

REVOLT AGAINST THE REVOLTERS

It was just a year ago when the first major student revolt racked the slumbering bureaucracy of New York's Columbia University. In the 12 months since that explosion, a wave of youthful rebellion has swept across the land, disrupting university life and claiming front-page headlines from Boston to Berkeley.

Now, suddenly, the headlines are changing:

- At Harvard, five agitators are arrested and received jail sentences of up to a year.

- At Columbia, two clergymen who supported dissenting students are fired.

- At a number of other institutions, conservative students are forming vigilante groups to combat disorders on campus.

- At the White House, President Nixon officially condemns student disorders while the Department of Health, Education and Wel-

fare works on a program for helping college administrations with the problem.

- In Washington and several state capitals, legislators are drafting bills to suppress unrest and punish violators.

The mood of America is no longer one of the usual adult tolerance toward adolescent high-jinks. A backlash against all the campus uprisings of the past year is setting in and, in some instances, threatening to reach the same degree of blind excess that student extremists themselves have achieved.

"The revolt against the revolters is in full swing," notes educator and columnist Max Lerner.

The participants in this counter-revolt, of course, have varying goals; they range from moderate student and faculty groups that simply want the demonstrators to tone down their tactics to stern conservative elements that want to bear down with

punitive laws and financial sanctions.

If the mounting backlash movement has one symbolic figure, it is S. I. Hayakawa, the celebrated semanticist and the acting president of embattled San Francisco State College. He is the unsettling image of the new college president — driving to work every day preceded and followed by police cars.

Hayakawa realized early that SF State was, in a sense, like Vietnam — both sides were using it as a testing ground for the “war of liberation.” He was quick to use, and is quick to defend, force.

He is weary, he says, “of liberals who feel it’s terrible to have a show of force on campus. When President Eisenhower used Federal troops to open up schools in Little Rock, the liberals didn’t squawk at all. Whether to protect the liberty of white people or the liberty of black people, you ultimately have to use force. And I, for one, am not going to hesitate to use it.”

While the rebellion at SF State was still in full flower,

Notre Dame president, the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, issued an ultimatum to his students that has become a sort of rallying cry for conservatives. Extremists, he warned, would be given 15 minutes to reconsider their actions. If they persisted they would be suspended, then expelled and, if necessary, arrested.

The hard-line approach is paying off — at least for some administrators. At the University of Texas, board of regents chairman Frank Erwin, who last spring called rebellious students “dirty nothings,” was reappointed despite a poll showing that only 23 per cent of the students and 40 per cent of the faculty favored the reappointment.

Students at some colleges have acted in anticipation of future disturbances. Ten thousand Michigan State students have signed a petition against radical dissent. Bands of neatly dressed undergraduates have been showing up at demonstrations to form cordons against rioters and, in some cases,

to stage counter-demonstrations.

If the backlash were confined to the campus, moderates agree that there would be no cause for worry. After all, protest, and reaction to it, are as old as education. In 1766, a Harvard student named Asa Dunbar staged an "eat-out" because, as his slogan proclaimed, "our butter stinketh."

But lawmakers, too, are jumping into the fray. There are already two Federal laws, passed last year, to curb disturbances. Neither has been enforced, but both hang threats over the heads of demonstrators.

One law directs a university to hold hearings for students accused of violating regulations in disrupting order and, if the students are found guilty, to deny them further Federal aid money. The other cuts off Federal aid to any student convicted in a regular court of illegally disrupting his school. Opponents of the laws argue that they are discriminatory against the poor and, once enforced, would

provide a whole new basis for protests.

More disturbing are the bills that are currently before more than a score of state legislatures. The Wisconsin Assembly, for instance, is debating 16 bills, which would do everything from abolishing the university's tenure system (so uncooperative faculty members could be fired) to levying a \$500 fine and/or a six-month prison sentence on any student who returns to the grounds of a school from which he has been expelled for participating in campus disorders.

The California legislature is faced with 50 bills. One that was recently introduced would allow school administrators to ban loudspeakers from the campus and bar anyone they think might create a disturbance — a proposal that implies not only conviction before commission, but the prohibition of newsmen from state campuses.

Many moderates are alarmed by the prospect of legislative crackdowns. "New laws will just contribute to

the polarization of left and right," predicts a UCLA student who has been trying to keep to the middle ground. "They force the mid-left and the mid-right to make a choice, and so depopulate the center of its buffers. This is where the danger lies."

Even so, some politicians have found it expedient to espouse the cause of student repression. California Gov. Ronald Reagan, who has constantly conjured up images of "guerilla warfare" and a nation-wide Communist conspiracy, is considered virtually unbeatable in his bid for reelection next year. ("We can't hope to out-bayonet Reagan," says one prospective challenger.)

Lesser luminaries have used the issue to solidify their hometown power bases. "I walk down the street back home," reports a Wisconsin state senator, "and people

come up to me and start cursing the damn university. They're angry — not a little angry, real angry. The middle class used to be sympathetic to students. No more."

A recent Gallup Poll showed that 80 per cent of the people in the United States favor expulsion of — and suspension of Federal aid to — campus lawbreakers. Seventy per cent think that students should not have a greater say in running colleges.

But the danger with backlash is always that it will lash too hard and in the end be self-defeating. Indeed, the most radical of the demonstrators want nothing more than severe repression. It makes underdog martyrs of them and, by engaging the sympathies of moderates, gives added momentum to their cause. — *From Variety.*