

The University in the World

On Wednesday, October 16, the long-range study of the University by the Hollomon Committees (SM May) was culminated in a report entitled "A Plan for OU's Future," which was published in a special 32-page supplement of the Oklahoma Daily. (For information on how you can order a copy, see Sooner Scene on page 1.) With hundreds of recommendations for innovation and reorganization throughout the University structure, the Hollomon Report, as

it has come to be known, has been received with interest by educators and the public media (Time magazine wrote about it) as well as citizens of Oklahoma and members of the University community. In coming issues, SOONER MAGAZINE and SOONER NEWSMAKERS will publish key sections of the report with accompanying articles of interpretation and comment. The first installment, the report's introductory chapter, follows.

Universities are tough institutions. They began and evolved fully a part of the changing and important events of the day. Yet they are restless in this world and look toward another, better world.

Universities were given to us by an age of faith, the Middle Ages; their essential structure came to us intact. They existed five hundred years before Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence or the founding fathers hammered out a written constitution as the first expression of faith in a new nation. Born of conflicts among students, masters, and the larger community, universities have adjusted to inescapable change, with the capacity of life itself. They have witnessed and participated in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; they have produced anarchists and revolutionaries that changed the political structure of Europe; they have spawned much of the science and technology that has changed the social structure of the world.

Universities not only have survived but have lived new lives as the tides of change washed back upon them. For a long time the purpose of a university has been a living expression, constantly shaped by those people it serves. Those it serves reflect their times through an enlarged world view and liberated perspective given them by the university. While adapting itself, the university has preserved, affected, and transmitted man's cultural experiences.* It has been a vital organ of order and change for over seven hundred years.

The central purposes of the univer-

sity from its beginning have been as paradoxical as human life itself. Sometimes a person must preserve his own security and identity while in the midst of radical change. Sometimes he reconciles the hedonistic impulse of pure emotion and the irrational with the need for reason and discipline. A mature person or institution can handle highly ambiguous questions and uncertainty without going to pieces. The ancient institutions of the family, the law, the state, and the church have had to handle paradox to survive. A person or nation faces a similar paradox sooner or later.

The university perpetuates the established system of values, order, and knowledge. It also tests the new and actively seeks the new in better values, greater truth, or a more just existence. Among the many themes we have reviewed in examining universities, a counterpoint—between order and change, the old and the new, preserving and creating—recurs constantly, almost in cyclic rhythm. We see it, for example, in the tension between the certifying function and the liberal education function of the academic mission. Certification of students is for the benefit of established institutions such as business, journalism, law, or medicine, as well as for a student. The degree certifies entry into society through a group that gives status and identity. Thus it is a tool of the established system, a tool fashioned by the past. Understanding, learning, and seeking truth or authentic experience, without regard for what the established system demands, are the lifeblood of the future, in that

they seek to establish new systems, to fashion new tools, to explore the Beyond.

The medieval universities had the same conflict between practicality and seeking ideal truth. Then, however, the principal truth was stated in philosophy and theology; accordingly, the area of dispute was severely limited, channeled, and strengthened by both faith and the authority of the Church. This focus, although it encouraged intense exploration and questioning, ultimately resolved its major questions by humble appeals beyond the university and even beyond the human world. Principally in practical disputes such as trade disagreements or legal controversies a boisterous, self-contained freedom to espouse differing views was possible. We have reversed that emphasis today. A long tradition of academic freedom protects diversity of opinion about divine and ethical questions, but industry and government enforce their own practical designs upon the campus with their requests for professional and trade skills, social values, and faith in secular or statistical absolutes. These practical demands intrude and often force us to make sometimes arbitrary choices between one man's truth and another's in areas once the outpost of less encumbered discussion. This maneuverability of the university to respond to such extraordinarily different pressures partly explains why it has survived the shifting of eight centuries.

