

Youth On The Rampage - An Imperative

IF ONLY a handful heeded the "Handwriting on the wall," it was so because it was cryptic. Normally society is myopic. It is concerned only with its immediate needs. It might be dynamic on the surface but internally it is lethargic. Social complacency is the by-product of routine, of established norms of conduct, of traditions, of the social order itself. Only when its serene assuredness is rudely shaken will society really open its eyes and adjust the focus of its attention beyond the tip of its nose. Only then will that cryptic message on the wall be attended to.

That script on the wall has been there for quite a while. Through the years social ills have accumulated and grown in proportion to the explosion of population. Feeble attempts to cure them have simply expanded their number, the kind of solutions and the way they were applied only introduced new problems. The weakness lies in the haphazard adoption of half measures, if at all. For established norms, like beaten paths, only lead us back to where we started. Added to this is the natural desire of those who are already established to assume a vested interest. The tendency then is to be conservative if only to retain the advantage through the status quo. And how many of us are truly imbued with the crusading spirit?

THE ESSENTIAL COMBINATION

That is why the young people in ferment are most welcome in our kind of society today. In fact, the phenomenon is a built-in mechanism for the preservation of society itself. Like the tip of a wedge, student activism may yet lead us to finally make a breakthrough. The feebleness of earlier attempts may yet acquire a fresh vigor enough. To propel the ramrod in order to make a breach.

Is it possible for youth in rebellion and the Establishment to look straight in each other's eye and discover that mutually there is an urgent need for each other? Henry Ford II in his "The Human Environment and Business" Young People, the "Establishment" and the Quality of Life — Reader's Digest, Vol. 15 No. 89, August 1970) gives us an incisive analysis of the possibility of establishing rapport between the two. What is required of these two factions in society is to realize the urgency of collaboration.

First of all, it must be realized that student militancy is only the visible aspect of a more massive challenge to the present order of things. This is so because theirs is more idealistic than materialistic. Add to this the element of youthful exuberance and what we have is a potent factor which can move mountains. On the other hand, the greater portion of the movement is composed of the more materialistic elements such as the discontented worker, the desperate poor, the disenfranchised electorate and even the neglected minorities. They are less visible because less glamorous, yet the fury that they can muster is horrendous if unleashed. Herein lies the need for the youth and the Establishment to combine in order to effectively bring about a condition which would make the release of such terrible force unnecessary.

What have the youth done so far towards this direction? What more is expected of them? The rebellion of the youth against the present state of affairs has rocked the very foundation of society. Indeed, it has roused society from its lethargy. If there is any soul-searching now going on among the men in the Establishment, if there is self-reexamination now going on in society, nothing else is more responsible for this than youth militancy. It has inspired society to act in self-purification, and induced it to exert a sustained effort to read the signs and translate them into positive action. When society — its leaders, the elders, the Establishment — manifests a convincing and real concern for the burning issues championed by the youth, when it sincerely endeavours to promptly transform its commitments into reality, then it will be possible for all parties to act in concert and move forward with determination and certitude. Oneness of purpose is achieved through a dialogue in which everyone is ready to talk and listen to one another.

ANATOMY OF ACTIVISM

If such men as the Fords and the Rockefellers, to mention a few of the giants in the capitalistic establishment, have come down from their high perch and walked with the man in the street, it is because they have come to understand the anatomy of activism and its implications. A part of this understanding could come from knowledge

To Change

by Samson A. Lucero

of the nature of student activism. In a paper read at the First U.P. Alumni Conference last April 9-10 by Dr. Abraham I. Felipe, a psychology professor, a deeper understanding of the movement is offered. Dr. Felipe suggests that the activists are differentiable.

