

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

BWB-6
University Crisis

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53 Bonn
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Mr. Richard H. Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Nolte:

My six-year-old daughter Elizabeth revealed to me at the lunch table this week that she doesn't plan to be a student. "But you have to go to the university so you can learn," I insisted, somewhat surprised by her comment. "Oh no, Mommy," she replied confidently, "students don't do anything but march through the streets and carry signs." Too quickly, perhaps showing that I didn't approve of her statement, I asked where she'd heard that...at our next-door neighbors', a middle-class German family in which the father is an accountant in the city finance office? Or from the apolitical medical student upstairs who might have jokingly made a similar remark? "I know it myself," she retorted, "from books and from television."

Her guileless comment illustrates the chasm that still exists between student activists and the West German population, ergo also the political parties, a chasm which neither side seems able, or willing, to span.

"You have to be carefully taught," go the lyrics to a Rodgers and Hammerstein song about racism, and German schoolchildren are beginning to learn about the contemporary student stereotype. A student newspaper in Munich recently asked ten and eleven-year-old elementary school pupils to draw pictures and describe in words their image of "the students." Their pictures showed figures with beards, huge ties, dirty trousers, some carrying a guitar or riding a bicycle. All drew in placards with such slogans as "Freedom for the CSSR," "Give Us More Study Room" or "Mao! Mao!" The sentences underneath explained that "the student is a person who sometimes protests very brutally against politics" or "the student is a crazy person, but he is not dumb, he is for politics." One youngster, who may have heard his parents pooh-pooh the students' dissatisfaction as a temporary phenomenon, wrote on his picture of a student with Mao-poster: "A young, intelligent student of today, who states his opinion in public. When he has reached his goal, he will become a normal citizen."

Yes, and so will the American Negro.

It would be overdrawing the West German educational crisis to suggest that the student situation here is as dismal as that of the black race in

in the United States, but there are some parallels in the attitudes and actions of moderates, militants and governments.

There is the same indecisiveness and lack of parliamentary action on the part of government, the same affection for stopgap, less expensive measures which merely postpone attacking the root issues. The university administrators offer the same mealy-mouthed protestations in support of free education that the Negro heard in civil rights promises for years from city and state officials, promises that evaporate like soap bubbles when exposed to the harsh air of so-called political expediency. And just as American judges and police find it easier to lay down the law--to the full limits--when a defendant is black, the West German judges and police extend like favoritism to the students.

Among the moderate students and liberal professors, there is the disunity and perplexity when forced to defend a more patient course that characterized the disintegration of moderate black leadership in the States. Among the radicals, there is the same ugly intolerance and cruel name-calling for moderate or liberal voices.

America's racial time-bomb had been ticking for a century before it exploded in the long hot summer of 1967. The West German educational time-bomb has a shorter fuse, since the students embraced university reform as their theme only ten years ago. Fanned this winter, however, by the leftist students who have temporarily abandoned their scatter-gun approach to revolution (protests against the war in Vietnam, the conservative Springer press, NATO, the Greek military regime), the time-bomb is sputtering dangerously close to university breakdown in Berlin, Heidelberg and Frankfurt, with sympathy strikes, lecture boycotts and protest demonstrations in several other West German institutions.

The tension is erupting at a time when six of the nation's eleven states are discussing reform proposals, most of them grounded in the SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund) and VDS (Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften or National Student Union) papers of 1961 and 1962 which would reduce the power of the professors and give students a greater voice in administration and curriculum decisions.

At Berlin's Free University, where the spark of student and professor cooperation was first lit at its post-war foundation, then damped under the depersonalized demands of a mass university, the philosophy, Germanistic, sociology, journalism and law students now are petitioning for new statutes similar to the tri-parity reforms achieved by the Otto Suhr political science institute last summer.

Militant students sounded the battle cry in fiery language in November: "We have wasted enough time with reformatory busy work on co-determination, statute changes and tri-parity," read one of the flyers from the SDS-controlled student government. "It is time to use our productive strength in revolutionary fashion." Threatening "individual terror," the flyer said stone-throwing and setting the homes of professors on fire were acceptable tactical measures.

