

Commencement Speakers Across the

By WILLIAM K. STEVENS

Most of the major difficulties besetting America in 1970—the Indochina war, pollution, rebellion and reaction, racism and the struggle for equality—have provided ready material for college commencement speakers throughout the nation.

But in the wake of Cambodia, Kent State and Jackson State, one theme seems to predominate: Reconciliation.

It has been sounded by establishmentarian and rebel alike, and it has sometimes been linked with appeals for reason, tolerance, nonviolence and faith in the System.

Representative Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn expressed the theme in a speech at Hampton Institute. The Negro Democrat said that, if it came to a choice between rebellion and submission, she would choose rebellion. But she continued:

"I do not think it is come to that yet. The time is nearly here, but it is not yet. What can we do? What can we all do together? There is the answer. We must get together."

The nation's divisions, however, are clearly reflected in the graduation speeches.

Thus, Julian Bond, the Negro legislator from Georgia, told graduates at Lincoln University, which is predominately black, that "we are suppressed, repressed, dominated and cheated and we must escape from this predicament if we are ever to be free."

Kennedy at Mount Holyoke

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, speaking at Mount Holyoke College, charged the Nixon Administration with unwillingness and inability to solve domestic problems and end the war in Vietnam. "A decade of progress towards racial harmony is coming undone," he said.

And Vice President Agnew, speaking to graduates at the United States Military Academy, castigated "charlatans of peace and freedom" who "eulogize foreign dictators while desecrating the flag that keeps them free" and decried a "clever, sustained assault on America's system and institutions."

The Vice President is one of a relative handful of Federal officials who are taking part in commencement exercises this year and it is obviously a graduation season in which many Administration figures and Congressmen either declined to accept commencement invitation or were not invited at all.

"It becomes more and more of a problem to speak to students because they boo and hiss," Senator Marlow W. Cook, a Kentucky Republican who supports the Administration's policies in Indochina, told the Senate recently.

"I don't get that much combat pay," said another Republican, Senator William B. Saxbe of Ohio.

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Nation Stress the Theme

of Reconciliation

Constructive Criticism Stressed

Among the Administration officials who did make speeches, the themes of reconciliation and moderation ran strongly.

Robert H. Finch, who is leaving his post as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to become a Presidential adviser, told Arizona State University graduates that it was time "to begin engaging in the compassionate criticism that leads to constructive action."

"I'd suggest that the equal and opposite slogans, 'never trust anyone over 30' and 'never trust anyone under 30,' both miss the mark, the Presidential press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said to the class of 1970 at Muskingum College in Ohio. "I'd suggest that a better formulation would be, 'Beware of any mix that doesn't include both.'"

The current commencement season is one in which some speakers fear an excess of emotion in public discourse. One of these, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, counselor to President Nixon, told Fordham University graduates that he saw a spirit of irrationality spreading among the nation's youth.

Another, Robert F. Goheen, president of Princeton University, told those attending Princeton's baccalaureate service that he thought "the flight from reason" might be a greater danger to the United States than political divisions and national policy problems.

Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said to Niagara University graduates: "We have learned from the students—from you and your contemporaries—that we must come up with better answers to larger questions."

While America's political and social health provided a common thread running through commencement speeches, the actual form and style of this year's graduation ritual varied widely from campus to campus. Some colleges made the wearing of caps and gowns optional; others added student speakers and inserted music and poetry.

Still others held a "minute of silence" in the cause of peace. And on one campus, the speaker held up his fingers in the 'V' peace symbol as he delivered part of his address.

Following in special reports to The New York Times is a sampling of commencement speeches given on campuses across the country.

Arizona State University: Finch Sees Signs of Sanity

TEMPE, Ariz.—Robert H. Finch, outgoing Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told the graduates of Arizona State University that he saw new signs of sanity coming from the recent turmoil on the nation's campuses.

"Some might be tempted to play down these past few weeks—to write them off as another round of student unrest," he said. "Or they might be characterized with such words as 'revolt' and 'revolution.'"

