

AGE SHAPES VIEWS AT KENT PARLEY

The Young Speak of Death,
the Old of 'Troublemakers'

By JOHN KIFNER

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KENT, Ohio, Aug. 19 — The elders talked of a minority of troublemakers, of better communications, of non-lethal weaponry and of the problems of large universities as the President's Commission on Campus Unrest opened hearings here today, and the young spoke of guns and death.

The hearings on the campus of Kent State University, where four students died in a burst of National Guard rifle fire last May 4, began over the objections of Gov. James A. Rhodes. The Governor had asked the commission and President Nixon to delay the hearings until after a pending grand jury investigation into the events of that weekend, which included the smashing of downtown windows and the burning of the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps building on the campus.

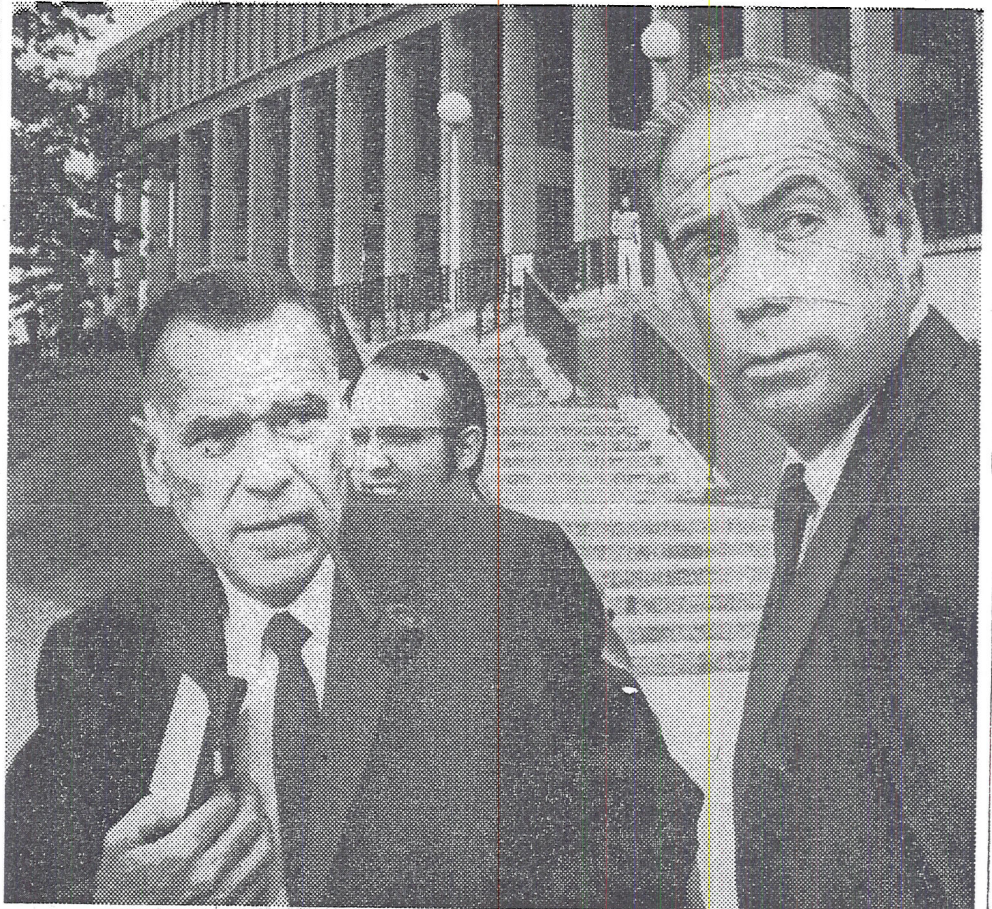
In a stuffy biology lecture hall packed with summer school students, university administrators and law enforcement officials testified about a situation that seemed to go out of control, and two youths told the commissioners of a growing bitterness among the young.

'I'm Very Pessimistic'

"I'm very pessimistic. Students on the campus will not allow themselves to be shot at without shooting back," said Steve Sharoff, a graduate history student who is the son of an upstate New York police chief. "In the United States, if things do not change soon, we are going to face civil war."

Maj. Gen. Sylvester T. Del Corso, the adjutant general of the Ohio Guard, said today that it was Guard policy that weapons "only will be loaded on an order."

However, last spring the general and other Ohio Guard officials had stated that their standard operating procedure — in contrast to normal military discipline — was that troops called to duty in civil disturbances would always have their M-1 rifles ready to fire, with a round in the chamber, on the theory that this was a deterrent.



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AT SCENE OF SHOOTING: Robert I. White, left, president of Kent State University, guides William W. Scranton, head of the commission on student unrest, on campus tour.

several questions, particularly those dealing with reports that the Guard investigation of the incident had found no evidence of a sniper.

Finally, he said: "We stated we never identified a sniper as such, as defined by the military."

Within hours after the shooting last spring, the general had announced that the Guard had opened fire in response to a rooftop sniper.

Robert S. Pickett, a black law student at the University of Michigan who was vice president of the Kent students, last year, told the commission that black students had avoided the demonstration because "we knew how the National Guard was trained and how they would react" from reports of riots in Newark, Detroit and Watts.

He told of acting as a marshal to keep black students away and having a rifle and a .45-caliber pistol point at his head and being told to "move, nigger."

Emotional Exchange

The general, who has been in the military for 42 years, said that the Ohio Guard had been called out "approximately 30 times" in the two and a half years he has been in command.

He was accompanied by a lawyer who attempted to block

Then, in the most emotional exchange of the day, Joseph Rhodes Jr., a Harvard fellow, who is the youngest member of the commission and a Negro, began questioning him, asking: "Why, suddenly, are these things happening? Everywhere I go, I see people who once had

very beautiful words turning very bitter."

"Joe, there's no middle, now, no more middle," said Mr. Pickett. "This country is headed, if it doesn't change itself, for death. This country is on its deathbed and there are no doctors. It is the doctors of life that they are killing at Kent and Jackson.

"I thought about it and wondered, supposed those students had been black, suppose I had been killed, would the country have been so concerned," he continued.

"No, Pickett, they wouldn't. You would have been another nigger chalked up—you shouldn't have been demonstrating.

"I don't have to tell you, Joe, America. Del Corso, They're killing the doctors of life."

As he finished, there was a pause, a heavy silence as several commissioners leaned forward to ask questions. Then then the nearly all white, youthful audience burst into loud applause that lasted 40 seconds. Several held up the two-fingered peace sign, and Mr. Pickett stood and returned it.