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The political economy of higher education.

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A dissertation presented
by
ROBERT M. WINSTON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
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partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation

by

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November 1972
Chapter I, "Overview," considers the development of education, and in particular higher education, as a social tool designed to integrate individuals into extant social-political-economic structures (thus perpetuating those structures) rather than as a system aiding in the fullest development of the individual's abilities without reference to external factors. Consideration is given to the operations of those social-political-economic structures and to their deficiencies, particularly with regard to disadvantaged minority groups, the lower class, and women.

Chapter II, "Who Goes to College?", is concerned with the myth that the average individual's chances of obtaining a college education have steadily increased in this century. Instances are cited in which policies of social engineering (informed by a desire to perpetuate the status quo) have resulted in the average individual's chances of gaining a college education decreasing since World War II, despite the proliferation during that period of junior and community colleges. The lack of meaningful improvement in the opportunities for women and black to obtain college educations, facul-
appointments, or training in professional schools to a degree commensurate with their ability is discussed.

Chapter III, "What Do the Universities Teach?", deals with the curricular limitations of American universities. Difficulties attending the establishment of Black Studies programs are examined as evidences of the universities' mono-cultural commitment to the WASP social-political-economic elites who have traditionally provided the bulk of their undergraduates. The pressures on women to restrict their educations to certain "feminine"—rather than feminist—fields is examined as evidence of the universities' monosexual commitment to male superiority at the expense of talented women.

Chapter IV, "What Do the Community Colleges Teach?", deals with the social engineering functions of the community college: "cooling out" talented students whose aspirations the extant social-political-economic structures are not prepared to fulfill and socializing the cost of training workers for capitalistic enterprise. With regard to the more flexible academic training it was once thought the community colleges could provide, they are seen as having developed into a colonial system for established universities, deriving from them their customs, methods, and standards.

Chapter V, "Why Are the Universities as They Are?", is concerned with the involvement of the American universi-
ty with those most interested in preserving the social-political-economic status quo. Universities, "disinterested seekers of truth," are seen as having compromised their disinterestedness through extensive involvement with, and dependence on, an economic and political elite. The university as corporation is examined, and instances are cited of limitations placed on the "disinterested search for truth" as a means of protecting the interests of the social-political-economic elite.

Chapter VI, "Can the Universities Disenthrall Themselves?", briefly surveys the possibility that the universities might become disentangled from those more interested in increasing their own wealth and authority rather than truth and become agents for social change. It concludes that such a disentanglement can only be accomplished by a massive transformation of national institutions and leaves to the future the question of whether such a transformation can be accomplished gradually or must come with calamitous swiftness.
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CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW

Educate . . . v. 1588 [fr. L. educat-, educare, related to educere to lead forth (see Educe).] trans. or absol. 1. to rear, bring up -1818. 2. To bring up from childhood, so as to form habits, manners, mental and physical aptitudes 1618. b. To provide schooling for 1588. 3. To train generally 1849. 4. To train so as to develop some special aptitude, taste, or disposition.

--The Oxford Universal Dictionary

Any discussion about the political economy of higher education in America involves consideration of what education ought to be. The traditional definition of liberal arts training derived from the Latin root above involved a "leading forth" or "bringing out" in two ways. First, all the intellectual potentialities of the student were to be brought forth, developed as best they could be. Secondly, the students were to be led out of themselves, given a new and broader cultural perspective by which they might view themselves and their society. There was little, if any, thought given to the utility of the education one received at university; apart from scientists, ministers, and lawyers, one attended university because it offered a course in the traditional attainments of the gentleman, a thing certainly of value in society if nowhere else.

Education was perceived, however, as having various social, political, and economic side-effects, despite this
emphasis on developing the individual. The Sunday School movement in Great Britain which led ultimately to the establishment of free public elementary schools was strenuously resisted by conservative elements in the country who feared that literacy among the peasantry would lead ultimately to political and economic literacy, which would in turn upset traditional social structure of the country and lead to anarchy.

Higher education in the United States was perceived as having similar socio-economic properties, but, as will be noted below, the democratic spirit of the frontier insisted that public schools and universities serve an egalitarian purpose, that they serve as the great levellers of the classes of society and that they produce one class possessed of the values of, and as talented and competent as, the upper class. The universities would absorb the population. The "Wisconsin idea," popularized by Lincoln Steffens in his article "Sending a State to College," involved teaching "anybody--anything--anywhere." Stanford entered the business of higher education by emphasizing a wide range of "utility" courses aimed at a student body selected with no regard for formal academic standards and freed of the obligation of paying tuition to attend the university.¹ A great many college administrators

in the period 1890-1910 avowed a course of mass expansionism of their schools, not permitting "academic values" to stand in the way. As the Chancellor of the University of Nebraska said, "My entire political creed . . . is a thousand students in the State University in 1895; 2,000 in 1900." This egalitarian spirit, however, has been subverted by an increasing economic emphasis in education; development of the individual has been deemed less important a goal for education than servicing the currently existing economic needs of our society.

In twentieth-century America the customary reason offered in favor of staying in high school is that the drop-out has greater difficulty than the graduate in finding and keeping a job; going to college is ordinarily favored because the college graduate generally earns more money than the high-school graduate or college drop-out. Studies generally agree, furthermore, that while each year of college education increases one's earning power, the fourth or degree-taking year increases earning power by as much or more than the other three years combined; in other words, the education one receives is not so relevant to an employer as the certification one obtains—otherwise the increases in earning power per year of education would presumably be roughly equal.

Educational reform has traditionally been one of the most

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2Ibid., p. 356.
active of political issues in the United States. In analysing some specific reforms one can see more clearly how heavily the socio-economic function of education is emphasized. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was prefaced with the following:

A national problem ... is reflected in draft rejection rates because of educational deficiencies. It is evidenced by the employment and retraining problems aggravated by the fact that there are over 8 million adults who have completed less than 5 years of school. It is seen in the 20% unemployment rate of our 18 to 24 year olds.

In other words, if our schools are not delivering capable soldiers to the Army and capable workers to the extant mode of production, then they are failing their purpose— and, indeed, they are. But their greater failure is to the individual student. His personal self-development is seen as secondary to his functional development as an assembly line worker or janitor, because the standing economic elite needs such workers and janitors. If he should somehow realize his own abilities to the extent where he would no longer be satisfied with menial labor or the stultifying physical repetitions of mass production, then our social and economic structures—and ultimately our political structure—would be threatened, just as the British Tories feared; it is the function of an economically weighted and politically tracked education to avert that threat.

The methods adopted by educators to accomplish this pur-
pose are often ingenious. "Ability grouping" was a tactic designed originally to lessen the frustrations of less "capable" students in high school and, consequently, to lessen the drop-out rate. Instead of asking these students to compete on a traditional academic basis with brighter students—and generally students from a higher socio-economic level more accustomed to the demands and better prepared with the skills of traditional liberal education—they would be grouped together in classes that would face a less demanding, watered-down curriculum, usually in "vocational education," thus enabling the students to enjoy greater success at what they attempted and to stay in school. To view staying in school as a benefit to the student, however, one must assume that the school is imparting something of value to him; in the case of most of the less capable students at most of our high schools, the thing being imparted is docility to an autocrat—be he foreman or teacher—and a belief that whatever occupation he is directed towards by the school accurately defines his greatest abilities.

The perversion of "ability grouping" has become "tracking" or "streaming." The tracks sometimes extend back into elementary school, and the fates of the students are determined by their socio-economic status long before any valid testing of their native abilities could be accomplished. When a teacher is faced with a group of students in
the lowest track, he expects little of them, and they, consequently, expect little of themselves; a number of studies have shown that the student's ability to handle academic work is directly related to the expectations for him of his teacher, but the stamp of failure put upon the student by the "tracking" system prevents any valid expectations being formed by anyone.

It would be difficult to say exactly when our educational system was subverted, for the process was gradual and took place at different times at different levels. The process began, apparently, in response to the country's industrial development in the nineteenth century when it was perceived that for the first time education, because of developing technology, could contribute directly to the advancement of the economic system—thus the development of quasitechnological vocational training at the high-school level and engineering courses at the university level, two kinds of school programs that had not been counted within the province of "education" previously. It is perhaps a measure of the materialistic nature of our society that what had been the servant of "culture" in ancient times and of "religion" from the middle ages until well after the Renaissance became, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the servant of material production. As the schools were fitted with their new livery, furthermore, they became the curators of one particular system of production and absent-mindedly forgot the possibility of other systems [as Socrates and Wyclif in their
academies disturbed the orthodoxies of their times, so would socialists or marxists promote new heresies with similar, if more humane, results]. The thesis of this paper is that higher education in the United States today has become the uncritical promoter, supporter, and supplier of the commercial and financial elite, the owners of the extant political economy in the United States—or, as the Dean of Admissions at Harvard College recently expressed it, in answer to a question:

"I believe in what the students are calling our monstrous corporate state because it keeps America alive and the colleges should be turning out students who can staff it. And if that is patriotism, I guess I am patriotic."\(^3\)

That this system of corporate capitalism has produced dissatisfaction in many sectors is no longer a surprise to anyone. Between twenty-five and thirty million poor Americans are not shareholders in the American system, and, despite apparent attempts at reform, no significant means of improving their material existence has ever been seriously undertaken by those who do partake of the benefits the system offers. Racism has eliminated a vast majority of black and Spanish-speaking Americans from most well-paid and responsibility-wielding positions in the economy or in our political or social life. Nearly half the remaining population, the female sex, has been conditioned to accept an economically, psychologi-

\(^3\)Frank Mahoney, "Dean favors brain elite for corporate America," Boston Globe, April 3, 1972, p. 4.
cally, and legally dependent status because full realization of their rights as individuals would require a broader distribution of rewards than the system is designed to afford; their position in society has been compared to that of inmates in a comfortable prison camp:

In fact, there is an uncanny, uncomfortable insight into why a woman can so easily lose her sense of self as a housewife in certain psychological observations made of the behavior of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. In these settings, purposely contrived for the dehumanization of man, the prisoners literally became "walking corpses." Those who "adjusted" to the condition of the camps surrendered their human identity and went almost indifferently to their deaths. Strangely enough, the conditions which destroyed the human identity . . . were similar to those which destroy the identity of the American housewife.

In the concentration camps the prisoners were forced to adopt childlike behavior, forced to give up their individuality and merge themselves into an amorphous mass. Their capacity for self-determination, their ability to predict the future and prepare for it, was systematically destroyed.4

The men (for the most part) who operate the system are similarly bent out of shape; the mass production system which produces our goods is not compatible with the idea of self-expression through meaningful work, and younger workers not disciplined by the hardships of the Depression have created problems for industrial managers by responding to assembly line speed-ups—attempts to make them more efficient as ma-

chines—with incomplete assembly and sabotage. While the work of many is harried, moreover, too great a portion of it is useless, not created in answer to any human need:

Once we turn away from the absolutely necessary subsistence jobs . . . we find that an enormous proportion of our production is not even unquestionably useful . . . . Many acute things are said about this useless production and advertising, but not much about the workmen producing it and their frame of mind; and nothing, so far as I have noticed, about the plight of a young fellow looking for a manly occupation. The eloquent critics of the American way of life have themselves been so seduced by it that they . . . fail to see that people are being wasted and their skills insulted . . . .

