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WITH THIS ISSUE, the seventieth publishing year of the BULLETIN comes to an end. The 1968-69 year will begin in September. In the intervening period, the BULLETIN staff will busy itself with plans to enrich the editorial content of the magazine, broaden its scope, attract additional readers, and lure new advertisers. Suggestions along these lines are always welcome. In the meantime, faithful readers are urged to put their released reading time to good use. Go fishing, that is. Or read a good book.

"We May Yet Not Only Survive, We May Triumph"

Taking the place of her murdered husband, Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses the Class of 1968

THE TRAGIC EVENTS of recent months, starting with the assassination of my late husband, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee, and followed in exactly two months by the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in Los Angeles, California, cause us to realize that the very fabric of which our society is woven is being torn away. These men have been eulogized as great men, as loyal Americans and dedicated servants of humanity, one black and one white, both young men, both devoted husbands and loving fathers. By profession one was a minister who sought to change society by moral persuasion through love and nonviolence, the other was a political leader who sought to change society through the political process. Both methods are necessary and highly legitimate. These two men addressed themselves to the burning issues of our times: they spoke out against great evils in our society: racism, poverty, and war. They were great and effective actors on the stage of history. They played their parts exceedingly well, thus inspiring millions. They are a part of that creative minority which helped to move society forward.

As young people, as students, your lives have been greatly affected by the loss of these champions of freedom, of justice, of human dignity and peace. In a power-drunk world, where means become ends, and violence becomes a favorite pastime, we are swiftly moving toward self-annihilation. Your generation must speak out with righteous indignation against the forces which are seeking to destroy us.

THE CONFLICT between students and administration has often been improperly interpreted by the media, giving the impression that only a few leftist militants are making trouble. This is tantamount to skirting the real issues involved. Today's student is now recognized as a significant political actor with amazing power to influence the course of societies all over the world. In many ways, American students have now, with all their innocence and open generosity, become the prodding conscience to those in power and those aspiring to it. In the United States, candidates for the highest office in the land worry as much about their student support as formerly they concerned themselves with the farm bloc, organized trade union support, or the backing of businessmen. Indeed, the enthusiasm of students in a political cause is a vestment of its legitimacy and honesty. The student crusades behind Senator Eugene McCarthy and the fallen Robert Kennedy created a virtual political miracle by retiring an incumbent president, moving the government to the Paris peace talks, and hopefully, inducing basic revisions in our foreign policy. The political scene in our country has never been so marked by student action, and it is not reckless to predict that this is no aberrant phenomenon but a fundamental shift in social patterns that will distinguish this era from others past. Along with classes and races and conventional pressure groups, generations are now useful and appropriate categories of historical action and understanding. It is a totally novel development and a paradoxical one that students, most of whom have no vote, emerge as a formidable political force for progressive change.

If student action has been dramatic in the United States, its impact has been thunderous in Europe. In France, it was the spark that ignited a political conflagration engulfing the whole society and forcing it to confront long-delayed issues of economic justice and real political freedom. There, too, a government pursued foreign and military policies on the backs of its citizens. In Czechoslovakia the young have stimulated far-reaching developments that will in the end have irrevocably altered the face of Eastern Europe, another moment in the long struggle to liberate it from dogma.

How can we explain the depth and scope of the student movements and the social upheavals they evoke? I think it must be seen that in the swiftly evolving technological societies of today, students, faculty and all intellectuals are playing a new role. They are not only contributors, as in the past, of ideas and new concepts to the masses, no longer merely rationalizers of the status quo, but in the nature of modern industrial society they have become a mass force themselves. They count, they are crucial. As the old union song has it, without their brain and muscle

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not a single wheel can turn. Mostly of course, their brain. . . .

Therefore, and beyond this, I think, the students of today are the sensitive edge of society that is pressing against the dehumanizing elements of technocracy. Human personality and values have been in a losing war with the impersonal operation of a rapidly evolving, complex society. We are a nation incomparable in wealth and power, but impoverished spiritually and psychologically. Our activities generate a bewildering array of material goods and no satisfactions. Our machines have grown so large that we have become small. We no longer ask for what purpose they are made. Instead of a flowering of personality, with the decrease in heavy labor there is such a loss of identity and growth of alienation that the distinctiveness of individuals has become blurred and homogenized. My husband frequently warned us of a trend toward what he called the "thingification" of people, a thing-centered rather than a person-centered society.

