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THE EUROPEAN STUDENT REVOLT

AT THE END OF THE PAST DECADE, the analysts of contemporary Western societies, deluded by the absence of sharp social and political tensions, predicted confidently the end of an ideological era. In a book titled "The End of the Ideological Age", R. Aron, a well-known French writer, pointed out the decline of grand scale ideologies and erosion of utopian hopes in industrial countries both in the West and in the Soviet-Communist bloc. At about the same time A. Koestler, an acute observer of the European scene, voiced his disappointment with the young generation in Western Europe. He thought youth to be uncommitted to any particular belief, over-pragmatic, self-seeking, immersed in the prosaic pursuits of their careers and indulging in vulgar pleasures of an easy life secured by an increasingly more affluent society.

The recent outbreaks of student rebellion in a number of European countries seem to disprove these affirmations as premature if not altogether fallacious. In Germany and in France alike there erupted a new passionate revolutionary explosion, essentially irrational and with a strong admixture of ideological overtones. A novel and puzzling feature of this neo-Marxist revolutionary wave in Europe is the fact that it occurred in the highly industrialized countries which enjoy unprecedented prosperity, and that the impulse originated not among the common people, but among the students.¹

In attempting to throw some light upon the circumstances and the causes of these "events", as they were called in France, the present writer makes no special claim to any expertise in the highly complex field of social psychology, but he did have an opportunity to see the rebellion in action while travelling in Europe in May, 1968, when he spent three weeks in Paris during the student revolution and general strike. A good part of these reflections is based on observations gleaned during a journey to Western and Central Europe. Attention will be focussed mainly on the events in Germany and in France, the two countries in which the rebellion took on dangerous proportions threatening to engulf the existing political and social order, but the most significant

and hopeful observations and conclusions were made in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

It was first in West Germany that the student unrest erupted and became a serious menace to the apparently solid and stable post-war order. Ever since the departure of Chancellor Adenauer from the helm of government, the internal situation began to show signs of a long-drawn malaise. The onset of an economic recession coincided with much political confusion in Bonn and a series of reverses in diplomatic relations with France and the United States. On the political right there appeared a neo-Nazi party, the N.P.D., which challenged the legitimacy of the Bonn establishment, while on the left there emerged a radical New Left in the form of the German Socialist Student Union or the S.D.S. As an extremist wing of the German Socialist Party, the S.D.S. was, despite its assertion to the contrary, fanatically hostile to the parliamentary form of government and to the hegemony of the two old parties, the Christian Democratic Union and the Socialist Party. The rise of this extra-parliamentary opposition did not fail to undermine the domestic self-assurance of the post-war society in Germany and to generate doubts in its external hard-won respectability.

Sparked by a handful of disaffected left-wing intellectuals, the socialist students got a firm foothold in German universities. They launched student riots all over Germany. In West Berlin, Hamburg, and Frankfurt these disturbances had already taken on the character of mass movements. In the first half of 1967 there occurred twenty-five student demonstrations in Bonn alone: against legislation to give the government emergency powers, against genocide in Vietnam, against the visit of the Shah of Persia, and against the *coup d'état* in Greece.² In the spring of 1968, student mobs set fire to the Springer Press buildings and a few months later leftist students led by the notorious Danny the Red (Daniel Cohn-Bendit) played havoc with the Book Fair in Frankfurt.

Like their comrades in America and in Western Europe, the German radical students appear to be motivated by a strong revulsion against some dominant features of our industrial age: its soulless uniformity and efficiency, the increasing importance of big industrial and administrative units run by technical experts and bureaucrats, the predominance of party oligarchies and parliaments manipulated by professional politicians, and the rise of mass universities operated by the academic mandarins.