American society has tried so hard and so ably to defend the practice and theory of production for profit and not primarily for use that now it has succeeded in making its jobs and products profitable and useless.5

"The system" described from one angle above has a different aspect from another angle. The pursuit of profits has created in the United States a higher standard of living than has ever existed anywhere else in history—a standard of living, furthermore, that is probably higher than any possible hereafter in history. Each year, approximately three per cent of the world's population account for about sixty per cent of the consumption of the world's resources, distributing many of these resources in non-recoverable forms. The need for expansion in the gross national product (over and above expansion of population) dictates that a good quantity

of those resources must be wasted on useless production—automobile tail fins, the third layer of cellophane on the cracker box, the cardboard covering the wax paper or tin foil—if no immediate practical use for them can be found. Thus the system takes no more reasonable account of natural resources than it does of human ones. It is a system of imperialism plainly insupportable on a global scale and thus depends on limiting the scope of distribution of its own benefits. The realities of nature indicate that the expanding consumptionist economic model—of infinite growth in a finite world—must find its downfall in time, yet one must wonder whether that catastrophe can be averted or prepared for by a transformation of the system. If the nation's universities were serving their historical purpose of directing their society towards worthwhile achievement, they would be turning their attention to the question of whether our high standard of living, our urban-industrial mode of mass production, our development of and reliance on technological development were not all a monstrous mistake. They are not considering the question.

The term used to describe the subject of this paper, "political economy," has fallen out of use in the twentieth century in favor of the term "economics." Economics (as is not surprising in a country which, like the socialist nations and unlike most others, has adopted an ideological commitment to a particular system of economics) is generally restricted
to the study of statistics and their material significance. Political economy, on the other hand, involves consideration not only of facts and figures but also the public and private policy decisions behind the statistics and the interrelationships between economic and political power which affect policy. In the present instance, the questions of policy involve virtually every aspect of higher education in America—from the structure of the university and the shape of its curriculum to the fitness of an individual to teach at or attend the school. The political and economic power influencing those decisions is exercised by an economic elite, their corporations and foundations, and their representatives in state and federal legislatures.

This paper takes as its premise the existence of a political and economic nexus actively limiting the system's potential for change and argues that representatives of this "elite" have taken control of the universities and their curricula to an unconscionable degree, preventing them from pursuing the truth in any way inimical to the extant political-economic-social status quo. The thesis' informing philosophy could be called socialist, for the biases of its author are leftist. It is more simply critical, however, of the defects of the existing system of higher education in the United States (even to the point, admittedly, of ignoring whatever virtues the system possesses). Insofar as our current system of higher education
is a reflection of our capitalist economy, and insofar as socialism may be regarded as an alternative or antidote to that system, then the thesis is socialist.
CHAPTER II
WHO GOES TO COLLEGE?

One of the hoariest myths concerning contemporary American higher education is that increased educational opportunities exist today for the lower class and for poor and oppressed minority groups. By availing themselves of these increased opportunities, it is argues, these classes of society will be able to climb the economic and social ladders which have proven so slippery to them in the past and it will be possible to create a truly democratic society which lives up to the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

This myth is an ancient one by American standards. The Northwest Territories Act of 1785 provided endowment for public education, not widely available, by use of federal lands designated for the purpose. In 1787 public institutions of higher learning were also endowed by use of federal property, an endowment that was not made effective, however, until the Morill Land Grant Act of 1862. The Second Morill Act (1890) went further in providing federal funds for support of study in certain fields. The institutions thus supported would be democratic and egalitarian:

...higher education was to be open to all qualified young people from all walks of life. It was to serve less the perpetuation of an elite class and more the creation of a relatively classless society, with the doors of
opportunity open to all through education. 6

In more recent times the development of junior and community colleges has been hailed in the same way, for much the same reasons. However, just as public, land-grant universities have contributed more heavily to the maintenance of an economic and political elite than to the development of a classless society, so are the community colleges failing to reach and fulfill the expectations of those they were designed to serve. Virtually all higher education in the United States today is devoted to maintaining a social-political-economic status quo, a status quo that we are daily discovering to be unsatisfactory. No ideal of a classless society is being served by our colleges and universities.

If the supposed egalitarian ideal of our universities and colleges is to be accomplished, clearly those most in need of higher education are those who are currently disadvantaged in social and/or economic terms. Yet it is a commonplace that they are the group with the narrowest path of access to higher education.

When one looks at the percentage of each group graduating from college, the influence of the father’s occupation on college attendance is seen as indeed a powerful one. Considered in terms of per cent, over seven times as many children of professionals as of skilled and unskilled laborers. Yet of the total college graduates, those from the homes of laborers

account for by far the greatest number of any group, almost one-third.  

There is some evidence, also, that the educational opportunities for the lower classes may indeed be decreasing at the college-university level. Of high school graduates between 1915 and 1925, 43 per cent of the graduates whose parents had dropped out of elementary school enrolled in college while 64 per cent of those whose fathers had attended college did likewise; between 1945 and 1955, however, "only 31 per cent of the sons of elementary dropouts were going to college, compared with 84 per cent of the sons of college entrants"—and this despite the supposed greater opportunities for a college education offered by the G. I. bill after World War II. A similar change took place during the same period with regard to a given student's probability of completing a four-year program.  

In California, the state with the best-known and most widely established system of public higher education, lower-class students suffered a decline in their chances of attending an institution of higher education between 1959 and 1969. This was primarily due to the legislature's decision to keep people out of college so as to provide industry with low-level tech-

nicians in the state, a decision discussed below. Those least likely to attend college in the first place are, of course, those most hurt by such a policy; indeed, S. I. Hayakawa, the reactionary president of San Francisco State, has publicly stated that "under the state's Master Plan for Higher Education, the junior colleges were supposed to accommodate poor blacks and others of their social station."

Thus over 70 per cent of California's high school graduates come from families with annual income of less than $10,000, but only 10 per cent of these students enroll at the University of California or the state colleges, and only 41 per cent even reach the state's two-year junior colleges. Furthermore, while the children of the lower and lower-middle class are shunted into the less attractive schools (if into any at all), the parents' taxes—62 per cent of the state's personal income tax revenue—are used to subsidize the educations of more advantaged students at the four-year colleges: of each $100 of state money used for higher education, only $10 is apportioned to junior colleges while the state colleges and universities receive $30 and $60 respectively. The inequities of such a system are manifest.

Specific minority groups have, of course, been excluded virtually en masse. The Ivy League colleges, in selecting

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their entering classes for the 1969-70 school year, proudly announced that black enrollments were jumping by 89 per cent; blacks were inclined to wonder, however, if this group of capable black students had suddenly sprung up out of nowhere or if it had been ignored for decades—and how could such a vast increase occur while still not achieving proportionate representation for their race. Although blacks comprise more than ten per cent of the population, they supply only four per cent of the collegiate population (1969 figures), about 300,000 out of 6,700,000. More than half of those students were attending "black colleges," most of them in the South.  

Women constitute another minority group long excluded from meaningful participation in American higher education and, consequently, in many aspects of American public life. For more than two hundred years after the establishment of higher education facilities for men there were no comparable opportunities for women. The opening of coeducational facilities in the nineteenth century (at Oberlin, initially, and at state-supported universities later in the century) and the coeval establishment of "women's colleges" (as Matthew Vassar's endeavor) opened the university gates to women, but the group has never attended university in proportion to its numbers in the population. The percentage of all women of "col-

lege age" (eighteen to twenty-one) enrolled in institutions of higher learning rose from 0.7 per cent in 1870 to 23.0 per cent in 1958, but women in that year comprised only 35.2 per cent of the total student body at college, a slippage from a high of 47.3 per cent in 1920 which indicates the lack of firm ideological commitment to the principle of higher education for women.  

The statistics are even more bleak above the undergraduate level:

... of all the young women capable of doing college work, only one out of four goes to college, compared with one out of two men; only one out of 300 women capable of earning a Ph.D. actually does so, compared to one out of 30 men. If the present situation continues, American women may soon rank among the most "backward" women in the world. The U. S. is probably the only nation where the proportion of women gaining higher education has decreased in the past twenty years; it has steadily increased in Sweden, Britain, and France, as well as the emerging nations of Asia and the communist countries. By the 1950's, a larger proportion of French women were obtaining higher education than American women; the proportion of French women in the professions had more than doubled in fifty years. The proportion of French women in the medical profession alone is five times that of American women; 70% of the doctors in the Soviet Union are women, compared to 5% in America.  

It is commonplace that the largest untapped pool of talent in the nation is the female sex.

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13Friedan, op. cit., p. 368.
Most universities, even while expanding the opportunities for women to gain a higher education, have smugly ratified the societal prejudice against their achievements. Harvard University, which has long enjoyed a colonial relationship with Radcliffe College, is emblematic of the deficiencies of the traditional approaches to women's education and the difficulty a male-dominated institution has in appreciating its own oppressive role and adjusting to the stress of transformation. When merger of Radcliffe with Harvard College was proposed, a committee was established to study the question—a committee composed of thirty-six men, no women. The committee's initial objections to the proposal were instructive. It warned of the loss of Radcliffe's distinctive feminine viewpoint despite the fact that there had been no significant distinction between the two schools for some decades.

The committee went on to discuss admissions difficulties. If Radcliffe were admitted to equal status with Harvard, would it be proper to maintain an unequal proportion of admissions between, Radcliffe being a smaller school? If not, then the only solutions would be an enormous expansion of physical plant (about 60 per cent of the existing Harvard-Radcliffe facilities) or a decrease in male admissions by some 40 per cent. The first solution was rejected on grounds of expense,

the second on the incredible basis that reducing the number of positions available to male applicants would limit the diversity of class backgrounds in the undergraduate population! Women, apparently, have achieved the classless society—either that, or they have no backgrounds. The committee's statement of their concern for diversity of background led them to assert that they wanted

... more third world students. We should have more lower middle class and lower class economic representatives, the blue-collar group ... The raw-boned and unsophisticated rural students add something that no one else can bring to Harvard Square.¹⁵

This patronizing approach to the slum dweller and the hayseed clearly establishes the pecking order: males retain the priority over their twin sisters.

Analysis of faculty appointments reveals a sexual bias corresponding to the attitudes noted above. Of 577 full, associate, and assistant professors at Harvard in 1969, nine were women—all assistant professors. The largest percentage of women in any classification came under the heading of Senior Research Associates, a job outside the regular career stream, where women held one-third of the positions (one out of three). In no other faculty category did the percentage of women exceed one-fifth. These figures are so imbalanced that it is impossible to make the claim so often made (and

¹⁵Ibid., p. 14
perhaps justly) with regard to black faculty that "there just aren't qualified people available." There are.\(^{16}\)

The limitations on female participation extend to Harvard's graduate schools as well. Women were first admitted to the law school in 1954, the same year the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision was handed down, but in 1970 only eight per cent of the student body consisted of women.\(^{17}\) In that year, only Wellesley and Radcliffe of the major women's colleges were visited by law school recruiters. There were no women full professors in the school, and the defense of that situation offered by the school has generally been that there are none of Harvard's caliber available; those to whom positions were offered generally turned the school down because they found its emphasis on corporate law uncongenial.

