

- Absence of standards is the cause of all kinds of confusion.

THE COURAGE TO SAY – NO!

Barbara Tuchman, Pulitzer Prize winner in 1963 for "Guns of August," in an address before a Chicago conference of the Association of Higher Education, said what should have been said long ago.

"Of all the ills that our poor criticized, analyzed, sociologized society is heir to, the focal one, it seems to me, from which so much of our uneasiness and confusion derive, is the absence of standards. We are too unsure of ourselves to assert them, to stick by them, if necessary in the case of persons who occupy positions of authority, to impose them. We seem to be afflicted by a widespread and eroding reluctance to take any stand on any values, moral, behavioral, or esthetic. Everyone is afraid to call anything wrong, or vulgar, or fraudulent, or just bad taste or bad manners.

"In the turmoils at Berkeley, at least as regards the

filthy speech demonstrations, there was a missed opportunity . . . for a hearty, emphatic and unmistakable 'No!' backed up by sanctions. Why? Because the act, even if intended as a demonstration of principle, was in this case, like any indecent exposure, simply offensive . . . and must be curtailed.

". . . if the educated man is not willing to express standards, if he cannot show that he has them and applies them, what then is education for . . . If at maturity he is not willing to express judgment on matters of policy or taste or morals, if at 50 he does not believe that he has acquired more wisdom and informed experience than is possessed by the student at 20, then he is saying in effect that education has been a failure."

The tragedy is that there are not enough persons ready to take a strong stand when canons of good taste are violated. — *From C.U. Business, April, 1967.*