Those in the student movement who comprise the hard core in the youth ferment are the real student activists. Their concern is oriented towards a broader society, their goals are predicated on an ideology whose doctrines may be political in nature and leftist in direction. The ultimate goal is the restructuring of society. Leadership is dynamic and highly intellectualized, and geared to the firm conviction that the direction and the objective are not only correct but of cardinal importance. Although they get involved in lesser issues in order to draw wider support by "activating" the uncommitted sector of the studentry, yet the movement they spearhead usually goes beyond specific issues and proceeds to higher grounds which require a more profound analysis and a tenacity of purpose. The student activist is a hard-hitting man and a high-riding one at that.

Beyond the core and out into the wider circle of activism is a larger group composed of what could properly be identified as "activated" students. They are not committed to any particular doctrine nor do they visualize an ideology. Hence, they lack the profundity and determination of the hard core. Their involvement is intermittent. It is of the on-and-off variety of activism. They can be activated to protest and demonstrate by specific situations as instances of injustice or exploitation and not necessarily by the "isms." Without proper direction and leadership, they may either be easily appeased with palliatives and empty words or cowed by subtle threats if not outright intimidation. This only prolongs the agony of society.

QUO VADIS ?

The extent and magnitude of the problem is further elucidated by John D. Rockefeller III in his paper ("We Need Our Young Activists," Reader's Digest, Vol. 15 No. 91) which reveals the drive and potentials of youth and how an enlightened society should respond. Society in general, and
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On Democracy

- I. The majority —
I abhor
The voice
Of the majority
Because
It is for me
The mere cackle
Of idiocy
Impressively glossed
By the hollow magnificence
Of numerical superiority.

- II. Speak not to me
Of your beloved democracy
Because it reminds me
Of that mindless mass of men
Who can be manipulated with ease
Like puppets on strings
By the golden tongue
Of a nincompoop
Called demagogue.

They celebrate my death

They celebrate my death
Every 17th of May.
On the day before
They go to the town priest
And hand him a handsome fee
For a mass to be offered for me
To hasten my departure
From purgatory.
But I'm in hell
And I wonder if the mass
Can bring me to purgatory.

— heracleo e. repollo

CHRISTIANITY AND

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The Non-Violent Revolution

The aim of this non-violent revolution is to achieve rapid social change to restructure society so that an even greater measure of justice, freedom, progress, peace and love can be obtained among members of society.

Politicalization of the masses is its first step. This means making the people aware of their rights, of how they were used and exploited for personal gains, and convincing them of the justice of their cause. This can be achieved by preachings, teach-ins, seminars, organization works, demonstrations and rallies.

After this, the exploited confronts the exploiter with the latter's wrong-doings and to convince him of the justice of the former's cause. If exploiters persist in their practice, the exploited organize themselves.

This can be conducted at the local level and national level (nation-wide boycotts). It can also be conducted at the international level, when for example, third world countries unite to change the unjust trade structure and practice perpetrated by the first world countries.

The revolution is never finished. It goes on and on in establishing even greater measures of justice, peace and love of freedom and progress . . . until the world is ready for the transforming action of God into his kingdom.

Violence is avoided as a rule. Since non-violence derives its strength in being non-violent, it loses its power once it becomes violent.

The Case Against Violent Revolution

Since violence stems from sin, its results are unforeseen and uncontrollable. The outcome is very vague. It is very easily subject to abuse. Consider the atrocities in Vietnam, guerilla warfare, and other forms of violence. In violent revolution, there is a terrible loss of innocent lives and property.

Violent take-over of power results most likely in abuse of this power. In modern times, there is no instance where violent take-over did not result in abuse of this power. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

He who uses violence as a means to seize power is open to violence. Others will take his example and may lawfully use violence to seize power from him. Violence begets violence, as in the case of many Latin American countries.

After a violent revolution, nothing is accomplished yet. Just structure have to be built, which non-violent revolutions are already doing from the start. The latter concentrate their energy and resources in establishing and building just structure right at the start, and not in dissipating it in toppling down governments and then building up society after that.

Conclusion

Enlightened conscience obliges us Filipino Christians to dare the first move up to the last remedial one. To cure our social schizophrenia, we must revamp the socio-political-economic structures of our country, and reconstruct them upon Christian principles. To every citizen must be restored human dignity and the concomitant right to food, shelter, clothing, education, a decent job, and a just wage. Not until a person has acquired these basic needs can he really be free.

