

Virginia Scholar

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TO INSERT CONTENTS, TYPE "CONTENTS" AND F3

EDITORIAL:	2
How I got here: an open letter from the files	
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND ME	5
by Alexander Weiss	
EXCESSES OF SENSITIVITY	7
Henry Bauer on VaTech's Police-Department venture into Sensitive Crimes	
POTPOURRI	14
Male professors at VCU win; Core values; Evaluating physics instructors at UVa; Physics at JMU; Victimhood; English: Professional, Black, & Administrative; Oleanna; Circumstances & Cases; WANTED!	
JOSEF MARTIN GETS ALIENATED	17
NATIONAL ALUMNI FORUM	18
GOOD READING	19

DEPARTMENTS & SIDEBARS:

VASNET.....	6
Quotes	11,14,15,16,19
A Thought.....	9

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EDITORIAL HOW I GOT HERE

Moving offices last spring, I made the usual resolution to throw out all that stuff that I should never have kept in the first place. But again as usual, I spent a lot of time reading old stuff rather than pitching it. One of the pieces I found was the letter that starts on page 3, which I sent to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and to the Heads of the two units in which I hold a joint appointment. It is reproduced without editing other than re-formatting from the original file that I found on an old floppy disk. It answers a question I've often been asked: how did I get involved with the Virginia Association of Scholars and the National Association of Scholars? Though I now find the tone of this piece more emotional than I might choose, I stand by the sentiments. So I thought it might be a pertinent editorial with which to mark the beginning of a new academic year.

None of the conditions that spurred me to write that letter have changed – certainly not for the better. So I suggest a **Good Resolution for this new Academic Year**: that we will all *actively* support the scholarly principles to which the National Association of Scholars and the Virginia Association of Scholars are pledged. Show that *we mean what we say* on the inside back cover of these Newsletters. There are many ways of helping with that, and some of them are not very onerous:

- **Share *Virginia Scholar*** with as many people as you can:
 - Pass your own copy around.
 - Ask us for a bunch of copies and **send them to the Departments on your campus** with a request that they be ***circulated among the faculty***. We have extras of most of the back issues.
 - Leave copies in your faculty lounge or luncheon room.
 - Tell us where or whom to send complimentary copies.
- Join and use VASNET (see page 6). Help us make it an increasingly useful and active support and early-warning system.
- When a PC atrocity occurs, or when you learn that it's about to occur, **draw attention to it**. Protest about it to:
 - your faculty representatives;
 - your colleagues;
 - administrators *ad libidum*;
 - **and let *Virginia Scholar* know about it**. (Remember that we do need to know who we get our tidbits from, but we're happy to publish them under your choice of pseudonym.)

Bringing appropriate attention can have salutary effects. We have it on excellent authority, for example, that Virginia Tech was intending to give across-the-board raises to women faculty; but when Tech's Provost was apprised of the suit filed by Ted Smith and colleagues at VCU against the similar action there, the move was still-born.

- Curb your courtesies!

Among the most difficult dilemmas for decent, right-thinking people is how to deal with fanatics who have no sense of courtesy and with administrators who have no sense of integrity. It's hard but necessary to train yourself not to let lies go by unchallenged even if that makes the liars uncomfortable.
- Read ***Academic Questions***, pass it around, talk about what's happening around the country. A great deal of PC goes by unchallenged at the local level because most faculty still do not realize the hold that Left-Wing McCarthyism has achieved on our campuses.

**The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil
is for good men to do nothing**

***AN OPEN LETTER TO DEAN AND DEPARTMENT HEADS, FROM OUR FILES,
PROTESTING THEN-NEW REGULATIONS GOVERNING FACULTY SEARCHES***

18 September 1991

Dear Herman, Harold, Bob:

This is to tell you that in view of the guidelines just issued, I shall no longer be willing to serve on search committees. Furthermore I feel sufficiently strongly about the matter that I am making this a public statement and not a private letter.

Since the proposed members of search committees are to be listed and counted by race and gender, and since approval of the Director of Affirmative Action is required at various stages, the implication is clear enough—and personally and deeply offensive—that my ability to make proper judgments about the qualifications of candidates for academic positions is significantly influenced by what my race and gender happen to be.

Who has made that judgment about me, and on what grounds?

