

SOME curious, and I think fallacious, propositions have been voiced with great frequency in the widespread debate that has preoccupied this Nation since the Cambodia decision and the Kent State incident. They embrace such ideas as these:

—That the only way to bring student violence to an end is to terminate our involvement in the war in Southeast Asia.

—That police and National Guardsmen have been more to blame than the New Left agitators and campus rowdies in the recent upsurge of campus-related violence.

—That law enforcement officers and Guardsmen should not carry weapons while dealing with student mobs.

—That defiance of the law, violence and rebellion are not only acceptable, but are to be desired, if that's what it takes to overturn our traditional structure of values and to remake our society.

—That the student and faculty militants, and their mixed bag of political-intellectual-New Left supporters are right in their aspirations for America and their strivings for power, and that the vast majority of Americans—Middle America, they have been called—are wrong.

It is not the fact that such propositions are being uttered that is frightening, for a free society by its very definition must encourage open and free discussion of the manner in which that society should function.

What is shocking is the absolute insistence by a small and noisy group of radicals that they, and only they, know what is best for America, and their willingness to use any means—violence, intimidation, lies, and other reprehensible means—to attain their ends. Equally shocking is the equanimity with which many Americans are submitting to these radical ideas and to the techniques by which they are being spread.

There is much to be said for the apprehensions recently voiced by retired General Harold K. Johnson, that America is closer than many think to "a dictatorship of the minority."

It seems long past time for concerned Americans at every level to start expounding some counter-propositions, in clear and forceful terms:

—That students and others with an idealistic fervor must expose their ideas to the same democratic processes as anyone else.

—That young people may not always be right in what they envision as proper goals for our Nation, and that their Utopian yearnings may not always be acceptable as National policy.

—That all of us must obey the laws that govern our society, else the Nation itself may perish.

—That the burning of buildings, and physical violence, and other excesses not only will not be accepted as modes of expression but will be forcibly halted when persuasion fails.

—That no one, whether police or National Guard, should be expected to cope with screaming, rock-hurling mobs of campus hoodlums without the means of protecting themselves and the lives and property of their fellow-citizens.

—That peace, while it is eminently to be desired in all parts of the World, is not as simple as merely walking out on a conflict and leaving your friends to suffer the consequences.

When hearings are held by such agencies as the Presidential Commission on Campus Unrest, or various Congressional committees, such ideas as these are expressed, but they never seem to receive the same prominent coverage by the news media as the viewpoint of ultra-liberal or radical spokesmen.

Middle America can, and should, insist on being heard, else many of the Country's most cherished values may be lost, along with our greatness as a free Nation and a free people. ♦



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of the United States

Dictatorship of the Minority?



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