The Filipino Christian has no illusions of being able to build a heaven on earth. Realizing his imperfection, he knows he cannot completely eliminate evil in society. Yet he is hopeful that the Great Builder shall come to make the finishing touches on their greatest masterpiece. He continues to lay stone upon stone.

The Christian calling makes no split between material and the spiritual

world. The two are a unity as the body and soul of man are. To cultivate the material to the neglect of the spiritual is to humanize in vain. To cultivate the spiritual to the neglect of the material is to Christify in vain. Every Filipino Christian should take sides. "Behold I set you, over nations and over kingdoms to root up and to tear down to build and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10) You are either identified with problem or with the solution. Either, or. There should be no silent and neutral majority. To be such is a crime, nowadays. "You are either for me, or you are against me." And be for Christ is to be with the exploited majority. Decide now!

YOUTH ON THE

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The youth, in particular, must realize that the activists are a vocal minority. They are passionate in their idealism, fervently desirous for reforms not so much in the realm of material security but in the area of basic human values. They vibrate with impatience for the achievement of these desires because of the feeling that time is running out on them, and with a tremendous vitality which could be oriented for the good. Realizing all these, must the youth, in a moment of unthinking, abort reforms by refusing to harness their vast potentials just because their suspicions do not allow them to coordinate with the elders? On their side, must the elders invite tragic disaster by taking lightly the gravity, intent, and validity of the cause sponsored by the youth simply because they abhor the idea of having to budge an inch from their position of advantage? Both surely must desire to follow the path of peace and progress.

SHARPEN YOUR TOOLS

The apparent stumbling block lies in conservatism and it is the job of the young to overcome it. They can make their militancy more telling upon an adamant society if they choose to do so. What should be done is to stimulate a rationally persistent and massive militancy, to make and execute plans of action with deliberation, to curtail emotionalism and to promote reliance on sound judgment and to hurdle the crisis in confidence.

One weakness to overcome is hasty planning and implementation. Hectic preparation spells the difference between success and failure. Intellectualized leadership and action born of deliberation is uselessly dissipated in the confusion and haste.

Nothing is so pernicious as emotional disturbance in moments of crisis. Never allow any threat, imagined or real, to disquiet the rationality of the human mind and to disturb the soundness of one's judgment. Emotionalism renders youth leadership puerile and repellent to the unactivated and the uncommitted. And worse, it is conducive to mob behavior which internally transforms the movement into a rag-tag army of profanity-shouting, mud-slinging, glassy-eyed zombies, bent on tearing down any and all that fall within their reach. Unreasoning on both sides could only mean either anarchy if allowed to go unchecked or fascist tendencies characterized by police brutalities. What youth leadership must do is to encourage a healthy respect for law and order which readily wins the sympathy of bystanders and irresistibly draws more adherents to the cause.

It is heroic for the youth to successfully go through the gauntlet of the crisis in confidence. It is true that their sad

experience in dealing with the establishment is dotted with frustrations due to the insincerities of their elders. This is the underlying cause why they refuse to seek mature advice in the belief that none of the elders is with them. This suspicion, born of actual experience, should not shatter man's confidence in man and should not blind the youth to the fact that the rank and file among the adults are wanting in men who could provide the proper element to temper their mettle into a metal of the highest quality. The right combination can produce steel of the greatest strength.

THE IDEA POWER

The sharpest tool can be forged out of this combination. There are well-meaning men; youth must trust them and adopt their ideas. There are reliably responsible young people endowed with the ability to think clearly. The adults should exploit their bright ideas. The convergence of ideas from both sources when synthesized will produce a most potent force — the idea power — incisive, penetrating, piercing, irresistible.

Idea power is a mastermind. It is the fusion of ideas emanating from the deep and profound thinking of several minds. Idea power is potent and long-lasting only if the element of youthful vigor is in it. Likewise in a dynamic society where the constant quest for a change for the better is a basic concern, maximum actualization of the desirable change is only possible through idea power in which youth again must be involved.