At the Berlin Film and Television Academy a month later, striking students occupied the building to protest the expulsion of 18 students who had participated in an earlier occupation during the campaign against the emergency laws. After sporadic strikes and occupation of the philosophy institute at the Free University, the dean of the philosophy faculty closed down classes temporarily, and accused the militant students of "terror tactics" in trying to force professors and assistants to sign radical reform measures before allowing them to enter the classroom.

Non-striking students slugged their way into the lecture halls for several days last week at the FU law faculty, until Dean Klemens Pleyer finally cancelled classes for a week, protesting: "I am at the end. No one can hold out in this situation. My colleagues and I can't research and teach, and at the same time defend ourselves against radical students." The students, on the other hand, accuse the professors and assistants of resorting to disciplinary tactics, or closing the institutes, when they run out of arguments against reform. Scoffed a student representative: "This is a declaration of bankruptcy for the authority of the faculty."

FU students now are voting on a university-wide strike to protest the rector's disciplinary charges against 14 students who took part in the November philosophy faculty occupation. The student argument--and moderates are just as upset as militants--is that the university administration is attempting to single out and expel the militant student leaders on political grounds. (Indeed, SDS leader Peter Gaeng was summarily removed from his post as assistant in the philosophy seminar after the disciplinary action was introduced.) The party-allied Social Democrat university group protested against the rector's disciplinary charges as a "misuse of disciplinary manipulation" in a political discussion: "We recognize the student strike as a justifiable measure for declaring solidarity with the accused students and to deflect the threatened expulsions."

Signs posted now throughout the FU campus warn: "Heute: Relegation--Morgen: Liquidation--Besser: Revolution" (Today: Expulsion--Tomorrow: Liquidation--Better: Revolution).

At the Otto Suhr Institute, where students, assistants and professors worked together to push through the tri-parity statutes that were first rejected by the FU Academic Senate--where autocratic professors were loath to give the students a stronger voice--then accepted by the West Berlin political senate, the students want still more power.

"The administration is using tri-parity to integrate us into the system," complained Lutz Rininsland, a student reformer who claims some promised reforms are now being pushed under the rug. "We still need to make changes in the examination system, in the methods of instruction and in the curriculum."

What the radical students want is an autonomy that would seem utopian by American standards, but which might be practicable under the German educational tradition, where students are allowed far more freedom and



Berlin FU students occupied the Germanistics seminar, declared "books are collective property" (sign on bookshelves at right), and dubbed it the "Rosa Luxemburg Institute," honoring Germany's martyr to socialism.

(Klaus Mehner photo)

independence of study, with an examination only at the end of five or six years of study.

"We think the exams, as they now are, are not adequate for a self-governing institution," explained Rininsland. "I'm now autonomous for four or five years in my studies; why should I submit to an examination at the end which only tests the professors' special interests? It should be a self-examination as well. That's very important for us."

The OSI students also want university recognition of, and accreditation for, discussion groups, workshops and seminars which the students themselves schedule and conduct. In one seminar at OSI this semester (subject: The Contribution of Scientific Theory to the Understanding of Democracy), the professor closed the seminar because he disagreed with the majority of students on how the work should be conducted. "The professor said it was fine for the work groups to say what themes should be covered, but that he was responsible for the scientific leadership and continuation," said Rininsland. "He claimed he could not pass on this responsibility to others, even if the majority of students did not share his views." The OSI governing council, which arbitrated the dispute, supported the students' assumption of responsibility for the seminar discussion, but would not agree to credit the course.

In curriculum planning, the OSI reformers want the entire student body of the institute, not just their elected representatives, to take part. "If just the representatives do it, the rest of the students won't realize they have to think about it." The radical students want more courses which show the interrelation of political subjects--not a course on interior politics, another on foreign politics, but broader themes such as "Fascist Restoration in the Federal Republic," "Neo-Imperialism," "Neo-Colonialism," in which sociologists, economists, and political scientists approach the subject from their disciplines.

"We also need to explore more professional opportunities," said Rininsland, a leftist who fears--as many radical students do--that the establishment may punish him for his political views when he begins to look for a job. "We're trying now to syndicalize the professions, to make it possible for leftists to work together in a collective after they leave the university so they won't be compelled to slide out of the movement. This isn't easy; it will take imagination and planning."