Simply because the university has survived, however, does not necessarily mean that it is in good shape and out of trouble. A crisis in higher edu-

cation results from failure of clear purposes for the university in the post-industrial society. And this lies in the far deeper problem of the university's role in a society constantly in motion between order and change. Most recent attempts at reform, as far as we can determine, have not examined or clarified the entire purpose of a university in all its aspects and by all those it serves in the larger community and by faculty and students and administrators. For the past year we have tried to examine the life of the University of Oklahoma through people inside and outside the University. This has been an inclusive and whole process not done entirely by professors or students or outside experts or alumni or community leaders, but by people from all of these groups together. We have been permitted this luxury and have thus escaped crisis reformation by an innovation in the change of presidents. Last year the president-designate was on campus learning about the University and the state and undertaking this massive planning effort. He had only that responsibility, which allowed him time and opportunity for organizing this planning effort and for seeing it through to conclusion.

Our perspective, being as nearly whole as human beings can make it, seeks to take into account as many particular points of view as possible. This task requires some understanding of the world-wide context in which the universities (like it or not) find themselves, in addition to national, regional, and local settings.

There are mighty forces at work in the world which we do not and perhaps cannot fully understand. From France to Red China, from Germany to England, in Latin America, in Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet Union, from Berkeley to Columbia, in United States cities, there is rebellion or resistance. It seems directed against those in established positions of authority throughout our institutions and against abstract organized authority itself. There have been student riots and student protests from the beginning of the university and

before. In the past, riots and revolts have been more bloody and more violent. Revolution, resistance, and civil disobedience are no strangers, especially to America.

What makes the current restiveness of young people different is that when it breaks out it is watched everywhere in the world. Revolt or disobedience challenges the values and established order of our time and place. When the whole world watches, the old order is questioned everywhere. By radio and television, particularly via the communications satellites, we see and hear events, including violence, immediately. With the airplane and other high-speed transportation systems, we have fast access to any part of the earth. From our news media we have instantaneous reports which can fan our neuroses and anxieties as well as inform us. The communications media are strong instruments for influencing belief and action. We have become extremely sensitive to other people—unavoidably engaged in their lives as well as our own. Television can be used for stimulating political action more cheaply than for affecting buying habits. And strategists of anarchy know how to use the system of news reporting to inflame action for causes which in times gone by would have been dealt with differently.

It is a time when such calls to action find deep roots in old doctrines of civil disobedience, anarchy, and nihilism. Thoreau and Whitman find eager disciples in action against bureaucracy, hypocrisy, and dishonesty. Bakunin's anarchism has led simply to socialist totalitarianism. But Nietzsche's form of nihilism negates all value and even resists the existential salvation of Kierkegaard's moment of awful truth of the choice as a way out of our "sickness unto death." We may pass these theories off as intellectual speculation, but the facts are that they are of great interest and concern to student leaders and revolutionaries everywhere. They cannot be ignored. Nor are these basic ideas particularly new. In Plato's *Phaedo*,

Socrates worked out a system for the world which avoided the disaster of nihilistic thinking which the Sophists were driven to in earlier Greek philosophy. That is one reason why Plato survives: His was a response to a major question of the time. To affirm life from its opposite, to create from negation, to affirm meaning from nothingness were Plato's responses to the enveloping nihilism that he faced in his day. He saw a way to answer the threats to our ancient heritage of Greek thought by accepting our world, second best it is true but real nonetheless, to the extent that he reached for the ideal essence.

New, similar destructive forces are brought into our living rooms almost daily by events that in more peaceful times would pass unnoticed. Attention is focused on the meaning of life and whether anarchy is preferred over submission. There is alienation—the young (and old, too, sometimes) wonder who they are and what they are doing in life. The family, church, and state—even the university—are under severe stress from rebellion against the "colonialism" of imposed authority. Everywhere there is questioning, impatience, and change.

The United States always has had a streak of brooding doubt and an undertone of pessimism as Henry Adams understood so well at the turn of the century and Abraham Lincoln knew a century ago. It was, after all, the Declaration of Independence which by negating colonialism brought about faith in a new nation at the same time. It was faith and trust in a future new state that permitted men to write a constitution for the yet unborn nation for the first time in history. Yet the human values underlying the Constitution are expressed in action through a denial of power of government. The Bill of Rights essentially restrains the state. We know what we are politically by what we cannot do. The metes and bounds of power are prescribed by what the state and government cannot do to people. Why then does it surprise us when (some) people in the world rise up with no other

thought than to cast off what they believe is suppressing them?