Mr. Finch rejected both views and added: "It is time instead to admit to ourselves the sheer fact that much has changed, both on and off the campus, and to begin engaging in the compassionate criticism that leads to action."

Mr. Finch also criticized voters in Oregon and other states who have turned down measures that would have given the vote to 18- and 19-year-olds. He told the students: "It slanders an entire generation to confuse a militant fringe with the vast preponderance of deeply concerned, genuinely motivated young people citizens—and it throws them into extremists' arms."

Albert Einstein College: Course of Zeal Stressed

A noted Negro judge, speaking at commencement exercises at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, said that unless students carried their zeal for reform into their post-campus lives, he foresaw a bleak future for the nation.

Addressing the college's 12th annual

graduation, Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., of the Federal District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania, said: "I must conclude that if we continue on our present course there will be less reason for hope. Our nation will have a smaller probability of succeeding as a democracy, and tragically, if our present performance remains unchanged, the young, the poor, the weak, the black and the generally alienated will have less basis for respect for our nation, and our whole system of government, at home and abroad, will have far less credibility."

He went on to say that, if "we had opened up suburbia as it was rapidly expanding with modestly priced homes; if we had opened up our factories, our schools and universities; if we had been creative in applying manpower programs, we probably would not have had a Watts riot."

He termed people who only talked about reform as "canaries," and said that he felt there was no rational alternative for the thoughtful man other than to become a part of the slowly growing team of issue-solvers.

Oberlin College: Plea for World Harmony

OBERLIN, Ohio—An emotional plea for a world of harmony was made by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, national director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Operation Breadbasket, at Oberlin College's 137th commencement exercises.

"It is bad to be attacked by mean men, but it is even worse to become mean just like them," the speaker said as he noted that, if the recent campus and racial turmoil resulted in a new dedication toward peace and love among people, then the commencement ceremony would indeed be a "day of celebration."

Speaking of the problems of blacks, he said: "We are just a weathervane. We are the forerunner of the nation's problems, and until the forerunner is saved, those coming behind will suffer our same fate. We must develop some philosophical depth to our protest," he continued. "We cannot be just like the people we are trying to transform."

Mr. Jackson said that many blacks had decided to be Christians, that they were tired of killing and did not want to "study war any more" and that they did not want students to support such a philosophy. Instead, he said, they wanted universities to be havens for creative thoughts and dynamics.

"I would challenge you today, all my brothers and sisters, to take the high road," he said. "Let nobody pull you down to the level of hate. Don't let the hatred get on the inside of you."