It is ironic—to use the mildest of the terms that come to mind—that in the latter stages of my life in academe I should again be subjected to official, institutionalized racism; which I experienced first in my second year of public education but not for many decades since then.

At age seven, I had found myself removed from the public schools because it had been officially decided that my ethnic heritage marked me as irrevocably inferior and undesirable and disqualified from attendance. From that promising beginning, I went on to discover a number of criteria other than race that put me in the minority and subject to various degrees of odium. As a refugee child in Australia, I was taunted for my different accent, clothes, and manners. Within the refugee community, we were looked down upon because one of my grandfathers had been an assimilationist and we had not been raised into religious Jewish orthodoxy. As an adult citizen of Australia, I was never a real, “dinkum” Aussie because of my parentage. As an intellectual in an aggressively egalitarian society, I was looked at askance. And that does not exhaust the examples I could give.

Among the actual experiences that these minority roles brought me were to see my mother taken by police into the streets and made to scrub away emblems painted there by the police themselves; to have my father incarcerated for no other reason than that his parents had been Jews; to have many of my relatives die in concentration camps and the others scatter to all corners of the globe.

In Australia and in the United States, people were often unable to infer my heritage from my accent and background, so that I have periodically had the interesting experience of finding people I like and respect reveal anti-Semitic sentiments in my presence; subjecting me to a dilemma I've never resolved, whether to tell them gently that I am myself Jewish and cause them the greatest immediate embarrassment or hope that they will not make the realization until far into the future. This has happened with the father of one of my best friends; with a number of quite close colleagues; with a woman of color I dated; and with others as well.

I've also been hugely fortunate in any number of ways, including that I have been able to travel and come to know people in many places. I have genuine friends of both genders and several sorts of sexual preference; friends who are Australian, Scots, English, Welsh, Japanese, Chinese, German, Lebanese, and Americans of various hues of white and several shades of black—among others. One of my brothers-in-law, whom I also count as a genuine friend, is rather a deep shade of black, and his children, whom I also count as friendly, are somewhat paler but nevertheless black. During my first couple of years in the United States I lived in an International House with people of the sorts mentioned above, and also Indians and Pakistanis, Koreans, Ethiopians, Thais, and others. And I learned much from those interactions, about the experiences of others: about the hostility, for example, between Indians of different castes and shades of color, and between Moslems and Hindus. I found it amusing to be taken myself for a North Indian during one summer when my tan was healthy and my mustache luxuriant. I learned from American blacks who look white how badly they are treated by blacker blacks. I came to know one who could not travel with his wife, who was darker,

because there were so many places in which they could not take a hotel room together. When I visited my brother-in-law I discovered that he lived in that section of Manhattan where only mixed couples lived, for they were then welcome in neither the strictly white parts to the south nor the strictly black areas to the north.

Who now tells me that my professional judgment is suspect when it comes to seeking or evaluating candidates of any race, gender, ethnicity, or other such attribute? Who among those who promulgated these disgusting guidelines has the cross-, inter-, or multi-cultural or ethnic or racial experience, empathy, and understanding that I've gained?

But I'm not claiming uniqueness. I have no desire to be seen as somehow exceptional among white males: the Nazis had their house-Jews, and I have no wish to be anybody's house-honkie. I claim uniqueness of experience, and thought based on that, and understanding gained; but I don't claim to be unique in being unique. We all are. And that's what's most significant about each of us.

Belonging to a minority does not of itself confer any wisdom or understanding, not necessarily understanding or even tolerance of fellow members of the same minority. There are plenty of blacks who regard such people as Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, Glenn Loury, Kenny Williams, and so on as not "properly" black. There are plenty of blacks who are anti-Semitic, and plenty of Jews who are anti-black. The composition of search committees in terms of race and gender is simply irrelevant to the issue of how properly discriminating or otherwise the search is likely to be.

At the same time, people of the most varied sorts can achieve empathy with and understanding of humans of other sorts. It depends on one's individual experiences and thoughtfulness, among other qualities. I've learned quite beyond question that the only solution to humankind's history of xenophobia is for more and more of us to come to regard one another as individuals, to class one another within only one group, that of human beings—for which, moreover, there is ample scientific warrant.

