

Attitudes Toward Youth

To the Editor:

I feel compelled to comment on the "Open Letter" published on the Op. Ed. page Nov. 12, where a Mississippi physician expresses to his son his opinion on campus revolt.

It seems to me that it is very much this type of thinking that results in student deaths, in campus unrest, and the entire distortion of our higher educational system.

Consider some of the terms used by the doctor: "I thought the constituted authorities were most gentle to take only two." Is this a doctor, a healer, advising that it is gentle to take a human life for any reason? I hope he never operates on me. And the phraseology, "take . . . two," these are hunting terms; you can take a deer, or a brace of pheasant, but human beings? I think not.

But what does this imply to the doctor's son, and, ergo, to every young person who may read his open letter? It says: Study, but don't think. It says forget about your country, your morale, your ideals, and your love of truth, and go out and kiss some girls.

Does the doctor feel that college-age students are incapable of wishing to change an inimical environment? He says that there are legal ways of changing the system. Yet he overlooks the fact that the very revolts he despises are caused by the ineffectiveness of those methods, and the frustration of the young over their inability to use the existing modes in any way whatever. And then he counters his own argument by his "stay-at-your-desk-and-study" doctrine.

The doctor may well speak for much of our governmental policy. Tell disenfranchised youth that their only hope is to apply the franchise that they have previously been denied. Answer their frustration by telling them to study and kiss girls. And finish it off by saying that they'll grieve when you're killed, but they'll take your murderer out to dinner.

In the face of this type of thinking, is it any wonder that kids on our campuses revolt . . . and are revolted?

THOMAS R. JONES

New York, Nov. 14, 1970

In Support of 'System'

To the Editor:

You are to be complimented unstintingly for publishing "A Doctor's Letter to His Son" [Op. Ed. Nov. 12] by Dr. Paul Williamson. As an appeal to reason in this turbulent era, few indeed are those who could express their support for the "system" more succinctly, or with greater eloquence, than has Dr. Williamson, and his letter merits every praise.

NORMAN S. MEASE

Kensington, Md., Nov. 13, 1970