American University: Educational Apparatus Faulted

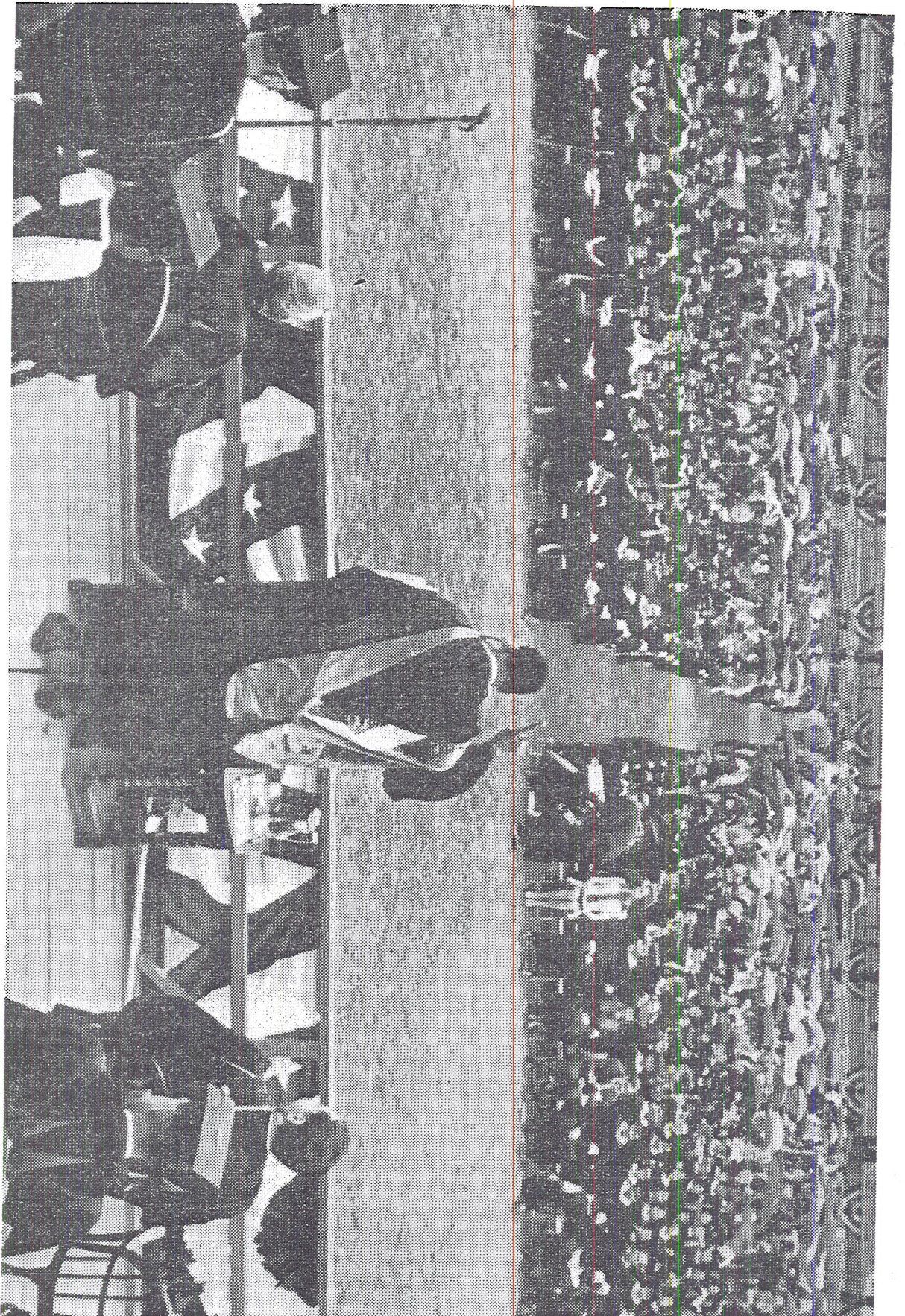


Nicholas
von Hoffman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Nicholas von Hoffman, columnist for The Washington Post told the commencement audience a American University that the apparatus of higher education in the United States was deliberately and knowingly created to serve only the technical and commercial needs of the nation. He added that it would be difficult to change it, since higher education and the society that supports it are inseparable and "there is no way of changing the one without changing the other."

He criticized Vice President Agnew for his opposition to lowering entrance standards for minority groups. These groups pose no threat to education, Mr. von Hoffman said, but do endanger the "indefensible practice" of focusing educational emphasis on "tests, grade point averages, senseless rules and the awarding of degrees."

He told the graduates that he felt they were luckier than their counterparts of 10 or 20 years ago and added: "The same things were happening then as are happening now—the same wars,



John J. Miller, minority leader of the California State Assembly and guest speaker at commencement exercises at Lehman College here, giving the peace sign

The New York Times (by Edward Hauser)

the same poverty, the same befouling of life and earth—but there was nothing they could do about it.”

He said the reason for this was that, 20 years ago, graduates were alone, scared and afraid to talk about the situation. But now, he said, “there are hundreds of thousands of people who have wised up to what’s happening, who talk about it, who shout about it, who strain to change the world. You are not alone and so you have a chance.”

Lincoln University: Bond Admonishes Blacks

OXFORD, Pa.—“A vicious beast is alive in this land. The rambunctious Maryland farmer is heard from every corner.”

