

Parker: Corporations rule as new barons

By PAUL TELLES
Of the Emerald

Prompted by the rise of multinational corporations, a "new feudalism" is emerging in America, charges Richard Parker, a former editor of Mother Jones magazine.

Speaking to about 350 people in the EMU Ballroom Tuesday night, Parker lambasted the typical view of America as a democratic, egalitarian society.

"We're finishing a period in which the state is central, and corporations are taking over as the new baronial rulers of the planet," Parker said. "Corporations now, in effect, can operate

outside the law of the state because they can move outside the geographical control of the state."

Parker said an examination of American income distribution refutes the notion that America is "one large and relatively homogeneous middle class."

"The bottom fifth of the American population has routinely collected less than 4 percent of the national income. The top fifth, by contrast, has routinely collected nearly half," he said.

In terms of job composition, "there has been a dramatic res-

structuring of American society" as the economy has moved from a blue-collar work force to a white-collar force, said Parker, who holds a doctorate in economics from Oxford University.

While this trend frequently is cited as proof the United States is becoming more egalitarian, it actually has caused an increase in the number of unskilled workers, he said.

Additionally, Parker said, American wealth is increasingly concentrated in only a few hands.

These developments will lead to the rise of a "techno-peasantry" almost completely

subservient to the corporate barons, predicted Parker, who has written on economics for several major publications.

"We now live in a world in which we are so completely tied to the process of production that we are no different from the peasants of France or England in the 12th or 13th centuries," Parker said in an interview before the speech.

This development is illustrated by the declining standard of living for American workers and by the increasing incidence of functional illiteracy, Parker said.

Inflationary pressures and a prejudicial tax structure are widening the gap between the classes, Parker said, referring to the current housing market as an example of how most Americans are being deprived of economic choices.

For instance, two-income families that annually earn \$60,000 are insulated from the effects of high housing costs and high interest rates because they can deduct large parts of the expense from their taxes.

"If you're in a 50-percent bracket, the federal government has made a pledge to you that it will pay 50 percent of your 15-percent mortgage. You were able to go out and buy a

\$116,000 house, if you earn \$60,000 a year, for a 7.5-percent mortgage."

But those in a 10-percent tax bracket get a discount of only 1.5 percent and may not be able to buy houses at all, Parker said.

Consequently, he predicted the 1980s will bring a growing gap between income levels.

Criticizing newly inaugurated Pres. Ronald Reagan for being "as much a servant of the corporations as when he sold Chesterfield cigarettes and Van Heusen shirts," Parker said Reagan's administration will accelerate the development of the "new feudalism."

He predicted that implementing the 30-percent Kemp-Roth tax cut will further exacerbate the differences in American incomes because it will benefit Americans with high incomes more than those with low incomes.

Reagan is a "small, stupid man guided first by the Evita of North America, his wife Nancy, and secondly by the dark and shadowy figures that surround American corporations," Parker said.

Parker's campus appearance was sponsored by the EMU Cultural Forum.

ask the sexpert

A correction from last week's question "Will antibiotics alter the effectiveness of birth-control pills?" The Drug Information Center says the antibiotic ampicillin, taken in combination with the birth-control pill, may reduce the effectiveness rate of the pill and may cause breakthrough bleeding.

Why is it that I can masturbate to orgasm, but I often fail to reach orgasm through intercourse?

Sometimes in sexual intercourse, women do not communicate what is sexually pleasing. Also, at times a woman's clitoris, the small mound of tissue located outside and above the vagina, is not stimulated sufficiently through intercourse alone. By masturbating, a woman can achieve orgasm by direct stimulation of the clitoris.

How do you say "No" if a gay friend approaches you?

Pretty much the same way you would say "No" to someone of the opposite sex. If a friend approaches you and you do not want to get sexually involved, you should make your feelings clear. Your friend may have mistaken some clues

you gave out and may think you are interested in a sexual relationship. Let this person know, through both words and actions, that you want to be friends — not lovers.

Please comment on "blue balls." What is it and what causes it?

There are two answers — one medical and one fictional. After surgery or a trauma to the testes, blood will accumulate in the scrotum. The effect, a natural response, is called "blue balls" and usually lasts several weeks.

On the other hand, men perpetuate a popular misconception when they complain of "blue balls" when deprived of sex. This is primarily a psychological feeling — not a real physical phenomenon — but not without merit in the male culture, since many a helpful female has been persuaded to rescue the poor lad in distress who applies this tactic.

This column is written by Planned Parenthood, 134 E. 13th Ave., 344-1611 or 344-9411. Please submit questions to the Emerald, EMU Suite 300, or to Planned Parenthood.

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