Only individuals can think, feel, or have self-esteem. As soon as we categorize people as members of groups rather than as persons like ourselves, we become able to see them as not human, and then we can do—and have done—all sorts of inhuman things. Negroes could be lynched because they were not humans like whites. Nazis could exterminate Jews because they were able to see them as non-human. Terrorists can murder because they don't think of their victims as human beings. People of all races have tortured one another because they could convince themselves that the other was somehow not as human. And so on.

My utopia is one where no child is treated as I was in Austria; where every child has the opportunities provided me in Australia and in the United States. In Australia, derided as foreign-born and eggheaded, I found that I could more than make up for the derision by working hard enough, becoming competent enough, so that people would say or think about me, "Well, he may be a bloody reffo, but he's also a bloody good chemist". In the United States I found it even easier: as people learned of my wish to become an American, my heritage and accent and different manners were of no moment for them—and several other people of similar background with whom I've compared notes have had the same experience. Education and jobs enable individuals to transcend handicaps of parentage so long as the criteria are strictly tied to the specific task at hand; so with me, so with many other refugees, so with countless lower-class children in class-ridden British society, so with many blacks in "racist" America and with many women in "sexist" America. But as soon as any other criterion than merit is applied, such transcending is no longer possible; and when the criterion invoked is race, then that is racism—no matter that the intention behind it be good rather than bad.

At any rate, I'm quite clear that applying "group" criteria to people is not merely wrong, it is evil. I'll have no part in it, and I'll do whatever I can to stop its being done.

Sincerely,

Henry

cc: many people

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND ME

by Dr. Alexander Weiss

Among the “hot button” issues on the current political scene, “Affirmative Action” was the subject of a purported debate held in Radford University’s Preston Auditorium on Tuesday evening, September 12th. Unfortunately, the event was staged more like a pilot episode for a new television series. On the left, in the PC corner, was Juan Williams, an African-American male, author, journalist and occasional host on Cable network “info-news” programs like “Crossfire.” Opposing him was Linda Chavez, a Mexican-American woman, who formerly served as Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Proceedings were initiated with a coin toss, won by Mr. Williams, whose opening remarks touched on the four themes to which he would return over and over during the course of the evening: first and foremost, that the “affirmative action” issue is not about “affirmative action” at all but rather about race, and the current debate is the result of nothing more than paranoia stemming from racial prejudice; second, that “affirmative action” is necessary to redress the wrongs of past discriminatory practices; third, that “affirmative action” does not give preferences to unqualified individuals but simply promotes “diversity”; fourth, that “affirmative action” is not practiced on any significant scale and so has had very little impact on individuals in our society.

Ms. Chavez focused on essen-

tially two points in her opening remarks and throughout the evening: first, she agreed with Mr. Williams that “affirmative action” has had very little impact on individuals, albeit for very different reasons (primarily because it just doesn’t work); second, she emphasized the existing body of Non-Discrimination Law, maintaining that it would remain intact even if “Affirmative Action” were revamped or eliminated.

Bright, well-educated, well-informed and very articulate, both Williams and Chavez have the potential to be effective spokespersons for their respective positions; the problem was that neither had anything new to add to this debate. Both presented the same old tired arguments we have heard before (and no doubt will hear again and again during the upcoming election year); both fell back on the same old tiresome clichés (“level the playing field”, “politics of race,” etc.), and both recounted the obligatory, touching personal anecdotes drawn from their childhood experiences.

While I found this debate to have been neither particularly stimulating nor informative, Mr. Williams’ insistence that “affirmative action” does not result in preference being given to unqualified individuals and that no one is hurt by it together with Ms. Chavez’s frequent references to “affirmative action” practices at the University of California, Berkeley struck close to home, evoking memories of my own personal experience with “Affirmative Action.”

In the summer of 1967 my wife

and I had packed all our belongings into a U-HAUL trailer and moved with our eight-month-old son from Maryland to Berkeley, where I had been accepted into the Graduate School to pursue a doctorate in English. I had decided to attend Berkeley for two reasons: at the time Berkeley had the best English Department in the country; even more important to me, Berkeley numbered among its faculty Professor Charles Muscatine, perhaps the most distinguished Chaucerian of my generation – the scholar I most wanted to direct my dissertation.