The speaker was Julian Bond, a Negro member of the Georgia House



Julian Bond
The New York Times

of Representatives, who was admonishing the class of 1970 at the predominantly black Lincoln University that there were few affirmative platitudes he could offer them. To the contrary, he said, “we are suppressed, repressed, dominated and cheated, and we must escape from this predicament if we are ever to be free. But it will take the courage and intelligence you have gained here to do it.”

Citing Lincoln University’s “long, proud tradition,” Mr. Bond said: “The idea that black universities like Lincoln are quiet places where little happens is a terrible lie—Martin Luther King didn’t graduate from Harvard, and the first black Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, a graduate of Lincoln, class of 1930, didn’t go to Yale.”

Niagara University: Volpe Backs Agnew

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.—Addressing the largest graduating class—more than 600—in the 113-year history of Niagara University, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said he conceded that Vice President Agnew had used some “pretty strong language” in references to students but added, “in some cases it was needed.”

Then striking the conciliatory note toward youth that the Nixon Administration has hit often in recent days, the commencement speaker said: “We have learned from the students—from you and your contemporaries—that we must come up with better answers to larger questions.” He said that he felt that both Administration officials and young people should develop an ability to listen as well as talk.

University of North Carolina: ‘The Dark Before the Dawn’

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.—Clifton Daniel, associate editor of The New York Times, suggested to the graduates of the University of North Carolina that, although this was not the nation’s finest hour, “it may be—it could be—the hour before the dawn.”

He said that it was possible to change institutions, redefine social goals, rearrange priorities and redirect energies and resources. But in doing so, he questioned whether it would be necessary to destroy the system under which we live.

“Don’t imagine that, if our present system is demolished, you will necessarily inherit the wreckage,” he said. “History tells us that, all too often, dictators and tyrants pick up the pieces.”

Mr. Daniel added that he still retained the faith that he had acquired in college—a belief in the ability of free people to manage their own affairs and, despite much travail, to live in harmony and deal justly with one another.

“I know the processes of democracy are painfully slow,” he said. “We have reason to be impatient with them, but we abandon them at our peril. Our institutions have not failed us. We have

failed them. We do not need new ideals—we need to be more devoted to the old ones.”

Salve Regina College: Dr. Mead Sees More Options

NEWPORT, R. I.—Dr. Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, told the all-female graduating class of Salve Regina College that the vocation of motherhood, if they chose it, would take up less of their time in the future than in the past.

Because there will be fewer babies, there will be more time “to make contributions to the wider community and society in which you live,” she said. “As women, you are going to be offered today more choices than women have ever been offered. More choices in the way in which you are going to live your lives and a chance to live them as individuals.”

Dr. Mead, who has written extensively on the generation gap, added: “One of the most important things that you can do, in addition to the vocational choices you make for the rest of your life and what you are going to do as citizens, is to begin to successfully communicate with the elder members of your own family, one by one. Because every single cross-communication that occurs can multiply throughout the country.”

Air Force Academy: War and Internal Problems

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—Speaking to fledgling officers at the Air Force Academy graduation, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird said: “We must end the war and solve our domestic problems.”

Mr. Laird said that one of the nation’s most important responsibilities was to insure “adequate military capabilities” at a time when costs were up and defense funds reduced and “threats from potential adversaries are growing rapidly.”

It is important in restoring and maintaining peace to avoid isolationism and also to shun the role of world policeman, he said.

He added that he believed that as Americans everywhere came to understand the full significance of the country’s “new strategy for peace” they would also come to have added respect for the military’s role and an enhanced appreciation of “the prestige of our men and women in uniform.”

Wellesley College: Nation Left in Shambles

WELLESLEY, Mass.—Dr. George Wald, Harvard biology professor and Nobel Prize winner, told Wellesley College graduates they were going out into “the shambles we have made of this country.”