The medical school has generally admitted a larger percentage of women students than the law school, the law school's top percentage of eight per cent equalling the medical school's low in the class of 1973. The percentage has generally been about 12 per cent, and the drop in the class of 1973 was caused by the school's sudden emphasis on enrolling black students—fifteen men and one woman in the class of 1973 as opposed to a single black male in the class of 1972--

\(^{16}\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 27.\)

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.},\ p.\ 42.\)
while white enrollments increased to 114 members in the class of 1973 for males. From these statistics it would seem that third world students and women are competing minority factions whose gains can be made only at one another's expense and who will not be permitted to challenge the basic white male hegemony of the school.18

Part of the "explanation" for the low numbers of women admitted to the professional schools at Harvard has been that few have applied, and this self-serving and self-fulfilling argument can be extended to the General School of Arts and Sciences as well. Male versus female applications to the School run about four to one in favor of males, and, as admissions rates for the two groups are approximately equal, that ration is preserved in the student body. Certain departments, however, place informal quotas on the number of women to be admitted each year, with the result that those departments dealing in disciplines considered "appropriate" for a woman's role—languages and literatures, child psychology, but not mathematics—supply an inordinate number of the women accounted for in the ratios noted above. The men admitted to the school, furthermore, are more likely to be admitted into Ph. D. programs more easily than women of equal qualifications, who are more likely to be shunted into the master's 18Ibid., p. 37.
programs. When institutional support of scholarship is considered, in terms, say, of the distribution of teaching fellowships among men and women, the 4:1 ration noted above slips to 5\(\frac{1}{2}:1\) in favor of the men.\(^{19}\)

Women were not permitted to enter the Harvard Business School freely until 1963; up until that time they had only been permitted to enter after completing a one-year business course at Radcliffe specifically designed for women. The first group of women to graduate with MBA's in 1965 signed up for interviews with firms that could utilize their talents and also with firms notorious for their sex discrimination, all of whom were required to speak to all of the students who signed up for interviews if they wished to talk to any. As one of the women recalls the experience:

No one could say we were not prepared. No one could say we were not serious about business. Some of us had borrowed to meet the $8000 cost of the course. So we were a perfect test case for sex discrimination. One recruiter finally broke down and blurted out that his company did not have any women higher than a secretary and furthermore his management didn't want any women higher than a secretary.\(^{20}\)

The firms which were willing to hire the women as other than secretaries generally preferred them to work not in the active "male" roles for which they had been trained but in more "passive" feminine positions; marketing majors qualified to serve

\(^{19}\)Ibid., pp. 33-34.

as product managers were shunted into market research positions. One applicant for a position with an advertising firm who was offered a market research job by the firm was bluntly told that the position was open because the woman who had occupied it had left to take on an account representative's job, which her own firm would not offer her, at another agency. The women who managed to leap all these hurdles and secure the lesser executive positions for which they were obliged to settle quickly moved up in the companies for which they worked as it was perceived that they were, after all, the most rigorously trained business personnel in the country; pregnancies from which the women quickly returned to work served to allay many of the fears top management had in employing women.21

Women, like blacks, have suffered in this country from many of the consequences of lowered expectations about them in the society at large; the difference between the treatment they and the majority of black Americans have received is one of degree rather than kind. Yet, given the material and economic advantages to which many women growing up have had access, the effects on women of sex bias are more readily extirpated. It would be interesting to speculate what would happen if the nation's most prestigious universities suddenly

21Ibid., p. 57.
declared equality for men and women in admissions procedures, admitting an equal number of both to coeducational institutions. At major schools like Harvard, Princeton, Yale or Stanford, where the ratio of admissions to rejections runs as low as one to nine, ten, or eleven, such a radical policy could be pursued without seriously diluting the collective skills and abilities of the admitted group. Would the result be a major transformation of social relations in the country? Or would the current crop of corporate executives simply begin complaining in ten or so years that their alma maters were not turning out the personnel needed to staff "America's monstrous corporate elite?"
CHAPTER III

WHAT DO THE UNIVERSITIES TEACH?

Should a lower class or minority group student reach one of the better public or private institutions of higher learning, what can he expect to find there? For one thing, he must not expect that he will be enabled to understand himself and his sub-culture better by what he learns at the university; the mores and attitudes of the subculture—the identity of the incoming freshman—are to be left behind, because simply by being at the university the lower-class or minority group student is presumed to be destined to join the social elite and he must be instructed in the values of that elite. This process, in many ways, sounds nice, but considering it from a different angle reveals it for what it is. If the transformation were being attempted in an area limited by convention to the individual's control—say, religion—it would certainly be resisted; intellect, however, is by custom the assigned province of the university professor, and it is expected therefore that the student will submit to his instruction. Again, if this transformation were attempted in a coercive manner—a law, say, banning pulp novels which are not necessarily pornographic but which are written at an unacceptably low level of literacy—it would be resisted. The transformation, however, is generally seductive in manner;
the student is told that it is a privilege to abandon his native culture, and, often, he accepts this assessment of the situation. In fact, where the transformation is coercive—in the form of "required" courses or reading, for example—it is generally resisted. The intransigence of the university in insisting on the value of only its mores and attitudes can be seen in the universities' resistance to curricular innovation. Black students in the sixties who were more interested in learning about themselves through Afro-American studies than in learning the values of the white power structure were strenuously resisted at most institutions, fobbed off with window-dressing courses at others; women interested in sociology and psychology programs dealing with the sources and effects of their inferior status in American life are dismissed as faddists.

The hegemony of the WASP male minority over national affairs has been greatly aided by the homogeneity of the groups admitted to the nation's ranking universities and of the curricula they offer. The "liberal education" (as opposed to radical education?) the universities provide serves as a link with the experience of preceding generations of the economic elite and traditionally has fed the students into the existing system as a high level in the rewards structure. Any alteration in the experience offered by the universities would represent a break in the chain tying the undergraduate
to the corporate power structure and at least a remote threat to its continuation. This is at least part of the reason for the resistance of the universities to curricular innovation.

The drive to introduce Afro-American or black studies into the curricula of the nation's universities began when large numbers of lower-class blacks—who had never had any contact with the liberal verities of the corporate elite and to whom such attitudes were alien—began entering the universities:

For years, select colleges accepted a token handful of bright Negro students from relatively privileged homes. In effect, they blackballed ghetto youths for alleged failure to meet white academic standards. Now the colleges have broken their own rules (often smugly) by seeking "disadvantaged" Negroes, many of them straight from the ghetto . . . .

For lower-class Negroes, whose whole lives have been spent in black ghettos, the sudden move to white campuses often produces cultural shock. Everything is so white. How can a slum Negro cherish the glories of Greek culture, for example, while his sister supports him by ironing The Man's shirts?22

The demand for black studies was an attempt to resist the inculcation of Greek culture, say, and a defense of the inherited values of the Afro-American culture of the ghetto. Demands for black-oriented courses and, more particularly,

black control (often by students) over the curricula and staff of black studies programs brought forth assertions from white academics that such programs would give rise to violations of "academic standards," would serve as mere refuges for nothing more than rap sessions among black students incapable of performing competent academic work within a white-oriented curricular framework. In some cases, as at radical Antioch, the federal government stepped in to threaten withdrawal of funds if black-controlled programs were not integrated, using the laws contrary to the wishes of those they were designed to help.

Older blacks, too long conditioned by dealing with the white power structure, similarly misconstrued the nature and purpose of the black students' demands.

Men like Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin have argued that without solid academic training, young blacks will not be equipped to take over the jobs in industry and finance that are rightfully theirs. Black studies, they say, is self-defeating.

The argument fails to understand several things. First, it does not recognize the almost desperate desire of young blacks to foster racial pride, and that pride can be nurtured, and asserted, through a black studies program. Second, it fails to realize that a growing number of young blacks just do not want those jobs at IBM or Chase Manhattan many older Negroes view as the epitome of success. What they want are jobs that will have social utility, that will enable them to serve their people and improve their lives.²³

From the point of view of those favored by the existing mode of production, there are good reasons for resisting such a movement, threatening, as it does, to dry up the sources of personnel, if only remotely.

Probably the first black studies proposal in the United States was offered by the Black Students' Union at San Francisco State College in the Spring of 1967. The proposal noted that an institution which served up to a number of races an education based on the cultural perspectives of one race could not be regarded as truly integrated. A black studies program, pitched toward the cultural perspectives of blacks and admitting only a minority of white students in order to reflect the segregation which had enabled the independent black perspective to develop in the first place, could bring about an intellectual integration comparable to the physical integration that existed. To counteract the declining proportion of black enrollment at the college—an effect of the legislature's juggling of social priorities through the instrument of the state school system—the program would undertake to cooperate closely with area ghetto high schools to prepare more black students to deal with the problems of remedial academic work and admissions tests.

The proposal promptly entered an administrative limbo,

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24Barlow and Shapiro, op. cit., p. 125. Most of the following account is drawn from this source.
at least partly because administrators and faculty did not know what to make of it. Among other things, the Council of Academic Deans suggested that the name of the program be altered to Negro American Studies, arguing that Black Studies sounded altogether too black. The notion that community organizing could be an acceptable academic exercise also caused some consternation among the faculty. It was not until the summer that a task force charged with working out the details of establishing the program could be assembled—a task force which conveniently neglected ever to report. The Black Students’ Union did manage to acquire permission from the college president, John Summerskill, to select a director for the not-yet-extant program and sponsorship for several black studies courses by various departments; the courses were to be taught in the Fall semester, mainly by black students themselves.

The director of the program chosen by the black students, Nathan Hare, a black sociologist who had recently been "dehired" by Howard University for his militancy. The product of a small black college in Oklahoma, he had won a Danforth fellowship and obtained his Ph.D. in sociology at the

25 This last concession had some attendant difficulties. The departments reserved to themselves the right of approval over course instructors, and the history department, confronted with a self-taught expert on African history, argued that it could not assess his expertise because, never having offered a course in the field, it had no one who could examine the man.

at the University of Chicago before moving on to Howard. He arrived at San Francisco in the fall of 1967, promptly discovering himself in the midst of the struggles between the Black Students' Union and the various departments to gain accreditation for courses the students had proposed. Quickly realizing that his endless attempts at pacification were sapping his energy and effectiveness and could not lead to the establishment of a stable, unified program, Hare left the short-term struggle to those who wished to fight it and turned his attention to the long-range prospects for black studies in his "A Conceptual Proposal for Black Studies." The proposal dealt first with the question of removing the program's courses from the various departments and establishing them within an autonomous Black Studies Program. This was to avoid the problems of "the mere blackening of white courses in varying numbers and degree . . . while omitting from the program the key components of community involvement and collective stimulation." Dr. Hare was very explicit in his argument that the central purpose of a Black Studies program should be "to serve the educational needs of the black community as a whole." 27

The proposal then turned its attention to the question of white participation in the program, certainly the touchiest issue involved. Here Hare was worried about the possibility of white students flooding "Black Studies courses, leaving us with a Black Studies program peopled predominantly by white

27Barlow and Shapiro, op. cit., p. 135.
students." He suggested that the traditional departments increase their offerings in "blackness" in order to accommodate the majority of white students interested in learning about the black experience while the Black Studies program would concentrate primarily on the black students.

The question of separatism is, like integrationism, in this regard essentially irrelevant. The goal is the elevation of a people by means of one important escalator--education. Separatism and integrationism are possible approaches to that end; they lose their effectiveness when, swayed by dogmatic absolutism, they become ends in themselves. It will be an irony of recorded history that "integration" was used in the second half of this century to hold the Black race down, just as segregation was so instituted in the first half. Integration, particularly in the token way in which it has been practiced up to now and the neo-tokenist manner now emerging, elevates individual members of a group but paradoxically, in plucking many of the most promising members from a group while failing to alter the lot of the group as a whole, weakens the collective thrust which the group might otherwise muster.  

