimate pressures leaning on such institutions. There really are taxpayers, and they really must have a certain basic respect for the institutions they are supporting. And we believe...that the students soon find there is no such thing as the students' point of view."

Neither of these studies promotes student participation as a panacea. Indeed, the Syracuse team concludes, "short of a total moral conversion, the American society will continue to behave in such a way as to insure some degree of pathological unrest in our urban high schools for some time to come." But both obviously agree that treating high school students as citizens in a democracy can encourage and equip them to act like democratic citizens—in their schools, and later, where it is even more important, on the college campus and in the community. *Los Angeles Times--Washington Post News Service*

D. J. R. Bruckner

Bombers, radicals needed in politics

If there were no Weatherman, no guerrilla, would government find it necessary to invent some? In fact, these people may not be responsible for all the bombings. It is easy for anyone to claim credit in the name of someone else. But the division of violence serves many purposes; one wonders if the people or the radicals have any notion of the necessity of irrelevance to modern politics.

Revolutions properly are radical shifts in power and the aggregations of power. There is a big one going on in this society, but the crazies have nothing to do with it.

—The automobile, the vehicle of personal independence, allows the American to run all over the continent at will. But it has bred worldwide industries of almost uncontrollable power: auto, construction, oil, for instance. Spending on highways is fantastic, most of it federal; the vehicle of personal independence has immensely broadened the power of central government and it has almost wiped out local government as an instrument of real political decisions.

Hitler used communications

—Former Nazi official Albert Speer says Adolf Hitler used communications, mostly telephone and radio, to wipe out the middle level of command, to give central government direct authority over individuals. Communications are much improved since then. And, in an age of superweapons, a ruler does not have to worry about the loyalties of as many people as he once did; big weapons are

easy to employ and the people do not have to be bothered quite so much.

—Radio and television bring the world home. But they turn consumer research and advertising into political movements. A man with, say, 30 million dollars at hand, can use them to be elected president; and, once in office, he can use them to overwhelm opposition and preach doctrine unrestrained. On fast planes he can fly about bouncing his homebound messages off the heads of foreign rulers. The entire electronic communications system comes under control of men he has the power to appoint.

Computers, still almost untried wonders, really should be able to revolutionize daily life, to bring in the age of creativity and abundance. They also give government, and some huge businesses, control over intelligence data of all types, information about individuals, immediate, unforgetful, untempered by any feeling.

—Basic research gives us all this wealth, and education has the power of freedom. But, within a couple of decades, the major funding of research and education has shifted to one source—Washington; the power of control is immeasurable. Many of technological developments which change our lives forever are researched and developed by government-funded technocrats who are personally committed to their success.

Technology helps crime

—New technologies, travel systems

and monetary systems greatly increase the muscle of organized crime. The administration refuses to mention the Mafia now, but Mafiosi and their allies can operate over political boundaries more easily every day. They run money in and out of foreign banks on a colossal scale; their power in legitimate business is growing all the time.

—Rapid development in bugging, wiretapping, photographing and surveillance devices of other types allows governments to conduct foreign affairs mostly through intelligence operations. They also give governments in-depth control of citizens. This month Atty. Gen. John Mitchell himself was boasting of the success his office has had in bugging and tapping suspects (there is a large group of people he claims the right to intrude on whom he refuses to enumerate at all), encouraging local police to use these devices and sneering at "absolute civil libertarians." When there was a dispute about the size of the crowds at last year's Moratorium Day in Washington, the Defense Department released an uncomfortably clear aerial photograph of that crowd. Were you thinking of a indiscretion on the beach for tomorrow?

The government has tea-tasters at work. And more. Increasingly, everything consumable by man, and a lot of beasts—agricultural products, food, drugs, drink—is controlled by government in quantity, quality, manufacture, packaging, supply, distribution. If the environment is to be saved, its control must increase in the future.

Such megasystems are not vulnerable to a few bombs. Weatherman is important to the maintenance of power much in the way the illusion of traditional party politics is, or traditional patriotism; they distract, and do not interfere with the power. Sometimes they allow government to increase its power of surveillance, control, arrest.

Manifestly the political system is not a control mechanism over the real revolution in everyday life. Whether it can be rebuilt into such a system of control is the overriding problem of the times. Technological change seems more palatable to many than political change, however. Ironically, Weatherman and his like are parts of the power system. *Los Angeles Times--Washington Post News Service*

Letters

Who

I was reading in the Emerald recently about James Weaver's talk at the Free Speech Platform and how he was catering his ideas to student views on the issues. It is interesting to note, that in the July 26 Oregonian, he stated his views to another set of voters, "These are the people who often wear the American flag and carry stickers on their cars that say 'America, Love It or Leave it.' This is the vote I'm working to represent, and if I get it, I'll win—there is no question on that point." Who, exactly, is Mr. Weaver trying to represent?

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