What distinguished the student left-wingers in Germany was their claim to a "political mandate" formulated already in a student charter of 1962, which

provided that: "Whereas the students consider themselves responsible for the universities, they will take a stand for a political and social order that guarantees freedom. In no way is it exclusively the task of the parties to shape democracy, but rather of all the groups in the State."³ For many years this remained only an expression of pious wishes, but with the political awakening of the students in the spring of 1967 it became a political fact of no small significance. In the course of that year, certain problems that do call for radical reform were turned by student revolt into burning issues. Through a strategy of provocations on campus, in the streets, before court houses and parliament buildings, the student revolt has aroused much public interest. It has created in government a greater readiness to reform the university system, to deal with press monopoly, and to redraft the antiquated code of criminal law. On the whole where realistic issues are concerned, the Bonn government has been receptive to criticism by this extra-parliamentary opposition. But faced with the provocative tactics of the turbulent students led by such people as Rudi Dutschke who deliberately sought violent confrontation with police, the authorities found it difficult to maintain a tolerant and reasonable approach.

There were disturbing symptoms of a psychosis among the German student rebels. Though pretending to be democrats, they behaved like left-wing Fascists and often espoused theories "of revolution, of the Third World", and of the Cuban freedom-fighters, using guerrilla tactics in the cities on the example of the Chinese Red Guards. Their thinking on social and economic matters is so remote from their own society's problems as to be properly called utopian and anarchistic. Utopian is their struggle for the total elimination of all authority by, of course, authoritarian means; utopian is their longing for a perfect social order of a primitive commune, which failed miserably in Berlin, and utopian is their anti-consumptionist, anti-technocratic, Marcuse-inspired vision of a brave new world in which even animals will do no harm.

Yet it would perhaps be unfair to deny any validity to these rebels' demands. One of their postulates is student co-determination in university affairs. This means giving students, as well as dons and assistants, a one-third vote—equal to that of full professors—on all university matters including staff appointments. Student rebels advocate dividing faculties into departments and enlisting a system in which the professors who hold chairs retain feudal prerogatives which reduce the rest of the university community—dons, assistants, and students—to the status of subordinates or dependents. Under the pressure of their revolt the principle of co-determination is finding wider acceptance. Another pressure is the call for "critical universities" where courses

are directed to political action. The students attack the concept of non-partisan scholarship as leading to the production of uncritical aspirants for the economic and government posts within the Establishment. In many universities students have issued critiques of courses. In Hamburg the issue has been the demand to make a professor stand up for cross-examination about his writings in the Nazi period.

Of greater consequence for the radical leaders is their claim that student government has "political mandate" from the student body to take positions and organize action on any political issue. This becomes an elitist principle when student radicals claim that students today are in the best position to comprehend the true interest of other groups in a "manipulated society". The S.D.S. leaders believe that democratic university reforms are not possible under the present political system, and their main reason for applying the provocative tactics to university and other reforms is to radicalize more students and then carry revolt into other sections of society.⁴ Yet whenever they secure a majority, the radical students tend to bypass the official student parliament and prefer to launch violent activities from mass assemblies that are open to all, but are manipulated by a handful of militants bent on provoking street disorders.

Thus an anarcho-syndicalist pattern of organization is emerging, with nearly autonomous "action committees" and the idea of continuous student revolt. Although the revolt has set itself democratic goals and seeks through enlightenment to free mankind from oppression, it can not, strictly speaking, be called a democratic manifestation of a new German political culture. Many of the students are avowedly anti-liberal in practice as well as in theory. They openly proclaim their hatred of the liberal society which they accuse of being tolerant yet repressive. This anti-liberalism of the student Left has been rightly condemned by all those in Germany who care for the survival of humanist and liberal values. Unfortunately anti-liberalism is no stranger to the German soil. It is the unbroken irrational tradition of the German universities, of the romantic, authoritarian Burschenschaften which revolted against the spirit of European enlightenment.

The delusions and misconceptions of the German radical students have been laid bare by a young socialist scholar, Professor J. Habermas.