A counter-attack on this proposal was later offered by John Bunzel, an Ivy League liberal who was chairman of the political science department at San Francisco State. Bunzel had already refused to allow the institution of any black studies courses proposed by the Black Students' Union in his department; furthermore, he had coopted the students' program in developing a course on African governments for the 1968-69 academic year and hiring a professor to teach it, permitting

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28 Ibid., p. 135.
29 Ibid., p. 136.
no black input into the course's development. To many blacks this seemed like an assertion that they were incapable of handling their own affairs, and the implication was resented by many. Even more resentment was stirred up, however, by an article Bunzel published in *Public Interest* attacking both Hare and his proposal, an attack which could almost serve as a paradigm for the reactionary arguments against black studies offered at any number of institutions.

Bunzel began his article by claiming that Hare's principal qualification for his position was his "angry and bitterly anti-white" approach to education. The means of his selection as director of San Francisco's Black Studies program—by the students, with reluctant, post-choice approval by the rest of the faculty—seemed to Bunzel to invalidate Hare's arguments at the outset, but he descended from the personal attack on the black director long enough to twist and misinterpret the proposals Hare had made. His "special admissions," designed to deal with the de facto exclusion of blacks from proportionate representation at San Francisco through remedial programs, became "special quotas" in Bunzel's interpretation. Instead of following Hare's logic to the discovery that more students in California ought to be in college, Bunzel pursued its mirror-image to the conclusion that racial quotas were to be imposed on admissions proce-

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dures across the country; this would result in "seven out of every eight Jewish undergraduates" being forced to leave the universities, Bunzel argued, thus attempting to employ the traditional WASP tactic of divide and conquer in an area where Hare had proposed unity of minority groups against the existing elite.31

Bunzel then moved on to caricature the Black Studies proposal in the manner of a Radio Free Europe attack on socialist news media. If the traditional liberal arts education was designed to inculcate habits of critical thinking in the student, as Bunzel believed, then a departure from that system must be designed to inculcate some other quality not necessarily sanctioned by liberal tradition; in this case, Hare's emphasis on "collective stimulation" and "community involvement" must mean, according to Bunzel, that independent, individual thinking would be discouraged by the program and that it would seek "to intensify the motivation and commitment of all who enroll in the program to return to the black community and translate everything to which they have been exposed into black leadership and black power."32 By this specious reasoning, the "liberal" Bunzel was able to introduce into the debate an element of race conflict that Hare had been at pains to exclude.

Bunzel went on to offer as a model for a black studies

31 Ibid., p. 142
32 Ibid., p. 143
program the kind of effort that had been organized at Yale and Harvard, which concentrated on the "talented tenth" of black students well-prepared to handle conventional academic work. Such a formulation of the program, of course, would exclude the community from benefitting from the effort; it would have no part in the process initiated by the universities and, as Hare noted in his proposal, the leadership qualities the students possessed would be led away from the community by the biases of their education. The authors of *An End to Silence* conclude bitterly that it is the function of such schools as San Francisco State to conduct the struggle to initiate such innovations as black studies programs while elitist schools are able to create manques of such programs with none of the violent effort that attended the creation of San Francisco's program throughout the epic strike of 1968-69. The programs of the elitist universities might be more inadequate than they suspected. At Berkeley, the black studies program was thrown together so fast that it did not make it into the course announcement booklet and no one was quite sure how many courses were involved. At Princeton, where the white director of the program has called Harvard's program "window-dressing," a committee searched the catalogue of existing courses and identified an Afro-American studies program out of the existing white-oriented courses. Only a handful of courses was created for the pro-
gram, and there were none in the art, music, or psychology departments; no credit was offered for community-action programs, thus ensuring academic concentration on the "talented tenth."

While blacks, excluded from the mainstream of society, have had to fight for a curriculum reflecting their particular interests, women have been freely offered an educational curriculum corresponding in its pettiness to their "niche" in American society. As noted above, women's education in the nineteenth century came to be divided between (generally) state-supported coeducational institutions and women's colleges. The women's colleges generally tended towards the same curricula offered in men's colleges, particularly as they served as havens for feminists who believed strongly in the ability of women to pursue such a program and who could find no other outlet in American society for their professional competence. The coeducational institutions, however, tended towards specialized (almost "vocational") education for "the hand that rocks the cradle," emphasizing training in child psychology and teaching, nursing, home economics, and secretarial work. "In 1956, three out of five women in the coeducational colleges were taking secretarial, nursing, home economics, or education courses."\(^{33}\) These statistics

\(^{33}\)Friedan, op. cit., p. 368.
tend to vitiate whatever strength may be found in the figures for women attending institutions of higher learning noted above; the fields towards which women have generally been "streamed" are not those in which one might find the fullest extension of personal development. The farthest extensions of sex-typing in educational programs would seem ludicrous were they not so wholly accepted by their proponents (and, until recently, by so many women); the president of Mills College, California, wrote:

One may prophesy with confidence that as women begin to make their distinctive wishes felt in curricular terms, not merely will every women's college and coeducational institution offer a firm nuclear course in the Family, but from it will radiate curricular series dealing with food and nutrition, textiles and clothing, health and nursing, house planning and interior decoration and so on and so on . . . . Let's abandon talk of proteins, carbohydrates and the like, save inadvertently, as for example, when we point out that a British hyper-boiled Brussel sprout is not merely inferior in flavor and texture, but in vitamin content. Why not study the theory and preparation of a Basque paella, of a well-marinated shish kabob, lamb kidneys sautéed in sherry, an authoritative curry . . . .

The attitude of such a man deciding what direction women's "distinctive wishes" will take and that of those professors who insist on maintaining liberal values while trying to "educate" those to whom such values are alien resembles that of missionaries reaching African tribesmen

34 Ibid., p. 152.
during the nineteenth century.

University professors as a group seem exceptionally uncritical of the limited value—and values—of a university education and the acculturation it represents. . . . The student will . . . be free of the more provincial ties of home, home town, religion, and class. In short, most academics take it as an article of faith that a student benefits by exchanging his own culture for that of the university. It is by far the most common campus prejudice.35

Just as the missionaries and colonists who came to Africa arranged for the disruption of traditional social-economic-political structures that were, to the natives, quite satisfactory, so this prejudice on the part of the university faculty members can often mean unnecessary disruption in the lives of lower-class or minority group students in the interests of introducing them to the "better" culture of the corporate elite. Riesman, Gusfield, and Gamson offer a description of the effects of faculty prejudices on some students in Michigan:

Some faculty members at Oakland and Monteith consciously tried to get students to question their beliefs, feeling perhaps that this was part of the process of liberation and enlightenment. But much more common was the unintended impact on students of the relativism and skeptical manner of the faculty. Many faculty on their first teaching jobs found it difficult to realize the weight their passing comments might have. . . . Only a few could imagine the kinds of problems with

their families that are created for commuter students in the United States by faculty traditions of candor and plain speaking.\(^{36}\)

Although these authors seem to realize the disruptive nature of what these teachers are doing, they perceive it as necessary to the university task. They discuss the problems that "fundamentalist" Catholic students had in dealing with teachers who professed "avant garde" Catholicism, implying by the adjective that if the students should "progress" in their thinking, then they too will be in the forefront of the religion's "advance." But advance to where? Leaving aside Catholicism's social, economic, and political implications and regarding it only as a system of thought, it is not difficult to argue that the Church has not "advanced" since Augustine and Aquinas: there is no place to "advance" to, and the Church has merely changed. The students discussed by these authors perceive their religion in that way; yet their instructors insist on a perception of the Church as an organic, "growing" and even malleable thing, and the students must adapt their thinking to that view to "succeed."\(^{37}\)

In this instance, as in others, the primary objection is not to what the professors are doing to their students but


\(^{37}\)Ibid., pp. 82-84
to the impulse that moves them to that action; surely true education must involve the elimination of misconception as much as it does the transferral of understanding, and that elimination must entail friction to be borne by the student. In such instances as those noted above, however—with regard to both black and "fundamentalist Catholic" students—the professors are making the same mistake that missionaries have made for centuries. At least up to the nineteenth century, the missionary assumption was that the natives or "heathen" he was going among were culturally naked, that Christianity would be inscribed on a tabula rasa; anything that anthropologists would call a culture was interpreted as a rag-bag assortment of taboos and irrational superstitions that could be dispelled by giving the natives a glimpse of the "rationality" of Christianity—an attitude not unlike that of the professors described above. A second assumption was that whatever culture the missionary represented was the highest expression of cultural advancement, accompanied by a corollary that the natives, given access to the true faith, would eventually develop to the point where their culture would be wholly European or American. This attitude, furthermore, contributed to the belief that failure to adopt European customs

38 Not a few of the tribes touched by these men were humanely horrified when informed that the Christians, in Communion service, devour their own god.
and attitudes represented a perverted unwillingness to progress or a racial inferiority that meant the natives were not capable of such progress. If the introduction of Christianity removed from the native culture elements of barbarism or superstition which interfered with the opportunity of the natives to lead happy lives, then the culture may be said to have advanced. But beyond that basic level—at the level of the ethnic student encountering an education alien to him but supposedly beneficial—how can it be said that the culture of one group is "better" or more "successful" than that of another? It requires a zealot's faith to make the assertion, but, then, they are zealots we are dealing with. That they represent the culture of the dominant social, economic, and political class is both what enables them to assert their faith and what makes it so difficult and necessary to force an alternative viewpoint into the system. Furthermore, under that system, training blacks or Puerto Ricans or women to be vice presidents only increases the opportunity offered the average white male to be poor and live in a slum. Education must be made safe for barbarians—persons who can represent an entirely different socio-economic order.
CHAPTER IV

WHAT DO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES TEACH?

If the lower-class or minority group student finds himself at a local community college, one might expect by the name of the institution that he has reached a place designed to help the community in general and the community's students in particular to further their education. In fact, the community colleges which have achieved such recent popularity—there are now more than 600, and in a recent six-year period expenditures for community colleges rose by 393 per cent nationwide while all educational expenditures rose by only 167 per cent—serve two important socio-economic functions that are only peripherally related to education: (1) they "cool out" those whose aspirations society is unable or unwilling to fulfill by legitimizing society's classification of the student as a failure while simultaneously deceiving him into thinking he is in some way a success; and (2) they socialize the cost of training workers for industry, thus reducing the costs and risks of capitalist entrepreneurs.

The first point has been effectively stated by Riesman and Jencks:

Quick departures [by students from community colleges] save the staff's time, the taxpayer's

39 Jencks and Riesman, op. cit., p. 480; Friedman et al., op. cit., p. 4.
money, and probably the student's psyche. The only constraint is that the student should stay long enough so that he feels he has had a fair shake and blames his failure on himself rather than on the system. (This is considerably more likely if the student can be induced to drop out rather than being flunked out.)

This callous and accurate appraisal of the community college function, say the authors, is one taken over by them from the big state universities of an earlier era: then freshman year at a state university was considered only an extension of the admissions procedure—since an egalitarian front had to be presented to the public, masses of "unqualified" students were admitted to the freshman class, only to be flunked out after one or two semesters so that the faculty could get on with the business of educating the survivors at the sophomore level and up.

The means the community colleges have adopted to accomplish this traditional task are also fairly traditional:

... most faculty and administrators are still primarily interested in traditional academic programs and in students who will eventually transfer to four-year colleges. The community colleges thus resemble other colleges in placing primary emphasis on the "college" part of their label, with only secondary emphasis on the "community" part.