We lived in married student housing (WWII navy barracks the University had acquired for that purpose). We worked at whatever jobs we could find to make ends meet (delivering newspapers, driving a taxicab, etc.). We contended with all the distractions of life in Berkeley during that tumultuous era – the “hippies” and “flower children,” the “Hari Krishnas,” the “peoples’ park” movement, and, of course, the anti-war protests, including the National Guard with its tanks, barbed wire and tear gas. But six years and a daughter later, the day finally came when I successfully “defended” my dissertation (Yes, it had been directed by Professor Muscatine) and I was awarded the Ph.D. in English. I was finally ready to take my place in the Academic world.

That’s when reality set in, the reality of “Affirmative Action.” For four years from 1972 through 1975 I responded to announcements of tenure-track positions for a medievalist, little heeding

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the postscript with which every such announcement concluded – "Minorities and Women especially encouraged to apply."

During that period I received, on average, two or three requests per year for my credentials, and in three of those years was asked to come to a single interview at the Modern Language Association Convention. Although apparently a finalist in a few cases (I was actually flown to and interviewed at Oberlin and Dickinson, for example), I was not offered any of these positions; in each case, the position was filled by a woman.

Nor was I alone in this predicament; such was the experience of all the new male Ph.D.s from Berkeley seeking academic positions, not because there were none, but because colleges and universities were "aggressively" pursuing "Affirmative Action Policies." During this same period

of time, female graduate students in the English Department, some of whom were not even ABD and most of whom had not even started on their dissertations, were in great demand; in fact, it was not uncommon for them to have scheduled ten to fifteen interviews at an MLA convention and to receive not one but several job offers to choose from.

A specific case in point. In 1974 the University of Virginia announced a tenure-track position for a medievalist. Both I and a female colleague (actually, a good friend of mine) applied. I had the Ph.D. in hand, a dissertation directed by a man many would consider the preeminent Chaucerian scholar of our generation, strong letters of recommendation: I did not even get to the interview stage. My friend, who had not yet even begun her dissertation, was offered and ac-

cepted the position. Was she "unqualified"? Perhaps not. She was, in fact, an extremely capable young woman with a potentially bright future as a teacher and scholar. But she was at that moment in time **less** qualified than I was. Was anyone hurt? I leave that to the reader.

A brief postscript: After three years my friend had still not completed her dissertation; consequently, she was not re-appointed to her position. To this day, she has not completed her dissertation and does not hold a full-time tenure-track position.

Hers is not an isolated instance. I personally know several other women with much the same history. Perhaps more people have been hurt by "affirmative action" and in more ways than is dreamt of in the philosophy of Mr. Williams and other defenders of this policy.

VASNET

VAS members can now communicate with one another through VASNET, the electronic bulletin board set up for us by Board Chairman Steven Eagle. Since this is a *private* forum for VAS members, you must sign up before you can use it. Send your e-mail address to hhbauer@vt.edu asking that it be added to the VASNET list.

It will be checked against our membership list and then sent on to Steven Eagle to be added to the list of authorized subscribers. You'll then get a message to that effect and instructions for how to send messages to the forum, and you will begin to get messages posted by other members.

***The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.
Vigilance must be translated into action.
VAS exists to make action possible.***

VASNET enables us to act promptly when necessary, by keeping one another informed about what's happening and about what needs to be done. Join up now.

You may not need to use the list often, but if you do it will be invaluable. For example, late this summer I was shown the notice about the founding of Virginia Tech's "Sensitive Crime Unit", and posted that to VASNET, asking for advice on how to proceed. In the light of subsequent events (see p.7 ff.), I'm awfully glad that I followed the suggestion to write to the responsible administrator. The posting on VASNET also made it possible for someone with connections at the *Washington Times* to bring this to wider attention.

The publicity brought us approving letters from Tech alumni and others.

EXCESSES OF SENSITIVITY

by Henry Bauer

It is possible to have too much of a good thing. Under political correctness in the United States and the principles of Orwellian Newspeak, such traditionally nice-sounding words and phrases as “diversity”, “sensitivity”, “affirmative action”, “equal opportunity” are now used to justify uniformity of opinion, insensitivity to freedom of belief and speech, and discrimination based on race and sex. As the nice-sounding slogans are thrown about with scant regard for actual meaning, one result has been that perfectly well-intentioned people using those words thereby commit, unwittingly and without realizing it, acts of politically correct intolerance and insensitivity. Here’s how that happened to Virginia Tech’s Police Department; and some reasons why we don’t need these excesses of faddish nonsense.

