

relax, neither of them can afford to say that power does not matter. Yet, at the same time there is a sense in which, once the aggressor has been checked, some sort of psychological *detente*, some relaxation of tension, is bound to occur, whether people like it or not. It takes place because people come to take even their very armaments somewhat in their stride; or they get used to a situation, in spite of its colossal hazards; even in a country like Russia it turns out that you can't keep the elastic at stretch all the time; you can't hold men's minds forever to a single political objective—they want to be thinking of their art or their families, their religious concerns, or their falling in love.

I need not tell you that the coming of this kind of psychological *detente* in politics has its dangers as well as its advantages. It has its dangers if you refuse to permit the relaxation of tension; but also it has its dangers if the relaxation is allowed to occur. It produces a situation in which the other party is liable to make surprising changes of tactics. And they may not always be unscrupulous ones. Surprising changes even in the direction of virtue are possible. While we go on producing bigger and better hydrogen bombs, doing the same thing that we have got accustomed to doing, they might even think of something entirely unexpected—something that might even make our hydrogen bombs comparatively useless to us. And sometimes a revolutionary government can be quicker than we are in a change of tactics. Sometimes it is more easy for a revolutionary government to change the record and to produce something original than it is for a stable and settled government, where people and things too easily tend to get into a rut, and one is in danger of doing what you might call almost routine thinking.

FOR THIS reason, certain things which I would call "imponderables" are very important in the university, where we have to consider not merely the promotion of subjects of study, but the actual creation of the personalities who are going to count at the next turn in the world's history. Issues are not always settled by economic superiority and sheer weight of guns. One of the things that has made me most nervous about our side of the world, not only in the last ten years but in the ten years and in the twenty years before that, has been the materialistic way in which we

could calculate whether the weight of economic power was on one side or the other; whether the one side had the bigger guns or not; as though we had forgotten one of the patent facts of history, that a brilliant genius among generals with a mere handful of resources can sometimes cut his way through all the economic and military advantages that you have got. Nothing can get behind the fact that imagination and genius can prevail. And when it comes to a change in the character of the conflict between East and West, particularly if it's going to come to the form of a conflict of civilizations, then, above all, the one that is likely to prevail is the one which has the greater imaginative power at its disposal.

Now, my own university regards itself as a place of religion as well as of education and research. I would like to think of a university as a seat of the Fine Arts, too. And, I would like to add that the cultivation and the development of humor is itself part of what I am trying to describe. What we are out to develop are the qualities of personality; and those who lay more emphasis on the spiritual factor in life are going to do very much to feed and cultivate the more imaginative side of human beings—the true source of real originality. Some of us, in our calculations, are liable to be a little too directly utilitarian to remember that the production of personality, the creation and eliciting of imagination—these are things which first of all we are out to promote.

—HERBERT BUTTERFIELD



PRINCE BISMARCK once remarked that one-third of the students of German universities broke down from overwork; one-third broke down from dissipation; and the other third ruled Germany. As I look about this Yard today, I would hesitate to predict which third attends reunions, but I am confident I am looking at the "rulers" of the United States in the sense that all active, informed citizens rule. I can't think of nothing more reassuring for all of us than to come again to this institution whose whole purpose is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth.

I belong to a profession where the emphasis is somewhat different. Our political parties, our politicians, are in-

terested, of necessity, in winning popular support—a majority—and only indirectly truth is the object of our controversy. From this polemic of contending factions, the general public is expected to make a discriminating judgment. As the problems have become more complex, as our role as a chief defender of Western civilization has become enlarged, the responsibility of the electorate as a court of last resort has become almost too great. The people desperately seek objectivity and a universality such as this fulfills that function.

And the political profession needs both the technical judgment and the disinterested viewpoint of the scholar, to prevent us from becoming imprisoned by our own slogans. Therefore, it is regrettable that the gap between the intellectual and politician seems to be growing. Instead of synthesis, clash and discord now characterize the relations between the two groups much of the time. Authors, scholars, and intellectuals can praise every aspect of American society but the political. Rarely, if ever, have I seen any intellectual bestow praise on either the political profession or any political body for its accomplishments, its ability, or its integrity—much less for its intelligence. To many universities and scholars we represent nothing but censors, investigators, and perpetrators of what has been called "the swinish cult of anti-intellectualism."

James Russell Lowell's satyric attack in the *Biglow Papers* more than 100 years ago on Caleb Cushing, a distinguished son of Massachusetts, a celebrated member of Congress and Attorney General, sets the tone: "Gineral C is a drefle smart man, he's ben on all sides that give places or pelf, but consistency still wuz a part of his plan—he's ben true to *one* party, and that is himself." But, in fairness, the way of the intellectual is not altogether serene; in fact so great has become the popular suspicion that a recent survey of American intellectuals by a national magazine elicited from one of our foremost literary figures the guarded response, "I ain't no intellectual."