This focus on the student who will eventually transfer to a four-year college program is the cause of the traditional

40 Jencks and Riesman, op. cit., p. 491.
41 Ibid., p. 487.
academic programs being emphasized in schools that were initially intended to serve innovation and diversity; in concentrating on the "academically qualified" student, the community colleges have made themselves colonial institutions serving the interests of the major colleges and universities. If these larger institutions are to accept transfers from the colonial system of community colleges, then those colleges must conform to the larger schools' traditional methods and standards. This concentration on four-year programs, furthermore, seems to deny the reality that only from one-twelfth to one-sixth of the students enrolling at community colleges later transfer to four-year institutions.42 Lower-class and minority-group students with less than acceptable academic records who enroll in community colleges in the hope of improving their standing are not likely to find much relief. The inadequacies of traditional academic subjects as valid fields of inquiry for these students have been discussed above, and the traditional methods of instruction as employed in poor ghetto and slum schools have generally created, rather than identified, the failures which these students are. The community colleges are incapable of remedying this situ-

42 Linda Friedman et al, op. cit., p. 4. The statistics are subject to varying interpretations since it is not generally specified whether the base figure for the percentage is the number of students expressing an intention to proceed to a four-year college at entrance to community college or the number remaining in the program at the time the transfer would ordinarily be made.
ation: "Just as in the public schools, this system has often precluded the development of new learning styles, has limited the kinds of skills that could be cultivated and rewarded, and has encouraged quite a conventional academic vision. . . ." 43 Thus the student has been given a "second chance"--not a new one--beyond high school and has failed for the same reasons he failed in high school. If he has stayed long enough to blame the failure on himself, the community college is now ready to perform its second task:

The students must be convinced that the upwardly mobile aspirations that they might fulfill by enrolling in "college" can be fulfilled just as well by the new categories of industrial work. In other words, the cool-out must convince the operator of a computerized inventory system that his job has higher status than that of his shipping clerk, father, whose job has been phased out by his. 44

In other words, the trick is to make the student feel that while he has failed in the academic portion of the community college, he must be convinced during the cool-out that he is, nevertheless, materially improving his social and economic position by availing himself of the vocational training aspects of the community college. That he is no better off than his father with relation to other segments of the population can be masked by the illusory mystique of operating an advanced technological tool (of which he has no under-

43 Jencks and Riesman, op. cit., p. 4.
44 Friedman, et al., p. 5.
standing) and by the general increase in wealth which gradually makes everyone—or most members of society who are gainfully employed anywhere above the rock-bottom level of occasional, unskilled labor—a little better off. It is not immediately apparent to the man who has worked his way up to foreman and a second car that those at the top of the economic structure are getting even richer still: their wealth, like his, has increased objectively but their wealth, unlike his, has increased proportionately as well, delivering to them an ever-increasing percentage of the national pie; Only the pie's growth has concealed from the worker the fact that the mal-distribution of wealth in our society is steadily worsening:

While the lowest fifth of American families are permitted to scrounge for 3.2 per cent of the national income, the highest fifth gets 45.8 per cent, or almost fifteen times as much. ... Moreover, the gap between upper and lower fifths has widened to 42.6 per cent from a previous estimate of 38.6 per cent, representing an income shift upward of some $21 billion.45

Getting the worker to accept this gross distortion of equitable distribution of wealth is an enormous task for the community college to perform, but it is one to which the universities contribute, as will be seen below, as well as the tenor of national political debate.

Delivering skilled workers to industry is a seemingly

praiseworthy task for the community colleges to perform, but it, too, is a double-edged sword. In California, the junior-community college plan got its initial impetus in the 1920's, when "progressive" reformers took control of the state government. Eager to attract industry to their state, they reasoned that developing technological systems would force the firms employing them to establish themselves wherever there was a sufficient population of trained para-professionals to operate the systems; thus a system of public junior colleges was established throughout the state to provide "two years of terminal and vocational training" beyond the high school level to all who sought it." This system pacified the population's thirst for advanced education temporarily, but by the end of World War II there was pressure on the state legislature to expand the state college system to accommodate those capable of performing college-level work who had come to perceive the junior colleges as social dead ends. The legislature adopted a policy of containment with regard to their four-year colleges, guided both by the expense of expanding the system and the needs of California's burgeoning technological industries after the war. The state colleges, the legislature decreed in 1955, were to direct themselves towards "occupational training" while the universities handled

46Barlow and Shapiro, op. cit., p. 21.
"professional training" and the junior colleges "technical training." The opportunity offered a student to enter the state's colleges and universities had to be limited so that they could be forced into the junior colleges because

[Industrial-technological economy requires more workers at a technical than a professional level. In the field of engineering, for example, estimates have ranged from six technicians for every professional engineer to as high as sixteen to one. In an expanding state economy, where the growth potential is much higher than for the average for the United States as a whole, technical personnel will be in increasing demand.]

To fight against the desire of the people to escape from the junior college, the legislature ordered a Master Plan for higher education to be developed. It proposed diverting students from the four-year colleges by jacking up the entrance requirements of the four-year schools so that the state colleges, previously open to between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of California's high school graduates, would now admit only the top 33 per cent of the graduating high school seniors, while the University of California, previously ready to accept 15 per cent, was now closed to all but the top 12 per cent.

The Master Plan placed special emphasis on the "screening function" of the junior colleges: students were now forbidden to transfer out of them until they had completed their sophomore year, and an elaborate system of counseling and testing would in the meantime weed out "individuals who lack the capacity or the will to succeed in their studies."

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
The Master Plan also counselled "vigorous use of probation and threat of dismissal" in the junior colleges, ostensibly to make sure that "late bloomers" produced a blossom within an acceptable length of time, but actually to force more and more students out of the academic arena and into the vocational training portions of the junior college program. The cost that the capitalist bore in the nineteenth century of training workers would thus be borne by all the state's taxpayers contributing to the state's system of higher education, and the system was set up in such a way that enough failures could be created to assure an abundant labor pool. Thus the system, rather than the citizen, would be exalted.

This description of one community college vocational skills program, drawn from the college's own publicity flak, is symptomatic of what the colleges provide their students with in general:

The student's motivation combines with the supervisory participation of his college to assure the continuity needed by his employer. In addition, this category of job, often judged to be a chore and beneath the level of high-priced professionals or skilled workers, is performed with refreshing zest by Cooperative Plan students. They don't become low-cost replacements for skilled people, but, rather, free them [the latter] to spend full time on jobs commensurate with their skills, training, and salaries.\(^{50}\)

It requires no great perception to see that the momentary

\(^{50}\)Friedman et al, op. cit., p. 5.
grammatical confusion caused in the last sentence quoted is caused by the public relations officer's stepping away from the question of what the students have become: they are low-cost replacements for skilled people (performing unskilled jobs), yet they are not. It is difficult to see what benefit the students have derived from their experience at San Mateo, the college discussed above; they might just as well enroll for courses with an employment agency. They do gain a docility--hardly "refreshing zest"--which enables them to perform demeaning proletarian tasks which they might otherwise have rejected in anger and frustration. By being able to say that they are attending college or being able to think that the college is doing something for them--even if it is nothing--the students are kept in their places, and the status quo is not threatened either by a mass of disadvantaged persons with newly gained skills exercising their potential for social mobility or by a mass of disadvantaged persons seething with frustration.

Another example of the community college's inept attempts to help lower-class and minority groups occurred at the Chicago City College in 1968-69. There a course on Child Development was offered to black women on welfare, the women to receive extra payments for each day's attendance and the checks to be withheld entirely if they didn't attend. The women did attend, learning how to become employees in day
care centers during the six-month program. None of them was employed in the end, however, because there were no extant day care centers that could use their newly acquired skills and no funds available to create any.\(^1\)

An administrator of that same college was also involved in a program to train black welfare recipients as medical, dental, and podiatric assistants. Five hundred thousand dollars in federal funds was provided for facilities and salaries (including $30 a week to the women involved during the training period), and ninety women were enrolled for the six-month program. Doctors and dentists selected by their professional associations to lecture in the program participated, but at the end of the course the salaries the women were offered by the magnanimous physicians ranged from $64.00 a week before taxes to $80.00 per week before taxes—not much more or even less in some cases than is received by a non-union domestic. Of twenty-eight women originally enrolled in the podiatry course, only four actually did become podiatrists' assistants.\(^2\)

John Kenneth Galbraith has noted that if our economic system demanded of our education system "millions of unlettered proletarians, these, very plausibly, are what would be provided."\(^3\) It is only surprising that a man of Mr. Gal-

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 6.
\(^2\)Ibid.
braith's perception has not seen that, in large part, the economic system has made that demand and that, in large part, the educational system has indeed delivered. In this respect, answering the question "What should the community colleges be doing for their students?" is not easy. Even if they are done a disservice by being "streamed" into life under the current system, it is not simple to imagine an alternative system for which they could be prepared within the practical realities facing the educator, principally an understanding of the community opinion which governs radical departures from accepted social wisdom and the fact that a student trained to function in a system which does not exist is also being trained to be left out of the one that does. One could perhaps build a program on the nature of the institutions, however. Generally located in an area of sufficient population density to insure an adequate student body, the community college serves its students in an environment with which they are intimately familiar, a theoretical understanding of which would be invaluable. Abandoning the rigid lecture-classroom-test-grade structure of academic endeavor in favor of "city as classroom" concept, students could be set free to relate academic concepts of sociology, political science, economics, or ecological studies to problems in their own communities, thereby at once satisfying the necessity of simulating an "academic veneer" and the desire of the student for a relevant educa-
tion—one which, furthermore, would not drive the student out of the system (although hopefully alienating him from it) but rather better enabling him to deal with it. The social functions thus served would only be ameliorative rather than revolutionary, but could fall within the guidelines of community approval and avoid the pitfalls offered by the invalidity of most radical-revolutionary student-worker alliances (caused by worker conservatism, their resentment of the students' relatively privileged position, or student elitism, their own brand of missionary consciousness). A network of community colleges throughout a state, acting in concert on common problems, could conceivably generate enormous impact while destroying deceptive social myths through the experience of dealing with power structures and simultaneously teaching the student how to cope with them.
CHAPTER V

WHY ARE THE UNIVERSITIES AS THEY ARE?

It is difficult to prove that any men in power or enjoying privilege in our society have explicitly issued standards to which higher education must conform in order to protect the status quo; explicit statements of what is acceptable in terms of education are not necessary, however. Such vast economic injustices as the maldistribution of wealth noted above; such vast social injustices as slavery at the outset of the nation's history and racism--directed against even those whom we would never consider making slaves in any explicit, legal sense--in subsequent periods; such oppression of women that they were denied the vote and even legal existence until well into this century; such intellectual and social Babbitry that could have proceeded past the Red Arks of the period after the First World War and the witch hunts of the fifties into a blanket condemnation of not only radical thought but even of unconventional behavior in one's personal life--all this could have been supported at the explicit legal level only by such repressive police apparatus as exists in South Africa today. For all our fear for personal liberties, such a police apparatus has only existed in the United States for specific purposes and at odd intervals--at least until the present day. Instead, the specific, legal
barriers to human dignity or economic emancipation have been withdrawn only as the pressure against them became intolerable or removal (as in the case of slavery) seemed politically expedient as one portion of the power structure sought to gain advantage against another portion; the withdrawal of these barriers, however, left behind an intellectual consensus to fight a rear-guard action against radical transformation of American society. Thus only a few decades after the republican, anti-democratic Founding Fathers had repudiated the principles of the Declaration of Independence in reserving the direction of government to a social and intellectual elite that could comply with the wishes of the people or flout them as it chose, the myth could arise that pictured Hamilton and Madison as staunch defenders of the common man. The elite that arose to assume control of the governments of the United States in the nineteenth century were less principled than the one the Founding Fathers had imagined in control, and they restricted the possibilities for political change to the (generally illusory) distance between the Republican and Democratic parties, but the myth persists that the American Revolution has been institutionalized in the Constitution. In this way one president could curb the power of the robber barons, harm (not destroy) their monopolies' ability to bleed white the farmer who shipped his produce on their railroads or the consumer who needed their oil—and a later president could declare that
the business of America is business. There has been a consensus that if things were not as they should have been before, then they certainly have been set right by the latest adjustment of our political or social or economic institutions. The trade union wars of the thirties were thought to have conferred special benefits on the workers affected, and steady gains were thought to have been made for workers throughout the last four decades—yet, as seen above, the disparity between rich and poor has grown greater while the workers, bought off by their illusory gains, were free to become the political allies of the racist, imperialist, capitalist elite oppressing them. The consensus has deceived us. Reform is no answer—which is to say that it is the answer of those individuals possessed of power and privilege. It is an answer counselling compromise, faith in the liberal decency of rational and reasonable political negotiations, and the universities have become its prophets.