Returned to campus from the sanity into which I tend to lapse during a few summer weeks in Scotland, I found awaiting me a note with a news item from Va. Tech’s faculty-staff newspaper¹. My incredulity was considerable as I read:

Police initiating assessment

The Virginia Tech Police Department has organized a sensitive-crime unit. The unit is a formalized group of officers who have been trained to assist in the investigation of intolerance committed against individuals or groups because of that person’s or group’s race, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or gender. The group also is trained to investigate acts of sexual assault.

For the Virginia Tech Police Department to provide all persons with [sic] the university community with a safe and secure environment, they must know what is happening on campus. The department would like to organize a sensitive-crime assessment team that will meet each semester to discuss acts of intolerance, assess the climate at the university, and provide constructive suggestions for improvements. The team members also will be instrumental in providing the department with ongoing information about incidents that may occur throughout the year.

Members of the university community who are concerned about these issues are invited to consider becoming members of the assessment team.

The unit coordinator would like all persons or organizations interested in becoming members of the assessment team to contact Karen Eggers at 1-9304 or by e-mail, eggerski@vt.edu.

If you have been or become the victim of a sensitive crime and would like to speak with a member of the Sensitive Crime Unit, contact the Virginia Tech Police at 1-6411 or emergency 888.

I posted a copy of the piece on VASNET. Following ex-

cellent advice from VAS colleagues, I wrote as follows² to Michael Jones, Director of Tech’s Police Department:

Dear Director Jones:

The Virginia Association of Scholars is concerned that Constitutional rights not be infringed, even with the best of intentions; and we are concerned at the prevalence of “political correctness” on American campuses whereby pressure is exerted for everyone to adhere to a single, narrow world-view. In a forthcoming issue of *Virginia Scholar* we shall be referring to the item, “Police initiating assessment”, in *Spectrum* of June 15, which appears to illustrate the grounds for our concerns. For your information, the text of the item was:

[*text of item reproduced*]

I would appreciate getting answers – from you or from whoever the responsible official concerned may be – to the following questions:

Is the item correct in implying that Virginia Tech holds intolerance to be a crime?

Is “sensitive-crime” defined in any statutes or other documents?

Under what authority was the sensitive-crime unit established in the Police Department?

What did the mentioned training consist of? Who were the trainers? What are their qualifications for this?

How much time did the training require? From what other duties were the trainees exempted in order to provide time for this training? Were the trainers paid? If so, how much and from what funds?

Did the training include consideration of the Bill of Rights and in particular the First Amendment? Did the training include mention of specific First-Amendment cases in which expressions of intolerance were found to be constitutionally protected, for example the right of Nazis to parade through predominantly Jewish

¹ *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 95:6:15, p.4

² 3 August 1995

neighborhoods, or the recent Michigan ruling that distribution of a pornographic story on the Internet was certainly deeply offensive, but not a crime?

Are you aware that (in California) university administrators were ordered to attend First-Amendment sensitivity training because they took action against people whom they charged with ‘insensitive’ or ‘intolerant’ behavior?

Since we plan to publish the next issue of our Newsletter in October, I would appreciate a reply at your early convenience.

Very promptly I got a phone call from Karen Eggers, offering a meeting with her and Director Jones. I had misinterpreted the item, I was told.

Should not then a correction appear in *Spectrum*?, I asked. No, was the response, the item was quite accurate!

I pleaded for something in writing, so that what I published would accurately reflect the Police Department’s views. (Of course I did also want answers to the specific questions I’d asked. When a written request for answers is evaded, I assume that some of the answers would be embarrassing.)

Again promptly I received several copies of the brochure reproduced on pages 12 & 13, with a courteous covering letter³:

Enclosed, are several copies of the Sensitive Crime Unit Brochure. The information contained in the brochure gives a detailed account of what the unit is about. This information should allay any fears you have, that we are attempting to suppress anyone’s first amendment rights. If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact me and we can set up a meeting to discuss your concerns. (231-9304)

Our only wish is to assist the victims of crimes in the reporting and recovery process that is so vital to the prosecution of perpetrators.

Intolerance in itself is not a crime, it is only when intolerance rears its ugly head and commits an act that is a violation of the law, that intolerance becomes a crime.