In the last analysis, youth on the rampage — properly utilized — is a social phenomenon which is an imperative to change!

PHILIPPINES IN TRAVAIL . . .

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refused to rally behind their cause.

Ironically, the dissident movement in Central Luzon is gaining momentum because the government overlooks the real causes of the Huk uprisings which are poverty, social injustice, and maldistribution of lands. Many citizens are reportedly resorting to the so-called kangaroo courts of the Huks because they have completely lost their faith and confidence in the judicial processes. Ortega Y. Gaset, in his classic "Revolt of the Masses," observed, "Man had recourse to violence. Sometimes this recourse was a mere crime but at other times, violence was the means resorted to by him who had previously exhausted all other means in defense of the rights of justice which he thought he possessed."

Sad to say, the rule of the gun rather than the rule of law reigns supreme, nowadays. Just recently, Mayor Leopoldo Rabanes of San Marcelino, Zambales together with thirteen other persons were massacred in cold blood in the presence of horrified spectators. A few months ago, Rep. Jose Laurel and Gov. Lumaig of Ifugao narrowly escaped death when they were ambushed by a host of criminals. In the heart of the city of Manila a few weeks ago, Rep. Salipada Pendatun's life was nearly snuffed off by the assassins' bullets. If the government officials nowadays, who are enjoying the protection of bodyguards, are no longer safe from the barrel of the gun, how much more the ordinary citizens?

Unfortunately, innumerable perpetrators of those heinous crimes are roaming around scot-free, victimizing numerous innocent citizens. This could be attributed to the inefficiency and negligence of duty of the

authorities and the lack of moral courage of the witnesses who refused to go out in the open and testify in court for fear of retaliations and reprisals. Many witnesses prefer to be living cowards than dead heroes. As a consequence, many aggrieved citizens are now taking the law into their own hands.

The "Pearl of the Orient Seas" is indeed in travail. As Pres. Marcos puts it, "the country today is sitting on top of a social volcano that could erupt anytime with such a devastating force as to blow our institutions to smithereens."

However, there is still much hope that the Filipino people can prevent this dreaded volcano from erupting. It is the consensus that this can only be achieved by undergoing a catharsis of our mind and character and by eradicating greed and hatred from our hearts. Unless the people will change their hearts and see the best solutions to our problems, there will be no guarantee that we will not be drawn into the valley of destruction.

THE OTHER REVOLUTION . . .

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It is imperative that such a change in attitude must be instituted if we are to accomplish anything in the line of alleviating the undesirable effects of these social problems. Unless this attitude of gross permissiveness to the corruption and injustice existing around is eradicated, we will not get anywhere in our work for social reforms. What is the use of changing and improving a system when the people for whom it is changed do not themselves fight for honesty, integrity, and justice in its processes?

Who fills in the need of a revolutionizing factor in our people's way of thinking other than the young Filipinos themselves? Who can understand Filipinos better than Filipinos? There is a need for a redirection of attitudes, of mentality, and the youth with their dedication and zest can do a lot along these lines. This is the essential change that they must effect before they can move on to work for other changes.

The attitude of awe and fear for those who have the money and the power must be eradicated. The justification of a contemptible act like dishonesty in government service for the reason that the majority does it, has to be made null. The resigned attitude towards a double-standard kind of justice, one that caters to the rich and bites the poor, must be checked.

It is high time that our people realize that a preponderance of individuals who advocate a wrong thing does not make it right and does not justify its practice; that money and power do not bestow on some individuals the privilege to trample on the rights of others; and, that tolerance and silent protest to these actions make us active participants in them.

The revolution we need is a revolution of attitude in ourselves. This is the other revolution that the youth have to work for. This is the revolution which they must effect for the success of the reforms they work for. This is the more fundamental revolution, hard to achieve perhaps, but this can be done, if we work for it with determination and perseverance.

For, such as we are, such are the times.