The connection between those at the top of the corporate capitalist structure and those at the top of the educational super-structure of the United States is not difficult to demonstrate, nor is their cooperation and collaboration on significant economic, political, and educational decisions. These cooperations and collaborations, moreover, are significant evidence of our educators' faith in the consensus that while reform might be necessary and desireable,
our political institutions (laboring under similar domination and delusion) are capable of bringing about a just settlement.

Grayson Kirk, the Columbia president who was brought down by student protests over the university's lack of concern for its Harlem neighbors, was closely allied with IBM and helped it with its education program. He also sat on the board of Consolidated Edison Company, the electric company which, despite its monopoly in New York City, felt obliged to divert money from urgently needed air pollution control equipment to advertising of its services; it was only after the great black-out and persistent brown-outs in the late sixties that the company reversed itself and started promoting reduction in the use of electricity instead of new and unnecessary electrical appliances. The chairman of the board of Con Ed is also a trustee of Columbia University. 54

Former Harvard president Nathan Pusey did not sit on the boards of any corporations, nor does Yale president Kingman Brewster. Brewster has said that he considers sitting on corporate boards a waste of time and that it would be to his disadvantage to be president of an institution and director of another if the first were seeking a financial deal with the second; his ability to bargain hard for either in-

stitution would be compromised. Nevertheless, one of Brewster's primary assistants sits on the board of the First New Haven Bank, Yale's primary banker.55

The retiring president of Princeton, Robert Goheen, sits on the board of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, and the chairman of that board, James Oates, was also for many years chairman of the board of trustees of Princeton. In addition to advising the company on educational matters, Goheen also made a number of suggestions for appointments to the board of directors, all of which were approved. His ability to raise funds for his university, one of his primary duties during his term of office, was of course greatly enhanced by his successful participation in the activities of those who have the most money to offer during such a drive.56

The activities of T. Keith Glennan, former president of Case Western Reserve University, perhaps illustrate most clearly what the interactions of businessmen and educators can mean. Glennan sat on the board of the Republic Steel Corporation, and, as a result, the university's concentration in the field of metallurgy was greatly increased. The Corporation used the faculty of the university as a research staff, had a special relationship with the university with

55Ibid., p. 30.
56Ibid., p. 31.
regard to recruitment of students, and had the university arrange seminars for its executives on matters that were of particular interest to them. The university thus impaired its ability to seek truth impartially and molded a large part of its program around the task of increasing the corporation's profits, with a substantial assist from the corporations in the form of funds to the university; pushed to its furthest extension, one would be hard put to tell the distinction between the company and the university.

The universities and colleges, of course, are businesses as well as educational institutions, and, as such, they are at least as unbridled and selfish as their competitors. Yale and Harvard manage investment funds, and the University of Wisconsin produces drugs, manages real estate, and owns an amusement park. Columbia University is a major landlord of Wall Street, Rockefeller Center, and Harlem. All of these activities produce profits which are needed by the universities under our current system of financing higher education, but, while "academic excellence and impartial investigation after the truth" cannot be sacrificed to allow lower-class and minority-group students a relevant education, they apparently can be excess baggage when the university is in need of funds to maintain its elitist training center.

One of Cornell University's profit-making ventures is

57 Ibid., pp. 31-2.
58 Ibid., pp. 40-50.
the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratories, which does a great
deal of research into automobile design and causes of auto-
mobile accidents and fatalities. Most of its research work
is funded in part by the federal government and in part by
the automobile industry. The findings of its studies, how¬
ever, are not made available even to the government agencies
which provide for them; a bland, general report is sent to
Washington, but the detailed results are sent only to Detroit,
the theory being that only those responsible for automobile
defects and their elimination should have access to the
necessary data. Thus it was not until a Congressional in¬
vestigation was mounted that information about defective
doorlocks on General Motors cars was placed in the public do¬
main, and not until then did General Motors correct the flaws.
The Cornell labs also knew, in 1961 and 1962, that the Cor¬
vair was poorly designed and was a definite safety hazard.
In those years studies were conducted which revealed three
major defects. The rear-mounting of the engine over the
drive wheel necessitated a peculiar axle-wheel assembly
which gave the car a decided tendency to overturn. The
extension of the steering column beyond the front axle meant
that in a head-on collision the steering column would be
thrust backwards into the driver, skewering him to his seat.
The placement of the gas tank inside the dashboard, over the
driver's knees, meant that in an overturned car following a
head-on collision a captive passenger would likely be burned
to death. This grisly picture, however, was painted later, by other activists, and even when the campaign against the Corvair was at the full the scientists of Cornell's laboratories did not contribute significantly. Cornell president James A. Perkins explained the university's reticence to contribute to the public welfare by saying that he feared the automobile companies would withdraw their business from the labs if their research went contrary to the corporations' selfish interests; he was, at that time, chairman of the board of directors of the labs and apparently felt that the impartial search for truth could be compromised in the interests of his own corporation.\(^59\)

Columbia University's involvement with the Strickman cigarette filter offers a similar picture. The filter's inventor, apparently seeking the name of the university as a promotional aid, offered royalties from the licensing of the filter to Columbia, retaining only fifteen per cent for himself and ten per cent for his associates. Columbia, eager for a dollar, agreed, and dispatched the filter to its laboratories for research on the filter's effects. In July of 1967, Columbia president Kirk announced at a press conference that the filter had been shown three times more effective in reducing tar and nicotine than any other filter on the market, a claim that could not be substantiated later.\(^59\)

\(^59\)Ibid., pp. 115-20.
None of the research that had been done, furthermore, involved test animals, a customary procedure in such studies; such biological research required a great deal of time, and Columbia was interested in capitalizing on its patents as soon as possible. At that same press conference, Dr. Strickman offered a description of the filter that differed substantially from the description offered by university officials. A comic-opera farce ensued. The university uncovered some suspicious financial dealings in which Strickman had been involved in the past and tobacco company researchers began to find that there was no difference between the Strickman filter and any other available on the market. Meanwhile, a group of researchers within the Columbia faculty of medicine began to claim that the filter was better than available filters, and this group angered the autocratic Kirk administration by leaking its opinions to news media in unauthorized interviews. The university was finally compelled to admit that according to the best research it could conduct, the filter was about fifteen per cent more effective than cellulose filters, which were not the most efficient on the market, whereupon Strickman, who had achieved his initial purpose by signing licensing agreements worth $500,000 with two Canadian firms, announced that, after all, he had never made any claims that the filter was in any way extraordinary. The blushing university eventually found its way
out of the capitalist debacle, its only available excuse for what might be regarded as an attempt at fraud being that the filter was at least no worse than any other in common use. 60

America's corporate capitalist manipulators have virtually dictated, among other things, the very structure of the modern university. Andrew Carnegie, when he retired from building United States Steel and began assiduously improving his public image with magnificent gestures of beneficence, promoted a plan to provide pensions for all American college instructors. Because the number of instructors at institutions which could only marginally be termed "colleges" but which bore the name as part of their titles proved so enormous, the Carnegie Foundation was obliged to publish standards by which an institution would be judged in order to qualify its teachers for the pensions; although the plan had later to be abandoned due to still insufficient resources, the plan at its outset was too attractive to the teachers for a college to ignore the standards. They duly began to conform:

... "colleges," according to the Foundation, were possessed of at least $200,000 endowment (later this was escalated to $500,000) or, in the case of State universities, an annual income of $100,000--requirements which served to force the institutions into an even greater dependence on wealth. Colleges had strict entrance requirements, including so many hours

60 Ibid., pp. 105-20.
of secondary education (these came to be known as "Carnegie units" and had a revolutionizing, and many would maintain damaging, effect on the secondary school curriculum). A college had at least eight distinct departments, each headed by a Ph.D. (the beginning of the enthronement of that stultifying credential). 61

It was probably not Carnegie's intention to insure the dependence of America's institutions of higher learning on the successors of the robber barons, but that dependence had been created no more surely than if his efforts had been purposeful—and accompanied, all the while, by public applause.

There were some persons who perceived what was happening to higher education. Henry Lee Higginson, a nineteenth-century fund raiser for Harvard, wrote in his letters to educational benefactors that "Our chance is now—before the country is full and the struggle for bread becomes intense and bitter. . . . I would have the gentlemen [the rich] of this country lead the new men [immigrants and the growing middle class], who are trying to become gentlemen [rich]. . . ." and grew perhaps overly simplistic in crying out "Educate, and save ourselves and our families and our money from mobs." 62 (Or perhaps it was not so simplistic, seeing how successful the effort has been.) Others who perceived the effect of corporate money sustaining the universities were frightened


62 Ibid., pp. 36 and 37.
of the implications; Harold Laski lucidly described what seems to be a subtle process from without:

A university principal who wants his institution to expand has no alternative except to see it expand in the directions of which one or another of the foundations happens to approve. There may be doubt, or even dissent, among the teachers in the institution, but what possible chance has doubt or dissent against a possible gift of, say, a hundred thousand dollars? And how, conceivably, can the teacher whose work fits in with the scheme of the prospective endowment fail to appear more important in the eyes of the principal or his trustees than the teacher for whose subject, or whose views, the foundation has neither interest nor liking? ... What are his chances of promotion if he pursues a path of solitary inquiry in a world of colleges competing for the substantial crumbs which fall from the foundations' table?3

The development in the twentieth century of the discipline of political science is illustrative of this process, for the "behavioralist" view of the discipline which now dominates the field was developed almost ex nihili by large infusions of capital from one of the Rockefeller Foundations, the Laura Spelman Memorial. The behavioralists first took root in the 1920's at the University of Chicago under the direction of Charles E. Merriam, who introduced a "value-free" approach to studies in political science that emphasized statistical-empirical quantification of results and restriction of operations to observable behavior. This meant that power elites operating in the country--particu-

3 Ibid., p. 39.
larly economic elites capable of concealing their activities --were largely exempted from study by the behavioralists, who would not "theorize" on unobserved activities. The political scientists instead turned their attention to those who could not conceal their role in the functioning of the nation's political-economic apparatus--the worker, voter, consumer--with the result that the power elite were supplied with information useful to them in a manipulative situation even as the mechanisms of manipulation were concealed from those being manipulated. As a result,

[t]he study of power, and the disbelief in its undemocratic and sinister concentration in American society, are of course the hallmarks of the pluralists, easily the most ideologically significant branch of the behavioralist school. . . . The pluralists have marshaled all the sophistication that the trade will bear to demonstrate that America is an effective democracy where no cohesive social group (and in particular no economic class) wields predominant political power in its own behalf. In a country where six percent of the population owns 50 percent of the wealth, . . . [the pluralists'] panglossian views of American democracy are obviously worth their weight in gold. 64

The gold that these views were worth began pouring forth from the Rockefellers in order that Merriam's department at Chicago might attract to it the brightest and most energetic graduate students and faculty, all eager for funds to support their activities and will to spread the gospel

64 Ibid., p. 43
on whose preaching the receipt of funds was contingent. Merriam was able to erect the Social Science Research Council as an umbrella organization over discipline associations in political science, sociology, history, anthropology, economics, statistics, and psychology; in the ten years following 1923, the Council had $4.2 million to dispense to adherents to its ideology, making it the most powerful clearing house in the nation for social science research.65

Other capitalist-funded foundations began backing the behavioralists following World War II as the Carnegie and Ford Foundations joined the Rockefellers in funding data-gathering studies and centers for the analysis of data. By 1950 a behavioralist had been elected president of the American Political Science Association, and by the 1960's such positions were regularly being awarded to behavioralists in most of the disciplines subsumed under the Social Science Research Council.66 The views which were socially and politically acceptable to the capitalists and which they rewarded with financial support had become dominant in their fields.