The primary conception of the S.D.S. [he wrote] lies in the assumption that we are acting within the context of a revolutionary situation. But there can be no question of that. What is most certainly lacking is any widespread sense that

present conditions are intolerable. Under these circumstances a person who speaks and acts as if revolution were on the agenda is simply deluding himself.⁵

It seemed that after the hectic period of uninterrupted riots the revolutionary *élan* in Germany approached an anti-climax. A fresh outbreak of student violence in September on the occasion of the Book Fair at Frankfurt was only a feeble repetition of earlier events and was quickly put down when the police moved in and arrested Danny the Red, who had been the hero and the leader of the revolt in Paris. According to reports, the national convention of the S.D.S., held in early October at Frankfurt, ended in chaos when some of its experienced leaders resigned and the delegates engaged in mutual recriminations, gross insults, and fist fights.

In France the student rebellion was short-lived, yet more violent and more successful than the one in Germany. Although the circumstances which prompted the revolt, the passions, and the passwords which lent the riots their frightening force were similar in both countries, there were significant differences which merit attention. In the first place, the French students succeeded in accomplishing what their German colleagues never did: they won a sympathetic response from the public and an active participation of young workers. The wave of strikes following street fighting in the Quartier Latin involved the entire working class of France, and almost toppled the seemingly unassailable Gaullist *régime*.

Another striking feature of the Parisian revolt was its spontaneous character. Its haphazard organization, however, was more than compensated for by brilliant leadership—quick, imaginative, and responsive to the instantaneous impulses of the crowd. The upheaval shook, as it were, the rigid carapace of social barriers and conventions. It brought people closer to each other. In Paris the city squares, the lecture halls of the Sorbonne and the ornate interiors of the Odéon Theatre became the agoras of endless, round-the-clock debates where adolescent speakers of most diverse orientations freely voiced their troubled thoughts and feelings. It was a kind of open fair, with endless perorations, tumultuous marches, mass demonstrations punctuated with frequent skirmishes with police and nightly barricade fighting. The occupation of the Sorbonne and the torrents of propaganda printed in the papers, on placards, and on walls brought revolutionary effervescence to the pitch, the government to the point of collapse, and the country to the brink of anarchy.

The May insurrection was in reality an unplanned explosion of pent-up frustrations of teen-agers and students who updated romantic socialism with criticism of the contemporary industrial society borrowed from the writings

of H. Marcuse and J. K. Galbraith. It was so remote from the reality of contemporary France, where there is hardly any intolerable injustice, and so deficient in any concrete programme, that failure seemed inevitable. Although it would be an exaggeration to consider the "happenings" as anything more than a sudden outburst of bad temper, a kind of revolutionary psychodrama, there were indeed objective deficiencies and real grievances that pushed the youngsters to a revolt. Parisian students protested against the anachronistic, over-centralized administrative structure of France created by Napoleon, and operated by big executives, academic mandarins, and high bureaucrats. They gave a violent reminder that the Gaullist *régime* in its preoccupation with vain international prestige had grossly neglected reforming the antiquated educational system.

The rapid increase in the number of enrolments, which in 1966 jumped by nearly one hundred thousand, has produced deficiencies of administration. Great numbers of new students experienced desperately overcrowded lecture halls, shortages of laboratories and equipment, poorly-supplied libraries, and a lack of competent teachers and professors. These conditions forced the students to work very hard and took an appalling toll in examination failures—the dropout rate in French universities being close to forty per cent of new entrants. The confusion was aggravated by the usual lack of any contact between the professors and the students, who were left to their own devices, without guidance, in poorly-defined courses, badly organized and not geared to career opportunities. The haphazard growth of the arts faculties and the swelling number of students with no future in disorganized humanities departments were a glaring condemnation of government policy *vis-à-vis* higher education.⁶ Furthermore, what made the situation worse was that for the first time the French economy has not been able to secure enough jobs for substantial numbers of university graduates in humanities as well as in science and technology.⁷ These conditions produced widespread discontent, which in turn prepared the ground for an explosion. For the last two years one could sense the approaching storm; "everybody expected the beginning of the 1968 academic year to present an explosive situation, especially in the Paris region".⁸ The upheaval began in March with a rather insignificant demonstration at Nanterre-La Folie, one of the suburbs of Greater Paris, and a seat of the new university. A small bank of left-wing students led by the fire-brand anarchist, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a sociology student, occupied the administration building of the university. There ensued heated nightly debates and the pasting and daubing of slogans and insults in the style of the Chinese "cultural" revolution. The