We would sincerely like to invite you to become a member of the assessment team. The idea of the team is to provide all sides of what people are experiencing at the university. To determine if anyone’s rights are being violated or crimes committed. If we find that crimes have been committed then it is our sworn duty to take action. Without the cooperation of the victims, there is little that we can do. By incorporating members of the community into a partnership we hope to have advocates that victims are willing to come to and report these crimes. These advocates will know that the police

are here to assist victims through the criminal justice process and encourage the victims to come to us and report crimes.

Under pressure of time, I responded⁴ as follows:

I do appreciate your very prompt response and the brochures you sent.

My suspicions are strengthened, that this is a well-intentioned venture, yet one that might illustrate the old adage that “hell is paved with good intentions”. That there is no intention to infringe on rights doesn’t mean that there may not be a chilling effect exerted, an environment created that is hostile to the exercise of free speech.

For example, “*intended* to intimidate or harass” “as determined by law-enforcement authorities” suggests that the Unit has the authority as well as the expertise to decide what a person’s intentions are. Then again, “The university does not tolerate behavior that is contrary to its mission” seems overly broad, to say the least: I might interpret it to mean that, since learning is the University’s mission, students who skip classes, or don’t do suggested homework, won’t be tolerated; or that administrative expenditures on anything but learning – for example, public relations or inter-collegiate athletics – should not be tolerated.

I will share my concerns and the information in the brochure with colleagues in the Virginia Association of Scholars. It may well be that our most fruitful avenue would be to volunteer for the assessment team, or perhaps to meet with you as you suggested earlier. In any case I do appreciate your prompt and courteous response. If I am not again in touch in the next several weeks, it will be under the pressure of other urgent matters that I cannot avoid.

By the time I returned from attending the XXth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences in Seoul (Korea), wider notice had already been taken. An article in the *Washington Times*⁵ shed some further light:

University spokesman David Nutter said the description of the unit’s mission may have been ‘an inappropriate choice of words’ ...

Mike Jones, chief of the university’s police force, agrees. ‘... We could have called it a rape response unit’ ...

Kissa Underwood, treasurer of Virginia Tech’s Black Student Alliance, said the new unit sounded like a ‘wonderful idea’ but added she had not heard of any problems with race relations on campus.

‘There must have been something going on if it

³ 7 August

⁴ 15 August

⁵ Ty Clevenger, Virginia Tech police start unit for ‘sensitive’ crimes, *Washington Times* 95:9:8, A1,8

was needed, right?’ she said. ‘I personally haven’t had any problems.’

Precisely so. That illustrates one of my major objections to incessant harping on sensitivity, diversity, anti-harassment initiatives and the rest: it feeds the suspicion that dreadfully insensitive, racist, sexist things are happening all the time, albeit for some strange reason unbeknownst to the general public. But such a suspicion goes against the evidence of recent American history.

My first-hand experience of the United States began in 1956. For a couple of years I lived in Nelson International House in Ann Arbor (MI). There I came to know a number of black Americans including several who looked “white” to me. One of them told me that when he visited his home in the South, he and his wife had to travel separately because she looked clearly black and they didn’t dare enter their home states as an apparently mixed-race couple.

My foreigner’s simplistic view that race matters were better in the North was soon altered. In Ann Arbor itself, clothing stores would allow whites but not blacks to try on clothes before buying them. One of the barber shops in Ann Arbor was being picketed because it refused to serve blacks.

I learned not only that racism was as much in the North as in the South but some other things as well that I hadn’t expected and didn’t much like. In my youthful naiveté I had imagined that members of different oppressed groups would display mutual understanding and empathy. But I discovered – most poignantly from a girl I dated – that blacks could be as anti-Semitic as any WASP; and from a Japanese roommate that anti-Semitic stereotypes were the same in Asia as in Europe.

Our International House was sponsored by the highly well-intentioned Experiment in International Living on the presumption that mutual understanding would follow from having a diversity of people living together and sharing the household chores. Instead as I like to put it, I acquired prejudices against groups of people of whose very existence I had previously been unaware. I learned that Indians respected or despised their fellow-countrymen according to the shade of their skin-color. I discovered how intolerantly dogmatic South Korean Christians could be. I learned that most of the Africans and Asians came from wealthy homes and thought it en-

tirely beneath them to do manual chores – and so for one semester I did the room-cleaning and laundry for my Indian room-mate as well as for myself. And so on.