While all this was being accomplished (accompanied by much public approbation), opposing viewpoints were simply permitted (or forced) to wither on the vine. C. Wright Mills, 66Ibid., p. 42.
who was abruptly cut off from foundation support after the
publication of *The Power Elite*, listed eight studies of the
upper class which he found helpful in preparing his study,
ot one of which was produced by an academic. Mills might
be viewed as the "house radical," one of those whose dissenting opinions must be suffered in order to preserve the semblance of ideological diversity and freedom of thought. Outright suppression of such a spokesman would be resisted even by those whom the foundations think of fondly, but outright suppression is not necessary when control can be exercised so much more subtly by cutting men of lesser stature than Mills off from sustenance. The insidious process Laski warned of has borne its fruit.

To take another example of foundation activity, consider the development of another kind of program. Immediately after World War II, when large-scale American involvement in the internal and external affairs of other countries was for the first time assumed as a national policy in peacetime, a spate of international affairs and "area" institutes were created at universities around the country, establishing interdisciplinary programs with considerable more ease, be it noted, than black studies programs would ever meet. Spurred by large grants from private foundations, academics who had

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served in OSS during the war created programs designed to insure that the United States would not again be forced to deal with foreign powers about whom it had inadequate intelligence. One "area" program established in response to scholarly requirements, however, was Stanford's Institute of Hispanic-American and Luso-Brazilian Studies, publishers of a monthly titled *Hispanic American Reports*. The Institute and its publication represented a scholarly dedication on the part of Professor Ronald Hilton; during the nearly twenty years he spent achieving for the *Hispanic American Report* an international reputation as "the finest compendium of news from the whole Hispanic world," in the words of one expert, Hilton received no extra compensation from Stanford for his work, nor did the institute receive any support from foundations or the government. Hilton was free, therefore, to report and criticize in 1960 the fact that Cuban exiles were being trained by the CIA in Guatemala for an invasion of Cuba.  

His continued refusal to endorse American policy toward Cuba led to the suppression of the Institute. A 1962 Ford Foundation grant to fund international studies at Stanford was placed under the control of a Stanford law professor who had been Nelson Rockefeller's assistant in the State Department and an official of the Foundation itself; Latin American studies

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were excluded from support pending a review of existing programs, a review to which Professor Hilton, head of the only existing program in the field, was not invited to contribute. Then, without consultation with Hilton, the university administration removed all doctoral candidates from the Institute's program. Hilton read the handwriting on the billboard and resigned; a Ford grant of $550,000 for Latin American studies duly followed two weeks later. 69

If subversion from within should fail to accomplish its purpose, then control from without is exercised by boards of regents 70 or trustees:

Many states now have—and others are developing—statewide boards, commissions, or councils designed to formulate policies for all public higher education. The effect of such bodies, of course, is to reduce the authority of particular institutional boards, administrators, and faculties. All of these statewide boards are political in origin and usually consist of lay members appointed by the governor. . . .

. . . they are potent political mechanisms making for the outer direction of higher education, and they inevitably tend to diminish the inner direction. 71

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69 Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

70 Paul Goodman offers an illuminating footnote on the history of the regents: "Originally the regentes were the teaching masters who ruled the guild. In the course of time, when the "university" lectures became otiose and teaching fell to the colleges, the regents became precisely the non-teachers who still ruled the guild. Finally they were not even part of the community and they still ruled the guild." The Community of Scholars (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 26n.

Any society tends to reward those who most fervently support its social orthodoxies as part of the inertia inherent in any society to reproduce the values of the older, controlling generation in the generation destined to supplant it. In the case of the United States, it is faith in the capitalistic system and the virtues of democratic liberalism that are highly rewarded, and those who receive the rewards are then established as the watchdogs over the preachings of social orthodoxy at the universities when they are appointed to exercise the control functions of the boards of trustees or regents. A study published in 1947 indicated that of more than 700 trustees of the educational "oligopoly," the nation's "outstanding" or "top" universities, in 1934-35, more than 15 per cent were financiers, more than 15 per cent were manufacturing executives, and more than a quarter were lawyers or judges. Less than five per cent were educators, and those were all administrative officers rather than active teachers. "If one adds farmers to the occupations with little or no representation, 91.5 per cent of the nation's workers furnished only 2.6 per cent of the trustees."\(^2\) It is symptomatic of the transformation that took place in the universities to match the transformation of the American economy in the nineteenth century that these capitalist-industrialists gained control of the universities at the expense

\(^{72}\)Bill Towe, "Who Runs the Schools," (Nashville: Southern Student Organizing Committee, n. d.), pp. 3-4.
of clergymen, educators, and farmers who had dominated them until about 1860.\textsuperscript{73}

After thirty-five years of "progress," a study of 5000 of the nation's 30,000 university trustees conducted by the Educational Testing Service revealed that

96 per cent of the trustees and regents are white, 75 per cent are Protestants, and 73 per cent are businessmen over fifty. In addition, more than half the trustees surveyed had net incomes over $30,000 a year. Typical trustees' attitudes on civil liberties suggest that they are something less than enlightened despots: 70 per cent favored screening campus speakers, 40 per cent believe that student publications should be censored, 53 per cent support loyalty oaths for professors, and 27 per cent feel that faculty members don't have the right to express opinions. . . . With such attitudes and backgrounds, it is not surprising that trustees throughout the country have been completely unresponsive to the educational needs of non-white people, to the students' demands for a more flexible and relevant education, and to the protests against academia's complicity in the Vietnam war.\textsuperscript{74}

More than that, it is not surprising that they have been active supporters of the oppressive system that has rewarded them so highly and intolerant of those who would alter it.

The animosity of university governors towards dissenting viewpoints can be seen clearly in the case of Angela Davis versus the University of California Board of Regents. A Phi Betta Kappa graduate of Brandeis with three years of graduate study in France and Germany, Miss Davis was pur-

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{74}Barlow and Shapiro, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 229-230.
suing her Ph.D. in philosophy at the San Diego campus of the University of California when UCLA offered her a position in the philosophy department in the Spring of 1969. The decision was based solely on the merit of her academic record, and Miss Davis accepted the offer, planning to employ a summer grant and the fall semester to work on her dissertation and the Spring semester to assume her teaching load.\(^\text{75}\)

Controversy about Miss Davis' appointment began when an FBI informer at UCLA wrote a column for the campus newspaper urging the philosophy department to identify the Marxist it had hired so that her lectures could be viewed in perspective by her students; the San Francisco Examiner pursued the story and the following week identified Miss Davis as a "known Maoist" and as an active worker for SDS and the Black Panthers.\(^\text{76}\) The Reagan-dominated Regents entered the case at this point and asked UCLA Chancellor Charles Young to find out if the reports of Miss Davis' communist beliefs were true. The Regents then voted to fire her, an action which immediately embroiled them in legal and academic difficulties as injunctions were filed against their actions, the UCLA faculty voted 539 to 12 to condemn the action, and the state-wide academic senate registered a unanimous dissent from the Regents'.


\(^{76}\)Ibid.
action. The Regents, who had assumed power over faculty tenure appointments earlier in the year with the soothing promise that "No political test shall be considered in the appointment and promotion of any faculty member or employee," suddenly discovered an abiding belief that "the taxpayers in a capitalistic, democratic society should not pay the salaries of professors, or the bills of students, who want to change the system." The legal basis for the Regents' action was a resolution reached by the Regents in 1940 (reaffirmed by them in 1949) that membership in the Communist Party was prima facie evidence of unfitness to teach in the state's school system; that the resolution had been repeatedly overturned by the California and federal Supreme Courts was of no interest to the Regents—they banked on Nixon appointees to the federal court to sustain their view against dissent.

The basis for the trustees' resolutions and their actions against Miss Davis rested heavily on the prejudices of educational philosopher Sidney Hook, who began in the 1930's to develop a theory of academic freedom which could be used

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77 Steven V. Roberts, "The Russians are Coming at UCLA," Commonweal, November 7, 1969, p. 175.
78 Kaufman, op. cit., p. 22.
79 Ibid.
80 "The Case of Angela the Red," Time, October 17, 1969, p. 64.
as the basis for an *a priori* finding that faith in the Marx-
ian economic construc disqualified one from participation
in the search for truth.

Hook defines "academic freedom" as the freedom
to pursue the truth "without any control of
authority except the control or authority of
the rational methods by which truth is estab-
lished." Communists are disqualified as dis-
coverers or disseminators of truth, under this
theory . . . because membership [in the party]
implies a commitment to practice educational
fraud . . . . A Communist [according to Hook]
knowingly accepts three obligations: (1) to in-
ject Marxist-Leninist analysis into every
classroom; (2) without exposing himself, to
exploit his teaching position so as to give
students a working class education; and (3)
again without exposing himself, to go beyond
injecting Marxist-Leninist doctrines into his
teaching by conducting struggles around the
school in a truly Bolshevik manner. 81

This theory, of course, is derived from Moscow's ideologi-
cal control of the American communist party before World
War II. To say this reflects a naive and distorted view
of both the party in the present era and of Miss Davis' in-
tellectual fiber is to miss the essential self-serving na-
ture of the argument. We can most clearly see the nature of
the Regents' argument in this letter from a trustee in an-
other part of the country when he informed the president of
his college of his resignation:

> Now I do not believe that a university--any
university--has a right to become embroiled
in public issues of political, military or

economic importance. . . .

Once the university begins to take a public position on military, economic or social problems it can no longer claim immunity from violent reactions on the part of those who disagree with its policies. Thus the very foundations of the university are undermined.82

These comments were written in response to NYU's throwing ROTC off campus, and they represent the same circular self-service as the California Regents' arguments about the Communist Party: maintaining ROTC would be embroilment in military affairs because that would serve to maintain the status quo--discarding ROTC is embroilment, however, for that would tend to attack the status quo. The description of the university, then, as an inert, sterile lump within the living body of society is misleading: the university can act as a red blood cell, feeding and supporting what exists (supporting the militaristic policy of the WASP elite with research or training for soldiers), but it may not serve as a white blood cell, attacking what it perceives as poison (e. g., militarism) in the body politic. Thus the trustees, ex cathedra.

Just as involvement with an economic and social status quo inhibits the university's ability to critically analyze that status quo, so does a university's participation in

82Lawrence Fertig to Dr. James M. Hester, President of New York University, "A Trustee Writes to the President of His College Giving the Reasons for his Resignation," National Review, July 14, 1970, p. 726.
government research inhibit its ability to critically analyze that government's policies. This is especially true of defense research. The argument that the university must contribute to "national aims" begs the question of whether those aims can be accepted on an a priori basis and whether or not the university's contribution towards those aims must not be seen as a tacit endorsement of them. Most universities, of course, were only too eager to accept government funds to supply research related to the war in Vietnam, and the most ludicrous distortion of the university function with regard to that conflict was supplied by one of the earliest entrants into the war supplier business, Michigan State University.