agitation spread to Paris itself. At the beginning of May, when some disorders occurred at the Sorbonne, the rector of the Paris university called the police into the Sorbonne to evacuate the students. This decision proved to be a fatal mistake, for the idle students, inflamed by several scores of militants, staged a series of mass demonstrations in the Quartier Latin. When the negotiations for the opening of the Sorbonne failed, another huge demonstration occurred, in the course of which the students erected barricades and fought the police in a pitched battle. The students were enraged by the government's irresolute and hesitant attitude as shown by brutal repression alternating with belated concessions. About the middle of May, the trade unions proclaimed a general strike in sympathy with the students who, joined this time by several thousand high-school pupils and young workers, organized a mammoth march through the working class districts of Paris. The revolutionary fever spilled outside Paris; in a number of provincial universities similar disturbances occurred when the students occupied the universities, and the workers the factories. In the early stages of the revolt, the Communist party's official leadership dissociated itself from the doings of the new leftist, "anarchist deviationists who proposed substituting the juvenile revolution for the proletarian revolution".⁹ Despite this hostility of the official revolutionary Marxist party the student militants won a mass support from the younger workers, who disobeying instructions from above joined the insurrection. About the end of May, the Gaullist régime had practically crumbled. The power lay virtually at the mercy of the turbulent mob. All semblance of public order vanished, and even the loyalty of the police to the government was questionable. But by the beginning of June the government pulled itself together. Having secured the backing of the armed forces, General de Gaulle by a supreme effort of will managed to reimpose his rule. The government negotiated substantial wage and salary increases with the trade unions. The workers returned to work, the universities resumed classes, and the tired heroes of the barricades settled down to study for the approaching examinations. In a new general election the overwhelming majority of the nation, horrified by the magnitude of the upheaval, voted for order and against anarchy. The Gaullist party, the U.D.R., won its most resounding victory at the polls, while the opposition, particularly the Communist party, came out badly shaken and demoralized. Only the left-wing splinter, the P.S.U. (the United Socialist Party) headed by Mendès-France—who openly supported the rebellious students—scored some success.

As one ponders over the May troubles and seeks for the causes of the riots, one has to admit that both the government and the professors share

some responsibility for the upheaval. The government was largely responsible because it remained deaf to the reasonable demands of the students; the professorial body, on the other hand, made itself available for any mediation between the university administration, the police, and the students in the early days of the riots when it was still possible to avert the worst excesses. The official student organization, the U.N.E.F., was torn by internal dissensions, discredited, and therefore, powerless. All the postwar French governments had little sympathy for the organized student movement; the Fifth Republic was openly hostile to it and attempted by various means to stifle the Union.¹⁰ It could no longer act as the legitimate spokesman for the students and the academic authorities knew that they had no partner for discussion. In the absence of a responsible student representation, the leadership fell by default into the hands of the radical militant elements inspired by a Che Guevara kind of revolutionary romanticism. The disintegration of the official student organization fostered the proliferation of small extremist groups ranging from the radical socialists and Trotskyite revolutionary Communists to outright Maoists and anarchists. They first appeared in the early 1960s and as the conditions in the universities gradually deteriorated they began to stir up the revolutionary ferment. Although they represented merely a tiny fraction of the students and quarrelled a great deal among themselves, they provided the points around which focussed much of student disaffection. The combination of organizations stripped of their representative functions and of small radical groups is one of the constant characteristics of all French revolutions. In the critical days of April and May, these groups captured the initiative and served as the detonators of the explosion. They even attempted to set up a student commune, an embryonic revolutionary power which occupied the Sorbonne and several provincial universities. The commune harked back to the great tradition of the French and Bolshevik revolutions. There was no small amount of play-acting and reliving the symbolic past. The juvenile rioters, mostly high-school boys, hoodlums, and students, stormed the Sorbonne on May 13 and set up a kind of revolutionary Soviet, on the Russian pattern, which became the headquarters of the rebellion.¹¹ Endless meetings and debates were in progress in many faculties and in great schools, including the Sorbonne, during which there were discussions of such controversial matters as the outlines of the future "critical university" government, the struggle against the bourgeois, high-consumption society, sexual repression, and similar revolutionary topics. Similar developments took place in most provincial universities. Naturally a great deal of this verbal deluge was plain rubbish, but not all. Some serious