Why have students been more sensitive to this assault on personality? This generation is practically the first to be brought up in the modern child-rearing philosophy according to which each child is an individual. They were encouraged and stimulated to be independent, assertive and individually creative. This was the thesis of countless child-rearing books. It may be Doctor Spock's real conspiracy.

Parents did the job well. Children no longer looked upon authority as sacred and beyond criticism, or upon themselves as submissive and conformist. Yet when they moved into the larger society, it had less room for individuals. It had computer numbers for each and rules old men had made in a distant past. When they became restive, they found themselves locked in a philosophical cage of prejudices and rigid standards. Finally, a clash was inevitable between their creative drive and the stultifying system. The student protest is a demand for decent human values and individual expression, as the impersonal and increasingly computerized society intensifies regimentation and standardization in people and things in the home, school, office, in recreation and culture. As an additional irritant, the intellectual maturity of young people is incomparably greater in this generation than in the past, but they, like the bourgeoisie in pre-revolutionary France, are excluded from any participation in decision-making. These are some of the conflicts in their lives—in all of our lives.

In this period of social, political, economic and religious transformation, not one of us can be spared the luxury of withdrawing from the arena of action. As members of the family of mankind we have an inherent moral responsibility to become participants in the greatest creative venture in the history of our world: that of remaking, reshaping, yes, restructuring our whole world order. Each one of us is being called to help save our society and the world from destruction.

Legitimate questions may be raised about students' tactics and forms of protest. However, it would be folly to overlook the prophetic essence in the demands they are voicing. Most especially, it is unseemly for us to think that the agitation in Prague is beneficial and that the agitators at home should simply and quickly shape up. Some of the objectives of the newly organized young may be immature and even somewhat divorced from realities, but there is nothing childish about their focus on the horrors of war and barbarities of race prejudice and inequality that seam and scar our society. The rational essence in their protest has aroused sympathetic chords in large elements of the population who also want an end to war, to inequality and the fragmentation of personality.

None of us wants to live in a computer dynasty as programmed people. We must all begin to question the experts. They have not really been right. No abundance of material goods can compensate for the death of individuality and personal creativity. This, it seems to me, is what student protest is saying and I am listening with an open mind because I have children who will live their lives in the emerging society and it matters deeply to me how they will live.

FOR ME, as for millions of black Americans, there is a special dimension to our national crisis. We are not only caught up in all the evils of contemporary society, we are its lowest and most deprived component. For most of us this is not a society of abundance but a society of want. We are not newly victimized by the loss of identity and alienation. We have suffered an imposed heritage of exclusion and frustration for generations. Our future is doubly bleak as we face the unabated racism and deepened deprivation reserved for black Americans.

It is extraordinary how well poverty has been concealed in the United States. For 25 years or more, government leaders have boasted of economic progress and the miracles of production the nation accomplished. Yet few people have heard the groans of 35 million poor, black and white. Black youth are commonly depicted today as dangerous, carrying firebombs in their hands and hatred in their hearts. Who noticed before the fact that their hands were idle, their pockets empty, their hopes frustrated and their hearts broken by indifference and contempt? Everyone is aware that a relatively few young Negroes have resorted to violence. But how many know that the unemployment rate for Negro youth in major urban centers has soared to between 35 and 50 percent? They live in squalor in slums, they are cheated in education, they cannot hope for normal married lives, and they can expect more diseases and earlier death than their white counterparts.

To be Negro in the United States is to be the victim of a system of deprival in a context of personal humiliation. I do not speak impersonally. I was reared in second-class citizenship and have known the sting of humiliation in countless days of my life.

The Poor People's Campaign in Washington was con-

ceived by my late husband and the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as America's last hope to deal with the twin problems of racism and poverty. The poor in this nation are entitled to a job or an income.