I did make some very good friends from all over the world, but I also learned some highly unappealing things about some other cultures. Chiefly I was reinforced in what I’d long concluded from personal experience, my family having been lucky enough to escape from Nazi Europe and be accepted into parochial, unsophisticated, good-hearted Australia: that one can make about groups – nations, cultures, “races” – entirely valid generalizations which, being **averages, probabilities, tendencies**, may not apply in any meaningful way to any given individual who happens to belong to the given group. One can make significantly valid **pejorative** generalizations about a group and yet, quite honestly and genuinely, recognize that any number of individuals who belong to that group **don’t** show that characteristic. Yes indeed, Scots are canny and frugal, for example as

compared to the Irish, and many aspects of the countries and their cultural atmosphere fit with that recognition; yet I know some marvelously generous Scots, and I don’t doubt but that there are some very miserly Irish. Consequently, I’m absolutely

firm that it is **always** wrong, and worse than wrong, to treat **any** person as a group-member instead of as an individual. It’s just as wrong when you think you’re doing the person a favor as it is when you’re intent on wronging them. It’s quite demeaning to have favors done for you just because you’re a Jew⁶. Inevitably you infer that “they” know you to be inferior, incapable of looking after yourself.

In the spring of 1957 I had ventured into the South and seen the segregated rest-rooms and water-fountains – as well as, to my utter surprise, blacks and whites mingling in what seemed an entirely unstrained fashion. Years later one of my graduate students, from a small town in Georgia, told me that he had grown up playing quite uninhibitedly with black children – until they came to be of school age and separation set in. He offered me

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Is it true that you must

“use it or lose it”?

The truth is even grimmer.

If you don’t use it,

THEN YOU’VE ALREADY LOST IT

⁶ On having favors done for you just because you’re black, read Stephen L. Carter, *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, Basic Books, 1991; and Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character*, HarperCollins, 1991

the generalization that in the South blacks and whites had been at ease with one another albeit the blacks were allowed no equality of rights; whereas in the North they were ostensibly equal but kept at further than arm's length.

At any rate, in the mid-1950s I had found the United States brimming with overt indications of racism. When I came back to the United States a decade later, it was the aftermath of an incredible social revolution. I spent 1965-66 again in Ann Arbor, looking for a permanent position. Returning from one interview trip, I remarked to the black secretary in our Department that I'd been in the South, in Kentucky. "I'm from Louisville", she told me, "and believe me, Kentucky ain't the South." As it happened, it was in Kentucky that I found a job – and also learned how quickly and without much fuss that Commonwealth had desegregated, education and all else, virtually overnight; under the leadership of Governor Happy Chandler, himself as much an epitome of a traditional Southern good-ol'-boy as one might find.

The builder who sold us a house in Lexington recommended two people to do some tile-work for us: "One's white and the other's black," he said, "but he's a **good** n----- and he'll do a better job for you". The "n-word" took me aback; but after thinking about it, I decided that it was rather remarkable and even admirable that someone raised decades ago in a segregated society would recommend a black man over a white; and perhaps it was asking too much that he also change the linguistic habits of a lifetime.

On the campus of the University of Kentucky, I was pleasantly amazed to see black boys and white girls walking hand-in-hand or lying next to one another on the grass with no one (except perhaps me!) paying any heed. How utterly astonishing to see open inter-racial dating barely a decade after mixed couples could not have sat together in a cinema, when blacks were upstairs and whites down. (Coming from Australia, that had seemed to me peculiar, because we used to think that upstairs were the more desirable seats.)

My brother-in-law Carl Johnson, a very black black married to a blonde white woman, lived at that time in New York, on a section of Riverside Drive where mixed couples felt least uncomfortable, with an all-white ghetto on the one side of them and an all-black one on the other. When Carl finally agreed that they would venture a visit to Kentucky, he fully expected (he told me later) that there would be such

unpleasantness that they might have to cut the visit short. But we took him and Lois and their light-brown children to our faculty country-club, to restaurants, to my favorite fishing-lake: everywhere that we would have taken any other visitors, and there wasn't any overt hint of any potential problem. Before leaving, Carl expressed to me his amazement. He had noticed, he told me, the occasional surprised look, but not the trace of anything offensive or unwelcoming. He had felt more at ease here, in a former Border State, than in the hot-house atmosphere of New York.