BOTH SIDES in this battle, it seems to me, are motivated by largely unfounded feelings of distrust. The politician, whose authority rests upon the mandate of the popular will, is resentful of the scholar who can, with dexterity, slip from position to position without dragging the anchor of public opinion. It was this skill that caused Queen Vic-

toria's Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, to say of the youthful historian Macaulay that he wished he was as sure of anything as Macaulay was of everything. The intellectual, on the other hand, finds it difficult to accept the differences between the laboratory and the legislature. In the former, the goal is truth, pure and simple, without regard to changing currents of public opinion; in the latter, compromises and majorities and procedural customs and rights affect the ultimate decision as to what is right or just or good. And even when they realize this difference, most intellectuals consider their chief function that of the critic—and politicians are sensitive to critics. "Many intellectuals," Sidney Hook has said, "would rather 'die' than agree with the majority, even on the rare occasions when the majority is right."

It seems to me that the time has come for intellectuals and politicians alike to consider not what we fear separately but what we share together. First, I would ask both groups to recall that the American politician of today and the American intellectual are descended from a common ancestry. Our nation's first great politicians were also among the nation's first great writers and scholars. The founders of the American Constitution were also the founders of American scholarship. The works of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Franklin, Paine, and John Adams—to name but a few—influenced the literature of the world as well as its geography. Books were their tools, not their enemies. Our political leaders traded in the free commerce of ideas with lasting results both here and abroad.

IN THESE golden years, our political leaders moved from one field to another with amazing versatility and vitality. Jefferson and Franklin still throw long shadows over many fields of learning. A contemporary described Jefferson, "A gentleman of 32, who could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, dance a minuet, and play the violin."

Daniel Webster could throw thunderbolts at Hayne on the Senate floor and then stroll a few steps down the corridor and dominate the Supreme Court as the foremost lawyer in the country. John Quincy Adams, after being summarily dismissed from the Senate for a notable display of independence, could become Boylston Pro-

fessor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard and then become a great Secretary of State. (Those were the happy days when Harvard professors had no difficulty getting Senate confirmation.)

This link between the American scholarship and the American politician remained for a century. Just one hundred years ago, in the Presidential campaign of 1856, the Republicans sent three brilliant orators around the campaign circuit: William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Those were the even happier days when all "egg-heads" were Republicans.

I would hope that both groups, recalling their common heritage, might once again forge a link between the intellectual and political profession. I know that scholars may prefer the mysteries of pure scholarship or the delights of abstract discourse. But, "Would you have counted him a friend of ancient Greece?" as George William Curtis asked a century ago during the Kansas-Nebraska Controversy—"Would you have counted him a friend of Greece who quietly discussed of patriotism on that Greek summer day through whose hopeless and immortal hours Leonidas and his three hundred stood at Thermopylae for liberty?" No, the duty of the scholar—particularly in a republic such as ours—is to contribute his objective views and his sense of liberty to the affairs of his state and nation.

SECONDLY, I would remind both groups that the American politician and the American intellectual operate within a common framework—a framework of liberty. Unfortunately, in more recent times, politicians and intellectuals have quarreled bitterly—too bitterly in some cases—over how each group has met the modern challenge to freedom both at home and abroad. Politicians have questioned the discernment with which intellectuals have reacted to the siren call of the left; and intellectuals have tended to accuse politicians of not being always aware, especially here at home, of the toxic effects of freedom restrained.

While differences in judgment where freedom is endangered are perhaps inevitable, there should nevertheless be more basic agreement on fundamentals. In this field we should be allies, working together for the common cause.

And finally I would stress the great potential gain for both groups

resulting from increased political cooperation. The American intellectual and scholar must decide, as Goethe put it, whether he is to be an anvil—or a hammer. The question he faces is whether he is to be a hammer—whether he is to give to the world in which he was reared and educated the broadest possible benefits of his learning. As one who is familiar with the political world, I can testify that we need it.

In foreign affairs, for example, the parties dispute over which is best fitted to implement the long-accepted policies of collective security and Soviet containment. Perhaps these policies are no longer adequate. But the debate goes on, for neither party is in a position politically to undertake the necessary reappraisal.

Republicans and Democrats debate over whether flexible or rigid price supports should be in effect. But this may not be the real issue at all. Neither program may offer any real long-range solution to our many farm problems.

Other examples could be given indefinitely—in taxation, in foreign trade, of how we make the best use of automation and our nuclear potential. The intellectual who can draw upon his rational, disinterested approach and his fund of learning to help reshape our political life can make a tremendous contribution to their society while gaining new respect for his own group.

I do not say that our political and public life should be turned over to experts who ignore opinion. But I would urge that our political parties and our universities recognize the need for greater cooperation and understanding between politicians and intellectuals. We do not need scholars or politicians like Lord John Russell, of whom Queen Victoria remarked, he would be a better man if he knew a third subject—but he was interested in nothing but the Constitution of 1688 and himself. What we need are men who can ride easily over broad fields of knowledge and recognize the mutual dependence of our two worlds.

"Don't teach my boy poetry," an English mother recently wrote the Provost of Harrow. "Don't teach my boy poetry; he is going to stand for Parliament." Well, perhaps she was right—but if more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place to live on this Commencement Day of 1956.

—JOHN F. KENNEDY