thought had been given and sensible proposals about the university reform emerged from the discussions at seminars held in the Censier Annex of the Sorbonne. An inter-faculty liaison committee of professors and students made a draft of the University Charter. It spelled out three fundamental principles: contestation, self-management, and autonomy. The first means that the university ought not only to transmit knowledge but should also assess it critically; the second stresses the necessity for student and faculty participation in decisions affecting the University; and the third calls for self-government of the universities and faculties.¹² Most professors stood aloof, but some teachers, especially those in the Faculty of Science who were members of the S.N.E.S. (Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur) participated in deliberations.

Undoubtedly the May revolt has been the most serious domestic convulsion since the Paris Commune of 1871. It came as a complete surprise to everybody and it dealt a terrible blow to nearly all the established authorities in France: the government, the universities, the political parties, and organized labour. Essentially it was an eruption of accumulated resentments, which in the face of a total collapse of social structure took on a libertarian and anarchist coloration so typical of all the past French troubles. This time it was not the working class or the colonels but the teen-agers who rebelled against the authority of their headmasters and professors and union officials so perfectly embodied in the person of the Grand Old General. "Down with the Gaullist régime! Ten years of the Big Bosses rule is enough!" howled the marchers. The improvised graffiti interspersed with huge inscriptions on the walls of the Sorbonne and other great Parisian Schools proclaimed the eternal verities of absolute liberty: "No master, no God! The only God is me!"¹³ This absolute libertarian imperative was supported by appropriate quotations from Bakunin, Marx, Mao, and Che Guevara. In an outburst of rage the mob desecrated the symbols of French national glory, the monuments of Cardinal Richelieu, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the *Tricolore*, hoisting instead the red and black flags.

Since mere negation, however, is no substitute for a revolutionary doctrine, the young libertarian rebels adopted the theories and the slogans coined by a pseudo-Marxist German-American philosopher, Herbert Marcuse. In his book *One Dimensional Man* Marcuse condemns modern industrial society because it subjects the social and individual life to the dictates of high productivity, pouring in exchange on its votaries and victims the mechanical blessings of high-consumption gadgets and machines. Man in industrial societies becomes a one-dimensional being, blocked in his creative impulses, and robbed

of his aspirations for a fuller, less mechanical, and less constrained existence. The revolutionary mission of destroying such a closed society, smoothly operated by the technocrats, the military, and the politicians no longer can be performed by the working class, for it has already become integrated with the establishment. Nowadays—contends Marcuse—only the students in the affluent societies and the guerrilleros in the Third World are capable of waging a struggle against that inhuman civilization.¹⁴ During the troubles in Paris one could hear an echo of this new revolutionary creed in the utterances of some more sophisticated militants who made use of Marcusian catch-phrases. While strong in condemnations, these juvenile orators were singularly deficient in providing any positive vision of the model society to come. The case of the revolutionary students was well put in a revealing remark made by the chief leader of the rebellion, Daniel Cohn-Bendit: "It is important not to elaborate a reform of the capitalist society, but to bring about a decisive break with that society; such an experiment will not last but it will allow to perceive the possibility of a change."¹⁵

It seems that the Paris upheaval was partly motivated by the revulsion against the abrasive and ugly aspects of the technetronic age. For refusing to accept material well-being, high consumption, and conspicuous waste as the only worthy goal of human striving, the young generation deserves our sympathy. The immediate effects of that revolt were negative: it resulted in the disruption of the normal, civilized fabric of social life in the loss of General de Gaulle's personal prestige and in general disrespect to established authorities. Perhaps the worst blow was dealt to the universities and the *lycées* whose patent inability to re-establish school discipline and regain respect bodes ill for the future of France. On the material plane, equally grievous losses were inflicted on the country's economy. The three weeks of general strike cost the nation approximately six per cent of annual product. Substantial wage increases granted to the unions generated strong inflationary pressures, caused foreign trade deficit, and undermined the stability of the French franc.