"The original statutes were necessary," concluded Rininsland, "but we can't stop there with reforms. It's not that the professors and assistants say our proposals are nonsense...their excuse is this or that technical reason, and they say, 'wait, wait.'"

After ten years of "wait," the radical students are fed up--some SDS members admit openly that their plan is to blow the university system sky-high. Even the moderates agree that the reform outlook is dreary. "As far as student unrest is concerned," said Karl Heinz Schmidt, the university secretary for the Evangelical Student Association, "things are going to get worse before they get better. With more and more young people wanting

to enter the university, yet being turned away because there's no place, those who are refused will join the radical organizations."

Government statisticians have warned of the enrollment boom for several years, but the states are reacting only now, with too little, too late. In ten years, one of every two students who has received his Abitur and is entitled to a university education will be refused for lack of space. "It just isn't possible for the states to catch up now," said Schmidt, "they're far too far behind."

"One can be of different opinions about the will toward reform among the universities," wrote education specialist Hilke Schlaeger in Die Zeit, "but that doesn't change the fact that the universities' accusation--that the states demand reforms and will not pay for them--is justified."

Quoting a professor from SPD-governed Hesse, Miss Schlaeger's article continued: "How nicely a sentence reads in the action program of the SPD that the citizens should not be shocked at the high investments that are necessary for further construction and operation of the universities. How bitter it is for us to realize that it is the politicians who are far more frightened than the citizens. Despite all our warnings and all our urgings, there's been an attempt to blame the inadequate educational capacity and the inoptimal educational climate on the university structure and the inadequate will for reform within the universities. Now, when the student unrest is growing again, the states' failure to create the necessary work places for students and the further training of academic instructors will cause a grave crisis. I believe it will then be clear just where the fault lies."

In Hesse, reputedly West Germany's most progressive state in terms of education, the University of Giessen proposed a reform model for its medical faculty in 1963 which the parliament and public heartily greeted--but have since neglected to pay for. The \$150 million plan, in three building periods, would have been built and financed between 1963 and 1978. In 1969, not even the first building level (which had a completion date of 1965) is finished. Since the new community clinics have not been built, expensive equipment must be purchased twice for the widely-separate installations; the "instruction at the patient's bed," a key part of the reform, annoys the patients because the rooms are too small. The state annual budget has met barely half the called-for investment each year.

"An industrial factory which had been managed the way the money-men manage the universities would have gone bankrupt long ago," said one Giessen professor of medicine. His colleague added: "The government uses the argument between students and professors for its own purposes; it decreases the budget."

The question of money and what kind of teacher education the state should provide brought Frankfurt students out on strike in November and December. Remarkably, it was not the SDS radicals but the usually apolitical education students who raised a cry of angry protest at the reform plan offered by Hesse's Minister of Culture Ernst Schuette. Dr. Schuette's

proposal, now being considered by the Hesse state parliament, would require only six semesters of study in the education department, paring down the credit hours in basic psychology, education, sociology and politics. Dr. Schuette needs teachers quickly to relieve the understaffed elementary schools, and the reform proposal would also allow him more flexibility in teacher placement--he could assign teachers who had been trained for elementary instruction into junior high classes.

Dr. Schuette's regressive kind of reform is not what the students had in mind. They argue, quite logically I think, that they cannot teach youngsters to be productive citizens if they themselves are not allowed to study sociology and history to learn the relationships between school, education and society. They want a minimal study program of eight semesters.

In December the Frankfurt sociology students voted solidarity with the education students against Dr. Schuette's "technocratic" reform. Declaring "the university belongs to us!" they went on strike, occupied the sociology seminar and renamed it the "Spartacus Seminar" in honor of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The protest strike spread to the faculties of law, Germanistics, English and history.

"For the time being we have no other choice but to criticize our own education," said Thomas Schmid, a Germanistics student, "because we know that our instructors have abdicated this task...either our cultural bureaucracy is not able to recognize the necessity of genuine reforms or it intentionally does not support the education of citizens with a critical consciousness."