Few people realize that our present tax and welfare structure is such as to encourage the wealthy to speculate and the poor to vegetate. If a rich man wants to speculate, he is encouraged by preferential capital gains and loss provisions which give him a 25 percent cushion against losses and take less than half as much on his normal earnings. But if a poor man on relief took a part-time job, he had until very recently to pay a 100 percent tax on his earnings in the shape of dollar-for-dollar reduction in his relief allowance. Even now, after a belated reform in the welfare system, a poor man on relief after his first $30 a month in extra earnings must turn back to the treasury 70 cents on the dollar, while the rich man need pay the treasury only 25 cents of every dollar he wins on the market, even when his normal income tax rate is more than 50 percent. Such is the topsy-turvy morality of the internal revenue laws.

Our Congress passes laws that subsidize corporations, farms, oil companies, airlines, and houses for suburbia, but when they turn their attention to the poor they suddenly become concerned about balancing the budget and cut back on funds for Headstart, Medicare and mental health appropriations. The most tragic of these cuts is the welfare section to the social security amendments, which freezes federal funds for millions of needy children who are desperately poor but who do not receive public assistance. It forces mothers to leave their children and accept work or training, leaving their children to grow up in the streets as tomorrow's social problems.

The accented oppression of the Negro has given rise to a difference in the demands and goals of Negro students from those of white students. Negroes have quantitative demands; their emphasis is on jobs and opportunities to ensure elementary survival and progress. But they also have qualitative demands. And here the most hopeful alliance is forged between black and white. For the white student already possessing the material advantages puts perhaps greater emphasis on freedom from psychological taboos, participation in decision-making and creative restructuring of the social system. Each is legitimate and complements the other.

I am optimistic about today's student. He is a vital force and on the whole a socially constructive one. No other white group in our society is as relatively free of racist poison and materialistic greed. No other group is more committed in its implacable hostility to the terrible war we are fighting against a small and outclassed people. The generation gap is a positive thing if it separates evil ideologies and customs of the past from the freedom spirit that animates much of the contemporary student movement. The young understand this society better than their elders think, and better perhaps even than their elders themselves. They listen to the preachments of authority on behalf of order against violence. And they know that the order evoked has been the very order which has done systematic violence to the poor and the colored for centuries. That violence is still being done today, in obviously cruel as well as in subtle ways. And so I must say, that many of the young feel, as I do, that official responses to the frightful and to the personally painful assassinations of these past months have been inadequate. Has not power heard the grim tidings? The anguish from the ghettos, the rural slums, the battlefields abroad? The violence which periodically shocks us is a reflection of the violence to which we have become immune. It is a reflection of the violence our media celebrate. I say, with all due respect to the office of the President of the United States, that even intense prayer and a new commission of notables will not ease the violence in our lives—though acting forthrightly on the recommendations of the Kerner Commission Report might help.

This is no time for business as usual, and strengthening the police is business as usual—a tried and false answer.

In the passions of recent weeks, I sometimes think that the best of our young do not always understand the extent to which our great universities are authentically the most liberal of our institutions. But the universities too must face up to some very hard questions they have thus far avoided.

This war, which is the most cruel and evil war in our history, must come to an end. I call upon the President of the United States to stop the bombing in Vietnam now. This war and the cries of the hungry, and the young who have made these their causes, however, will not let them rest—and that is good.

THERE IS REASON TO HOPE and to struggle if young people continue to hold high the banner of freedom. They have made mistakes and will make more, but the older generation has failed America dismally, and if it is discredited it has earned its disrepute. It is time for both fresh ideas and new leadership to come forth, because without it our society is on sinking sand. Historians of the future may record that the alliance of the civil rights movement with the student movement that began in the late 1950's and matured into broad political and social action in the 60's was the salvation of the nation. I am a religious person in the most unqualified sense of the word but I will say emphatically that there is more moral vitality and honest searching for values of life animating the campuses today than can be found in our churches.

The world is in dire need of a spiritual awakening which will make those eternal values of love, justice, mercy and peace meaningful in our time.

Finally, in struggling to give meaning to your own lives, as students you are preserving the best in our traditions and are breaking new ground in your restless search for truth. With this creative force to inspire all of us we may yet not only survive—we may triumph.