When Herbert Marcuse, an intellectual hero for some rebels, talks about one-dimensional man he is saying that when society has no criteria for meaningful dissent it leads to a total state, and becomes a total society. He is asking whether it is possible to say no. For if it is possible to say no to our technological culture, have we not in fact destroyed the possibility of its having value? If science and technology are our only unifying forces throughout the world, one can understand the nature of the rebellion against the tyranny of technology as much as one can understand it against the tyranny of government. The end may be to humanize technology and the means may be in part through denying its full entry into the innermost reaches of humanity. Of all institutions, the university must be particularly aware of these questions.

The university thus finds itself in a real world, partly of its own making, where weaponry and computer technology, the information and communication media, medical technology and economic productivity, among other things, all add up to a post-industrial society. Side by side exist those who control the benefits of technology and those deprived of its benefits in underdeveloped countries and in our own domestic communities. There are those who do not like the consequences of these forces and those who do. Mostly, those who benefit specially have greater control over the purposes served by the know-how of our scientists and engineers. Traditional political processes, therefore, are unacceptable for many who challenge the purposes to which these technologies are put or what they mean for human life.

The university finds itself in a world that must manage what has been unleashed. It must cope with diversity of every conceivable kind—information, products, policies; differences in life style and national political style; and differences within great nations such as the United States—regional and even multilateral differ-

ences. With ever greater crowding of cities and the countryside and with increasing global population, these disparities of all kinds exacerbate the abrasiveness of human relations.

The university finds itself in a world in which the rich countries by the year 2000 will become two or three times wealthier, while the poor countries will decline in wealth relative to the population and will increase in population relative to that of the rest of the world. By the year 2000 the population of the United States will decline relative to that of the rest of the world, to 5.1 percent from 6.4 percent at present. Yet its wealth will increase relative to the rest of the world. The Asian states in population by the year 2000 will be 58 percent, yet by wealth something less, except for Japan which will probably be the third major economic power of the world.

This great disparity between wealth and population will not only cause a possible rich-poor split perhaps as dangerous as the current United States-Soviet bipolar rift, but also may be so universal that it penetrates into every country. The same conditions will exist in the United States or any developed country where the wealthy, through technology, will get wealthier while the poor will remain relatively poorer in the future. Regions such as Appalachia or Ozarkia represent islands of poverty. Enclaves of minorities in cities, on reservations, and in rural areas will grow relatively poorer and more disconnected from the main culture.

Similarly, for small and large businesses, those who have will get wealthier and those who have not will get relatively poorer. The exception will occur when innovation, taking place from outside the current structure, invades—as in the case of xerography or the transistor—and produces new wealth which may contribute significantly to the economic growth of the area.

“Have-not” population migrations to the city will continue to produce great demands for welfare and for

absorbing the impoverished into the main structure and culture of the place. But from a world-wide perspective the technologically advanced nations will grow closer together as the need for them to cooperate increases so that in a sense they will become as a technological city ringed by poor and perhaps starving masses on the major subcontinents.

Eric Hoffer writes that “a population subjected to drastic change is a population of misfits—unbalanced, explosive, and hungry for action.” Given self-reliance and opportunity, individual action and self-advancement take place with great passion. But without self-reliance and opportunity for individual action and self-advancement, the population that encounters drastic change develops a hunger for faith, pride, and unity. It becomes receptive to political movements and collective action. It creates a revolutionary atmosphere. Rather than a revolution set in motion to realize radical change, however, it is actually radical change which sets the stage for revolution. If things do not change, revolution is most unlikely. Revolt is generated by tension, anxiety, and frustration which accompany the realization that drastic change is upon us. For, as Hoffer says, no one really likes the new. We are afraid of it.

Universities thus find themselves in a role which, in serving their ancient tradition, must seek to preserve what is, while lending protection and courage to face the new, to understand the nature of change and to cope with it.