Nevertheless the revolt would not be a total loss, were it to lead to an overhaul of the antiquated French educational system. There are hopeful signs that both the government and the universities have at long last realized the inevitability of change. Shortly after the worst troubles were over, General de Gaulle in a televised speech recognized some of the students' demands for participation in university affairs, for revision of the syllabus, and for the re-orientation of higher education towards more practical tasks and disciplines. In August of last year, the new minister of education, M. Edgar Faure, brought

before the National Assembly a draft of the bill which spells out the reform of universities. He assured the nation that the Fifth Republic would introduce important changes in the present-day system, so as to give the students as well as the faculty an opportunity to participate fully in running the university government. The proposal covers a number of grievances that led to the May troubles. It allows some student participation in university administration, and cuts down the stifling centralization which was the main deficiency of the universities. Under the new law, faculties would be run by elected party committees of students and teachers; the students would have a say in deciding their syllabus and the scope of their examinations. Fresh disorders at the Sorbonne and in some provincial universities seem to indicate that the government reforms are not likely to satisfy the radical students. Nonetheless, the very fact that the new solid pro-government majority resolved to make innovations by introducing popular participation in the universities, in regional administration, and in industry gives some hope that France will set about correcting the nefarious legacy of her past. The atrophy of "les corps intermédiaires", both territorial and occupational, had been France's congenital defect, and as de Tocqueville observed, one among the chief reasons for the downfall of various French governments.¹⁶

In a brief survey of recent developments in the universities of Czechoslovakia and Poland, even a cursory glance at the Eastern European scene will reveal significant differences between the student movement in Western Europe and in these two Slavic countries. In the first place, student manifestations in Prague, in Warsaw, and in other provincial university centres bore none of the symptoms of mass hysteria, wanton violence, and impudent obscenity that marked student activities in Germany and France. On the contrary, the protests were orderly and in earnest and were well attended by both the students and the faculty. Secondly, neither the Polish nor the Czech students ever attacked their professors or the university administration, but in common with the professorial body rose against their oppressive governments and clamoured for the respect of elementary civil and academic liberties. Thirdly, though in opposition to the ruling totalitarian governments, they never expressed any hostility to the socialist system, but wanted only to make it more decent, humane, and acceptable to the people.

During the last decade, the Communist governments in Eastern Europe, although less oppressive than in the 1950s, were becoming more vile, mendacious, and corrupt, and above all patently inept to manage the economy. The passage of time laid bare the mental sterility and the inner rot of a totalitarian

party. "When the communist party became omnipotent, it degenerated into a spoil system which attracted the power thirsty, the greedy, the cowards and the ordinary crooks."¹⁷ This state of the nation was bound to cause widespread dissatisfaction among all, but particularly among the younger generation. Unlike their parents and the middle-aged, who were either too tired or too frightened to revolt, the young people showed little patience with their rulers. When free expression of public opinion is denied, it is usually the writers and the students who first voice the dissent of the captive nation. Thus in Poland and in Czechoslovakia the writers came out first in open revolt against the abuse of an oppressive and stultifying *régime*. Then, inspired by the writers' example, the students staged mass demonstrations. These youngsters, born and raised under Communism, saw clearly a deep gulf between the official Marxist creed and the sordid political practice. They could not help loathing their government for its stupid brutality, its falsehood, and its manifest failure to satisfy the deep longing of the common people for an honest and competent administration, for better living conditions, and for an independent national policy.