Decrying the United States Government’s attitudes toward war and fighting, he said that the stockpile of nuclear weapons in the United States and Russia equaled 15 tons of TNT for every man, woman and child on earth. “You might have thought that was enough,” he continued, “but we are now in the process of the next escalation, and by 1975, we confidently expect to have multiplied the stockpile by five.”

Professor Wald said that the nation had “bought the concept of total war” in a way that is foreign to the American tradition. “American soldiers have gunned down children and women with babies in their arms,” he said. “If one is really fighting women and 5-year-olds, one is in the wrong war, and had better get out of it.”

Mount Holyoke College: Kennedy Discerns a Gulf

SOUTH HADLEY, Mass.—Senator Edward M. Kennedy, speaking at the Mount Holyoke College commencement, said that one of the major problems of the day was the gulf in our society between the nation’s administrators and the young men and women who will be the leaders of the future.

He noted that hardly any of the high officials of the country felt free to travel to the campuses and that it showed the depth of alienation and isolation of the present from the future.

In another commencement address at Manhattanville College in Purchase, N. Y., Senator Kennedy deplored what he described as the extreme negativism in the nation. “This can be changed if our leaders lead and the citizenry also changes,” he said. “A silent majority is unacceptable.”

"To do nothing, to be silent, not to inquire, not to challenge, is to abdicate citizen responsibility," he told the students. "It is no excuse for an informed and literate citizen to claim that leaders have better or secret information, and thus forgo the right to hold a different opinion. In the first place, it is just not so. On most issues all the relevant information is public. In the second place, the issues today really are issues of values, standards and ideals."

Temple University: Focus on a Common Enemy

PHILADELPHIA—"We have managed to be a united people when we perceived a common enemy. The dissent and polarization which is wracking our country today is largely because there is no real agreement about the identity—or even the reality—of such a common enemy." This was the message Mrs. Jacqueline Grennan Wexler, president of Hunter College, delivered to the 3,000 graduates of Temple University.

Expressing the hope that the nation's military machine could be "revved down," she urged that students use their stamina and imagination to mobilize the resources of the country in the common cause of life-giving and life-saving.

Mrs. Wexler said she had faith that the graduates would force themselves to produce a "massive national effort for domestic life" and that such an effort of charity and sacrifice would bring about a rational future.

"Make love—not war" can become sentimental drivel or life-giving commitment," she explained. "The academic world of both professors and students—and college presidents—has long been long on rhetoric. The Federal budget of the year 2000 will tell the tale."

Adelphi University: National Unity as a Goal

GARDEN CITY, L. I.—Senator Margaret Chase Smith, in a commencement address at Adelphi University, said that "everyone of us, old and young alike, must start being civil, communicative



Senator Margaret Chase Smith

and credible" if national unity is to be achieved.

Addressing the senior class, many of whom wore white arm bands as symbols of protest against the graduation ceremony, the Maine Republican added: "The desire for unity should start right back in the home and family. We must unite mature counsel with young ideas."

Ulster Community College: A Gloomy Future

STONE RIDGE, N. Y.—August Heckscher, New York City's administrator of park, recreation and cultural affairs, described youths' visions as having little comforting hope.

Speaking Sunday to the graduating class of Ulster County Community College, he said: "If you are fearless and honest, as I believe you are, you must think about the hidden future as one of more and fiercer wars; bombs dropped upon the innocent; overcrowding on the planet; the slow exhaustion of resources—and for cold comfort, only the thought that scientific progress will somehow rescue us from the worst of dooms, though at the cost of increased regimentation and loss of human values."

Today's conditions make it doubly hard, he said, to maintain a capacity to live fruitfully in a world "where there are no solid foundations, where you must venture without being sure that there is anything to find, and endure even when you are not certain what it is you are holding out for."

Windham College: Dissent Termed Vital

PUTNEY, Vt.—Calling dissent vital to individual growth, Mrs. Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, director of the Women's Bu-

reau of the Labor Department, likened the right to disagree to the act of creation and said that, without dissent, the creative urge would wither and die.