In the 1950's and early 1960's, the government of Ngo Dinh Diem was maintained in Saigon by the United States in contradiction of international treaties which had provided for the re-unification of Vietnam by means of impartial, internationally supervised elections. The Diem government was a mockery of every sentiment ever expressed in a Fourth of July speech, maintaining its hold on the populace through repressive police measures and its hold on the army through control of the American-financed exchequer, but the missionary fervor of the Dulles-run State Department tended to favor autocratic regimes in times of crisis as a "bulwark against communism." Thus, shortly after Diem came to power, the State Department looked favorably on the involvement of Mich-
igan State with the South Vietnamese government and expedited the bureaucratic procedures to supply the government with American academic experts.

Michigan State was the chosen vehicle of American technical aid because of two individuals. One was John A. Hannah, the gung-ho expansionist president of Michigan State, a man with a degree in poultry husbandry who married the president's daughter in his rise to the presidency of his university; as enthusiastic about growth for his university as he is for its football teams, Hannah perceived the connection with Saigon as a means for providing funds for Michigan State out of the administrative budgets of contracts paid for by Washington. The second, and more important, individual in the equation was Wesley Fishel, a political science professor who had formed a fast friendship with Diem when the two met in Tokyo in 1950; when, four years later, Diem was named premier of South Vietnam, he immediately requested Washington to dispatch Fishel to him as an adviser. This was quickly followed by a request that Michigan State prepare an aid and assistance program for the Diem government, to be paid for by Washington; although Michigan State, with Fishel absent, had no one on the campus who knew anything about Vietnam, Hannah sent a negotiating team to Saigon which returned with a contract committing Michigan State "to do everything for Diem, from training his police to writing
his constitution."83

"Everything" was exactly what the Michigan State University Group proceeded to do. In addition to providing a rather porous cover for the CIA in Saigon (until the embarrassment became too great), the university even supplied guns for the Diem police, requisitioning surplus arms from the American government through the East Lansing School of Police Administration and turning them over to the Vietnamese.84 The New York and Detroit police departments, the FBI, and the Department of Defense supplied the University Group with small arms, fingerprint, and intelligence experts, all of whom duly appointed to the MSU faculty by the trustees, despite the fact that only four of the thirty-three police advisors the Group provided had any connection with the home campus.85 The CIA men were also appointed to the faculty. Regular faculty who served in the project during its seven-year duration were also well-treate-


84Ibid., p. 58

85Ibid., p. 59.
tions either during their tour of duty or within a year of their return. Professor Fishel, in particular, scored points. His published work was virtually non-existent and he was absent from his classes for years at a time. But in 1957 MSU promoted him to the rank of full professor. 86

Michigan State's "Vietnam adventure" came to an end in 1962. Several professors who had kept their eyes open during tours of duty in Vietnam returned to the United States and wrote articles that were less than laudatory about the Diem regime. Diem, touchy and sensitive, resented the attacks, but Michigan felt that it could mollify its client by promising more stringent methods of personnel selection. Alfred Seelye, dean of the Michigan business school, was dispatched to Saigon in 1962 to negotiate the renewal of the contract, but discovered that Diem was adamant in his refusal to have any more dealings with MSU. Recovering quickly,

... the business dean proceeded to make a strong declaration in defense of the academic freedom of MSU professors and beat Diem in announcing that the contract would not be renewed. 87

Aside from the difficulties engendered for the universities by their participation in research related to the war in Vietnam, military research has, in a general way, affected many of the attitudes and assumptions under which the universities pursue truth.

86 Ibid., p. 56.
87 Ibid., p. 60.
... sociology (in this country at least) didn't come out of the dark ages of philosophical speculation and become a "social science" until industry started paying for sociology. Industries paid sociologists to find out why workers strike and how they can be stopped from striking. ... Sociology also grew during the Second World War when it was found that the behavioralist method (the survey research business) could help the army train its soldiers and keep them happy while they were in combat. There's a big four-volume study on the American soldier which contains information of no use to anyone except the army. 88

This involvement of sociology with the military and industry has, of course, continued. Anthropology, similarly, was conditioned historically by the militaristic and imperialistic attitudes of a conquering people dealing with enigmatic aborigines. The Encyclopedia Britannica notes that "Applied Anthropology thus came to mean essentially employed anthropology. ... It was natural that the anthropologist's researches should be of special interest to colonial governments and that these should have become his principal employers. ..." 89 Anthropologists who recognized the dubious moral position of "seeking truth" while mortgaged to oppressive imperialist governments attempted to formulate in 1951 a carefully worded but extremely loose definition of what was


and what was not considered professionally ethical for the anthropologist, but the dilemma was unresolved:

From the beginning, we have inhabited a triple environment, involving first, loyalties to the peoples we studied, second, to our colleagues and our science, and third, to the powers who employed us in the universities or who funded our research. In many cases we seem now to be in danger of being torn apart by the conflicts between the first and third set of loyalties. On the one hand, part of the non-western world is in revolt, especially against the American government as the strongest and most counter-revolutionary of the western powers. . . . On the other hand, anthropologists are becoming increasingly subject to restrictions, unethical temptations and political controls from the US government and its subordinate agencies. . . . What does an anthropologist do who is dependent on a counter-revolutionary government in an increasingly revolutionary world.90

Clark Kerr notes the increase in government involvement with the universities—"Higher education in 1960 received about $1.5 billion from the federal government, a hundred-fold increase in twenty years"91—and then goes on to note that university control over its own destiny has been substantially reduced thereby.92 He is somewhat fearful about the erosion of academic freedom that this represents, but, in the end, he insists that the arrangement is a merger between

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91Kerr, op. cit., pp. 52-3.
92Ibid., pp. 58-9
Washington and the universities, not a take-over; with the true liberal's faith in the rationality and liberalism of others, he feels it can all be worked out. If one perceives Washington as a power center largely controlled by entrenched vested interests to whom the universities are already largely subservient, then "merger" seems unlikely.
CHAPTER VI
CAN THE UNIVERSITIES DISENTHRALL THEMSELVES?

Paul Goodman notes that "a society educates, inevitably, to continue itself, and that the kind of education is a function of the kind of society." He makes no distinction as to whether societies necessarily continue themselves in the same ways that they have pursued prior to education or, perhaps, employ education to teach themselves to prepare for change. Later on, however, he lists the goals of universities in our society and the goals society has established for them: the scholars, he says, hope to pass on and advance the arts and sciences, to advance their careers, to learn the philosophical foundations of their professions, and to establish a community among themselves. Society's demands on the scholars, as Goodman perceives them, are:

To fit the young for a useful life by teaching them acceptable attitudes and marketable skills. . . . To continue civilized society by manning its fundamental professions, religion, and government. . . . More narrowly, to train the young as apprentices for immediate service, as, at present, to win a war, to work for the corporations or the State. . . . And indeed, to get the scholars to affirm with their authority the social ideology, whatever it happens to be. 94

It is this last task that our universities are much too good

93 Paul Goodman, Community of Scholars, op. cit., p. 47.
94 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
at, for too many men in education were raised on the tenets of the social ideology—the "consensus" noted above—and too many have accepted its being in their own self-interest to affirm it.

Can they, then, abandon short-term self-interest in the interests of us all and assist in creating a new social order? In *The New Industrial State*, John Kenneth Galbraith argues that they can, that there are enough educators who recognize the serious problems our society has refused to face who are willing to abandon their quasi-passive roles as intellectuals and create a political coalition to achieve results. His argument seems limp, however, particularly at the end:

... there will be controversy over both the legitimacy of the alternative goals and the means of achieving them—over aesthetically motivated control of the environment, for example. There will be opposition from both entrenched interest and inert intellect. And there will be need to persuade. In short, there are tasks here, once more, that are worthy of a reformer's mettle.95

The word reformer might tip off what is being said here. However great ecological considerations might be now or in the future, the time is quickly passing when aesthetic motivation for ecological action will be paramount. Yet this is precisely the sort of issue favored by the liberal reformer--

one that does not strike at the root of the problem, but causes a mutation in its fruit—and it smacks of the historical American model of the conservative falling back before intolerable pressure—retreat but not defeat. Planting daisies on a junk-heap will not conceal the fact that our economic system demands production of the junk-heap, demands infinite use of finite resources, and that, however reformed, it does not take cognizance of human realities. Nor is there any explanation of how economic reform will result in social reform to benefit those who are currently considered pollution regrettably produced by the operation of our economic models.

One must remember, too, that Galbraith is privileged, exempt for two reasons from the censure which might fall on another colleague for presuming to speak out against the ills of our society. First, there is his stature both as a man of intellect and a man of affairs; he would be a tall target to set one's sights against. Second, Galbraith does not, in any essential sense, challenge the basic assumptions of our society. Those who do are generally halted in their careers at one point or another as the power structure either explicitly or covertly exercises its authority to determine what ideas shall be taught in our institutions of higher learning; Angela Davis was attacked in California explicitly, and Thorstein Veblen underwent his period in the wilderness
because his eccentricities were considered too far out of true plumb for him to be entirely trustworthy. Goodman points out that even Erasmus, Locke, and Kant had great difficulties in their relations with universities committed to preaching the social doctrines of their times.\footnote{Goodman, \textit{Community of Scholars}, op. cit., p. 132n.}

We are faced, in the universities, with a situation analagous to that extant with regard to our political institutions. Just as our political parties are non-ideological and devoted to coalition-building—thereby fairly guaran-teeing lack of principle and even mediocrity in government—so are our universities, in their devotion to the liberal consensus, incapable of doing more than patching the cracks as they appear in the aged structure. To pursue the analogy further, just as blacks, women and other minority groups were for so long excluded from meaningful participation in political processes, so are they now, as participation becomes possible, coming into their own in our elitist universities. Coming into their own, however, should not be interpreted to mean that they are receiving anything meaningful; it is a little like moving into a first class cabin on a sinking ship.

It should be obvious by now that the universities of the nation are not instruments for change in an unjust, economically insane, politically conservative society. They are, rather, bellwethers of that society, mirroring its pre-
occupations and inconsistencies, partaking of its absurdities. Christopher Lasch and Eugene Genovese (who stepped beyond the liberal consensus at Rutgers University and became one of the primary election issues in a gubernatorial race in New Jersey) have described the reforms needed in our schools in this way:

What needs to be done is precisely what neo-capitalist society cannot do without committing suicide: destroy the custodial function of schools; dissociate education from the process of providing qualifications for work, so far as this is possible, and where it is not, recognize more frankly the character of education as apprenticeship while seeking to improve the apprenticeship itself, and, finally, provide acceptable alternatives to formal schooling, both for young people and --equally important--for adults. 97

The authors do not propose this general statement of ideals as a means of reordering only our schools. Our schools have become society, both are sick, and both need to be altered fundamentally; to deal with them separately is to fall prey to the illusion that they are separate. They are not, and transformation of one necessitates transformation of the other.

Given, then, that the universities are identical in essence to those forces which resist alteration of the status quo, it is futile to expect them to serve as the source of change in our society. It is more likely that fundamen-

tal change will be forced upon us--and the universities--by the growing irrationalities of the consumptionist economic model. The question before us now is whether that change will come with calamitous swiftness, involving vast social disruptions, or whether it can be prepared for in advance. The academies would do well to ponder the proposition.
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