The university also finds itself in a real world where individual cultural and economic poverty exist. In our own country and state many people will never fully be part of our society because they have no means to cope with the so-called Establishment nor any passport to it. It is clear that minorities can be brought into the established order and value system through a university education which certifies that they are acceptable. But the university cannot escape the deeper question of whether the im-

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plicit values and structures of the established order and customs should be changed.

Revolutions and revolt are value questions of what we are to do, whether in families, governments, churches, businesses, or any group or organization. Underscoring all revolutions is an overwhelming sense of the need to be listened to, of the need for action, of the need for participation in shaping the meaning and value of the community of which any person is a part.

When men who have reached the height of their profession state that the society does not tolerate plain dissent but only positive technical alternatives, then we must pay closer heed to the children of the upper middle class who, knowing no poverty, resist entering that society. Intuitively, it seems, they resist entering a world that absorbs their own lives and commits them to perpetuate the values they distrust.

Technological and social change in the next half century will move us in many new directions. Innovation and diffusion of what we already know rather than new discoveries will dominate the scene. Technologies for transportation, weather, computers, energy, telecommunications not only are developing world-wide scale but also are unleashing consequences of the most unpredictable kind. We are faced with an even greater uncertainty as to the future. Cultural and social change have thrust upon us, particularly in advanced technological countries or countries where there is great disparity between the wealthy and the poor, a breakdown of familiar institutions. Consider the changing role of the family, for example, which brings lost children into the world without any particular identity or common interest with their fathers or their mothers. Consider the similarity between the Negro family who does not know a father and the white affluent suburban fam-

ily that does not know a father.

As to economic opportunities, Oklahoma and the Southwest have attractive growth potential. Consider the Southwestern movement of the population center of the United States, for example. In 1960 the center of population was in Illinois. By 1970, it should fall somewhere near St. Louis, Missouri. In a region of vast diversity, Oklahoma has survived the population loss during the '30s and '40s and now sustains a population growth rate for the past few years about the same as the average United States growth rate. The per capita income rate of growth similarly is about the same as for the average United States per capita income, although it lags about \$600 per capita. In manufacturing Oklahoma has sustained a slightly faster rate of growth and higher value added than the average for the United States, but substantially behind that for the Southwest region. The growth in personal income from transportation, communication, and public utilities is greater than either the national or regional average for the period 1930 to 1966. The other indicators of growth such as trade, services, and mineral production lagged.

The prospects for greater advances in specialized manufacturing with high value added per product and in transportation and communications are in line with national and world-wide trends in those directions. Moreover, the near central location of Oklahoma both geographically and for transportation convenience should prove a long-term aid to economic growth in those directions.

The expenditure of State funds for the various components of the State government in 1966 shows Oklahoma maintaining roughly the same proportion of expenditures for education, highways, health, and natural resources as the average of all other states, except for welfare whose costs make up 24 percent of the total State

government budget while all state governments average only 13 percent of the average budget for welfare costs. Such a drag on the economy prevents investment for short- and long-term growth. Also we note that in 1966 Oklahoma spent 37 percent of its general expenditure on education (both common and higher education), while the all-state average was 39 percent.

But the State of Oklahoma is a young, vigorous state where there is strength to build new institutions, overleap some of the problems facing older states, and so direct our resources that conscious goals can be reached faster than the past trends indicate probable.

The State system of higher education includes eighteen public institutions coordinated and budgeted by the State Regents for Higher Education, a nine-man constitutional board. The system has worked well, with each institution being governed by a board. However, these eighteen institutions have only the most rudimentary system of cooperation. The University of Oklahoma as a leading State institution of higher education must join with Oklahoma State University in seeking cooperation among all other State institutions of higher education to eliminate costly duplication and assure an efficient state-wide system, but one that promotes the human goals of higher education.

The university exists in time and place in history, in the country, and in the State. It, of all our institutions, must be acutely conscious of the human dimensions of change and uncertainty and must respond with the strictest commitment to human value. Our first recommendation, then, is basic to all that follows:

In a world of change and uncertainty, the University of Oklahoma should shape its goals in terms of human values by a continuous and impartial process for planning and restating its purposes through concrete action. Every major position taken in this report should be reviewed at least every five years. □