The strike was no vacation for these students who are seriously concerned about what form the educational reform may take--on the contrary, they formed work groups and discussion seminars on their own to continue their studies independently. Several assistants and professors joined the non-accredited sessions. "For years we pursued our various studies alongside each other, but separately," said Schmid. "With the strike we've now finally found a basis for the necessary cooperation and work together."

The students continued to boycott lectures after the Christmas vacation, but turned out, two thousand strong, to confront Dr. Schuette at a meeting on 8 January to discuss his reform proposal. Dr. Schuette won no points for eloquence in defense of his program, but neither were any points for democratic tolerance to be awarded to the radical students, led by former SDS national chairman K. D. Wolff and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, now a Frankfurt sociology student. Refusing to allow Dr. Schuette to answer questions on his reforms, they successfully disrupted the meeting and antagonized the guest speaker with other questions: why the "pogrom baiting" of the university rector who threatened to send police to break up the occupation of the sociology institute? why does the Social Democratic party propose a new law on preventive detention, which the radical students fear can be used to legally excuse the government's jailing of political opposition? (Prominent judges have already warned that the issue smacks of Nazi tactics.)



Education and sociology students from the Frankfurt university surround Dr. Ernst Schuette as he attempts to leave the discussion on his reform measures. Daniel Cohn-Bendit gestures toward the angered Culture Minister.

(dpa photo)

When Cohn-Bendit abruptly told Dr. Schuette that the Frankfurt students would continue to strike "until you take back your accursed fascist methods," the minister of culture stepped away from the microphone and refused to continue the discussion. Making his way to the exit, he was surrounded by a sea of students who chanted that he should stay...and one student told him to "please excuse us...all students are not like this."

After the Frankfurt debacle, Dr. Schuette first refused to attempt any further discussions with education students, then relented and agreed to meet striking students in Giessen a few days later. Here the moderate students held the SDS radicals in check, and the minister explained further his reform philosophy--his conviction that students' suggestions would be considered in the reform proposal, his disappointment that some professors fail to support his six-semester program (for some it is merely a prestige matter, he said), his explanation that the scientific council suggests other study programs be cut to six semesters (therefore the education students need not feel punished), and his assurance that post-graduate study programs will be increased. The Hesse parliament, said Dr. Schuette, will try its best to increase cultural spending more quickly than other parts of the state budget--but social, health, security, legal and traffic demands must also be financed.

Dr. Schuette's explanations, which he doubtless finds plausible, sound to me dangerously like a compromise solution that would be a short-term antidote, but a long-term poison.

The most brutal illustration of confrontation instead of communication occurred on 10 January in Heidelberg, where 70 helmeted policemen, 25 inspectors and a police dog burst into the university student council headquarters to arrest five radical students who had not appeared for their December hearing on charges of disturbing the peace (the charges were from an earlier political demonstration). Admittedly the five students had offered themselves up to the authorities a few days earlier...but in the midst of two thousand other students, and the Heidelberg police didn't chance the arrest then.

They waited until the early morning hours to pounce upon the students, who they knew were being sheltered in the student council building. Waking first a student council officer on the first floor of the building, the police refused his offer of keys to the door, stomped upstairs to the attic, broke through the door with axes and dragged out the five students. They also arrested seven more, who police said tried to protect the five. But eyewitnesses, journalists as well as students, said that the students offered no resistance, although they were beaten by the police and dragged bodily down the stairs. The chief of police and the state attorney were there to watch the show.

Shocked reaction to the Heidelberg incident sparked sympathy strikes and protest demonstrations at Marburg, Tuebingen, Stuttgart and Freiburg. In Marburg students occupied the political science and sociology seminars and set up work groups to discuss the self-organization of the teaching program. The students justified their strike as a protest against the



Prelude to the police brutality in the student council headquarters at Heidelberg was this demonstration in the "justice campaign" of the SDS and the student council. Some 2,000 demonstrators marched through the snowy streets of the old city, among them the five students who were under police summons--and later arrested in the student council building.

(dpa photo)

"de-democratization process of the society," which they say is evidenced in the universities through increasing pressures toward reducing the semesters of study, reducing the number of students, and cuts in the budgets for research.