Last year the Czech students dared to defy the Novotny Old Guard by organizing a mass demonstration on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. Since January of this year, students have been in the forefront of the popular movement in favour of liberal reforms. They have been giving their whole-hearted support to the reformist leaders within the Czech party, they encouraged them to break off with a sinister past, and they put pressure to bear for more freedom, more decency, and more democracy in Czechoslovakia. Knowing from bitter experience how wicked and tyrannical a revolutionary *régime* can be, the Czech students have been effectively immunized from the revolutionary delirium to which their comrades in Western Europe so easily succumbed. When the notorious Rudi Dutschke came to Prague to spread his revolutionary antics he was simply shrugged off by the students as "absurd" and "comical".¹⁸ Everybody knows how fearless and how steadfast the Czech students were in defence of the newly-won freedom during the days of Soviet armed invasion and afterwards.

The liberal reforms in Czechoslovakia struck a resounding echo in Poland. Last February the members of the Warsaw branch of the Writers Union called an extraordinary meeting and condemned the government for its severe censorship and strict supervision over cultural and artistic activities. They voted a strong resolution which censured the suppression of intellectual freedom as highly detrimental to national culture and indicative of the Com-

minist party's progressive sterility. Several leading writers bitterly assailed the official cultural policy and expressed their sympathy for the students who demonstrated against the removal from the stage of a patriotic drama "The Forefathers". In a gesture of defiance, the meeting sent fraternal greetings to the Union of Czechoslovak Writers.¹⁹ Hardly a week passed when, at the beginning of March, the students at the Warsaw Institute of Technology organized a mass meeting which ended in a riot when police forced the gates of the Institute and tried to break up the meeting. The students resisted police violence; there followed three days of turbulence in Warsaw and in all provincial universities. Street demonstrations and sit-in strikes lasted for almost two weeks. This was the first large-scale rebellion of the Polish students since 1957, when riots broke out following the government's decision to close the students' weekly *Poprostu*. It frightened Gomulka's government, but it failed to topple it because the workers and the general public, though sympathetic with the students, were not resolute enough to lend their active support.

Despite the magnitude of the upheaval, no acts of wanton destruction of property, no outrageous insults, no assaults against persons were ever committed. The student leaders acted responsibly, they called for self-restraint and moderation, and their appeals were heeded by the protesting students. Painfully aware of the political realities in their country, the young Poles made no impossible demands on the authorities. The resolutions passed at the student meetings called only for the release of arrested students, for the punishment of policemen guilty of brutality toward students, for correction of false press reports, and for respect for elementary human liberties. While proclaiming their loyalty to the socialist state, the students demanded the respect for human rights granted by the Polish constitution, and for the recognition of free student political organizations. They also called for a restoration of parliament to its rightful position in the state. They rejected with indignation the odious anti-semitic campaign which the Communist party had launched in a desperate attempt to find a scapegoat for popular discontent.²⁰

A striking feature of the recent student unrest in Poland is the absence of any open or implied criticism, let alone hostility, towards the professorial body and the administration. The students trust their professors and were anxious to heed their advice to manifest their dissent in a peaceable and orderly manner. Professors and students made a common front in defence of the elementary civil and academic freedoms trampled upon by despotic and irresponsible government. More than a hundred Polish university professors, including a brilliant economist, W. Brus, and an eminent philosopher, L. Kola-

kowski, the idol of the Polish students, had been removed from their posts; some of them have left Poland since the demonstrations.

Far from being in any way radical, the students in Eastern Europe are above all inspired by liberal and constitutional ideals and not by any desire for "student power" or "revolution". By a curious reversal of roles it is in Eastern Europe that the values of a humane, free, and rational civil society are most highly appreciated, whereas in the free, affluent countries of the West we observe, to our dismay, the high tide of violent fanaticism, disorder, and unreason.

NOTES

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3. Hilke Schlaeger, "Wenn Pflicht und Gesetz Kollidieren", *Die Zeit*, August 20, 1968.
4. Harold Hurwitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-3.
5. Kai Hermann, "The End of Revolt", *Encounter*, September, 1968, p. 59.
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8. François Bourricaud, *loc cit.*
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13. *Le Monde*, June 12, 1968.
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19. *Survey*, July 1968, Documents: Poland, p. 103.
20. *Kultura*, October, 1968, p. 87-91: "The Declaration of the Student Movement in Poland".