Mrs. Koontz, who spoke at the commencement exercises at Windham College, is the first Negro to head the Labor Department's Women's Bureau. She was the first black president of the National Education Association.

"Is it wrong to look at our nation as it really is, to admit its past mistakes, to discuss its weaknesses?" she asked, and then replied: "Surely not. For we can only cure an ill by recognizing it for what it is."

The speaker voiced the thought that much dissent grows out of the identity crisis since many Americans of all races and creeds are unable to find their own place in a society that is contradictory and confusing. They are in conflict within themselves, she said, because the nation has tended to rig history—to manipulate the past.

Texas A. & M. University A 'Dangerous Dimension'

COLLEGE STATION, Tex.—A "dangerous dimension" has been added to campus turbulence in the use of the university as a political instrument, the graduating class at Texas A. & M. University was told.

The speaker was Dr. Durward B. Varner, chancellor of the University of Nebraska, who added that, when university administrations voted to endorse student strikes and when they voted to abandon their fundamental purposes as a form of protest, "then we entered a totally new era."

Dr. Varner said that the logical result of such institutionalized political power would be a confrontation with police power. He asked: "If we take the university from its traditional search for truth and knowledge and commit it to the arena of political manipulation, what then is the future of the university?"

American International College: Students in Two Worlds

SPRINGFIELD, Mass.—The worlds of action and reflection are both important, but colleges are primarily for reflection and should not be expected to bridge the two worlds, the commencement audience at American International College was told.

Dr. Homer D. Babbidge, Jr., president of the University of Connecticut and a member of President Nixon's Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs, was the speaker. He said the students' urge to politicize the university and involve it in the affairs of the world was an indication of their desire to close the "chasm" between action and reflection.

In calling for a mix of the two, Dr. Babbidge said he was "less and less persuaded that students should go directly from school to college and spend four consecutive years on the same campus."

He said he believed that it was important to "take better advantage of our mobility to move in and out of learning situations . . . movement not blocked in one direction by the draft or parental disapproval, or in the other direction by economic hardship."

Clarke College: What the Students Mean



Dr. Barry Ulanov
The New York Times

DUBUQUE, Iowa—Rebellious students are trying to identify themselves to the adult world around them, said Dr. Barry Ulanov, professor of English at Barnard College, as he gave the principal address at Clarke College's 127th annual commencement.

"This is my name!" the students on strike are yelling at us. "I'm not just part of the mob!" they're telling us," Dr. Ulanov said. "Look! they're shouting, 'we're here. We're alive! We Are—damn it! We Are—damn you!'"

The speaker said he felt that what the students might have done as children—in a home with real, live parents willing to claim their proper roles as parents and to allow their sons and daughters to claim their proper roles as children—they were trying to do as young adults in colleges and universities.

"What is so sad about all this," he said, "is that they have to form a mob to scream at us that they are not part of a mob, an identity killing mass. What is so good about all this is that they have given themselves and the rest of us another chance to get at them, to establish values again, to make them—and us—really know that they exist, that they have identities, that they are people of consequence, that they really Are."

Hollins College: Establishment of Credibility

HOLLINS COLLEGE, Va.—The president of Hollins College told his graduating class that until the credibility of the Government's desire for peace is established among the young, a serious "and perhaps permanent alienation" of our future leaders from our present form of government could result.

"If this happened," said Dr. John A. Logan, Jr., "nothing would be more tragic or more ominous. It is vital that extensive lines of communication be established and maintained."

The college president also said he believed that colleges, in times of turmoil, should follow procedures that "open the way for individual action without placing the institution itself on record."

Dr. Logan added that "no individual should be compelled by majority vote to be represented by an institutional position that he does not adhere to personally."

"The great power of the university," he noted, "lies in the generation of ideas which lead to constructive change, and not in action itself. Once the university as a corporate body ceases to be a forum and becomes a self-conscious instrument of policy, once it becomes avowedly partisan, then it abandons its historic claim to freedom from political interference."