Obviously, reform is desperately needed at the 582-year-old Ruprecht-Karl University of Heidelberg. Although the student-hated numerus clausus, a system of entrance exams, has been introduced in medicine, natural science and the philosophy faculties, the Heidelberg university is still bursting at the seams--12,000 are enrolled in a physical plant intended for less than 6,000. The national average for university overcrowding is 32 percent, but at Heidelberg it is 53 percent.

Student groups throughout the nation called for the resignation of the Baden-Wuerttemberg interior minister, Walter Klause, after he announced support of the Heidelberg police measures. (If "the establishment" would win back the confidence of its disillusioned youth, why does it refuse to condemn such blatant extremes as this within its own ranks?) But the state parliament stood behind Klause, and the Heidelberg rector threatened to close the university if the unrest continued. The political science institute, occupied earlier this week, has already been closed by its dean. The Heidelberg student council announced their intention to occupy the university and take over the teaching program if the rector made good his threat.

Fearful of losing a semester's credits if the universities are closed, the moderate students at Heidelberg and Freiburg showed new determination to fight the militant radicals. "Fellow students," a flyer distributed in Heidelberg this week said, "protect the continuation of the teaching program, prevent the disruption of the seminars and lectures! Therefore, go to the Teach-ins, state your opinions, declare solidarity against the SDS."

A similar flyer from moderates at Freiburg warned: "A disrupted university will increase the power of the state and support its methods of law and order. The chasm between professors and students will be deepened. This benefits the authoritarian bureaucracy and demolishes the university."

The brutality on both sides is deplorable, and the radical students cannot claim a lily-white record. As Countess Marion Doenhoff, editor of Die Zeit, points out this week: "In Tuebingen three professors are sick who could no longer endure the constant strain, the brutal pamphlets, the provocations and threatening letters. There is no university today which is not missing docents who have suffered heart attacks or circulatory illnesses."

Willy Brandt's Social Democratic party made a laudable attempt to create lines of communication to the rebellious youth last weekend at a Youth Congress. The elite of the party, including the fevered Brandt who took to his bed afterward with pleurisy, were on hand for two days to answer questions and discuss the SPD plan for education reform. But even this attempt was a failure before it began, and the fault can, again, be attributed to both the radical students and the party.

Because of their reputation for disturbances and protest, the far-left SDS, the Liberaler Studentenbund and the Humanistische Studenten Union received no invitations to the congress. Professional youth group functionaries, such as Boy Scout leaders and the leaders of the Bundesjugendring, received four-fifths of the 500 invitation cards. The national student union had a packet of thirty, and the SPD-supported student groups (Falkens, Young Socialists and the far-left Social Democratic Students) received the remainder of the invitations. Invited or not, the radicals were present--former SDS national chairman Wolff got in with a student union invitation, and through crafty election tactics even won a seat on the conference council (but on the second day he didn't show up).

Leftist students complain that such a conference is useless if the politicians bar from discussion the very elements who are fomenting the student unrest--the SPD counters that the radicals' past performances indicate they refuse any offer of dialogue, so they will talk with those who are still willing to talk.

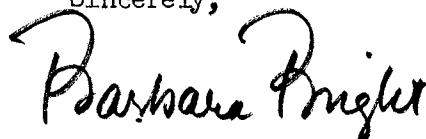
"By holding a national conference with lots of publicity, the SPD was only interested in polishing its political image," complained a leftist student, "hoping to get liberal votes this year as 'the party who can talk to the students.' If they were really interested in setting up a dialogue, why don't they do the same thing on a smaller scale, but down at the local level where it counts."

I can't predict what the next weeks will bring, but the battle lines seem to be moving forward. Interior Minister Ernst Benda wants to suspend government scholarships for all students who "consciously fight against the free democratic basic order." The national student union president said his organization condones the occupation of institutes and rectorates as legal methods for student protests, and also supports other militant actions.

Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger said yesterday that state and university authorities should use tougher measures against student demonstrators: "They are destroyers, cold-blooded revolutionaries, who have developed an entire strategy and tactic of revolution at the universities...We must finally stop using unctuous words with them."

He's right at least about the "unctuous words"--the greasy affectations, the insincerity of the reform promises is just what brought about the rebellion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Bright'. The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Barbara' being more prominent and the last name 'Bright' following in a similar style.

Barbara Bright