In the space of a decade or two, then, the United States accomplished a social revolution the likes of which has not been seen anywhere else in the world; and with an astonishingly small amount of violence before, during, or after. By and large, American society did the right thing because it had become so evident that it **was** the right thing. People of middle and older age changed beliefs and habits and actions of their life-time and of generations of tradition. Good-ol'-boy politicians, very recently instigators of "massive resistance" to desegregation, now sponsored blacks for all sorts of high positions. Contrast that, if you will, with South Africa which went backwards for three or four decades until forced by pressure from the whole world to change. Or with such multi-cultural unions as the former Yugoslavia or Soviet Union; or with the way blacks treat one another in nation after nation across Africa, as tribal and political enemies to be starved or slaughtered.

Rarely is the United States given credit for its social revolution accomplished so magnificently and so recently. Of course there always remains more good to be done and more wrongs to be corrected. I am, as a matter of fact, one of those who does spend more time pointing to faults than in praising merits, and I stand ready to justify that practice. But any realistic suggestion for making things better should be based on an understanding of the current situation and how it evolved from its recent and its further past. Above all, suggestions for making things better should not call for actions that can only make things worse.

The politically correct demands of the last decade or so have indeed, however, made things worse rather than better. Activist radicals of umpteen stripes and their cowardly administrative fellow-travelers use phony statistics; dismiss or ignore or denigrate the incredibly rapid and large progress recently made; push for measures that restrict

everyone's freedom; pretend that our society is inherently, entrenchedly racist and sexist. They bandy about words like "sensitivity" and "diversity" until everyone, Police Departments included, feel obliged to get into the act.

Ty Clevenger in the *Washington Times* quoted Tech's police chief as saying, "I'm sure we're not the first group to have a Sensitive Crime Unit. We could have called it a rape response unit". Karen Eggers told the *Collegiate Times* that the unit's original intent was to deal simply with sexual assault crimes⁷: "But the department decided issues can be sensitive in hate crimes, too".

A pity. Had they stayed with the original intent, only complimentary comments would have come their way. But, as the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* put it⁸, "Virginia Tech likes to be on the cutting edge. ... to show that it's connected to high culture ... Tech has created a Sensitive Crime Unit ... to investigate acts of intolerance". The *Washington Times* returned to the matter with an editorial⁹ a week after Ty Clevenger's initial story: "It was a mistake to set up this new Thought Police unit, and the university ought to get rid of it now, before it harms the university and its members".

It has harmed us already, of course, by holding us up to public ridicule. Who shall we blame?

The Police Department makes a handy scapegoat. But as usual there's enough blame to go around quite a long way. Most of it attaches to the climate of Political Correctitude that is a *national* phenomenon for which the blame is not easily placed, certainly not on identifiable individuals. Administrators, though, must accept some reproach for allowing PC to take local root, or even, all too often, actively fostering it. The faculty, in particular such institutional voices as the Faculty Senate, have thought it as usual the better part of valor to collaborate. The

least blame probably attaches to the activist radicals whose strident, intemperate blathering of faddish slogans might seem to be the most visible "cause" of the many contemporary infringements of free speech, due process, and clear thinking; those radicals, after all, cannot help themselves. They are intellectual cripples, incapable for ideological reasons of thinking logically or paying heed to evidence. They literally don't know any better. So it is those of us who do know better who are to blame for letting the know-nothings have their way.

Can we make things get better?

It would already go a very long way if administrators were to recognize that while the soft-headed absurdities of political correctness may play well on campus, they are not at all to the liking of the Commonwealth's or the nation's citizenry as a whole. Administrators would do well to re-discover that the primary mission, purpose, or "core value"¹⁰ of a university is to foster intellect, learning, scholarship.

There's simply no knowing how much public support we might get, even in these financially parlous times, if we eschewed attempts at left-liberal social engineering and concentrated our time and effort on **school-work**. If our

leaders would talk about ***nothing but that*** for a while, then maybe faculty and students and the wider public might start to believe that they – we, "the university", academe – really mean it; and they (and we) might begin to behave and to be treated accordingly. Perhaps even mid-level administrators and bureaucrats would then practice thinking clearly and critically and take care to express themselves so that what they say is also what they mean.

Yes. I know. Hopelessly naive. Dreaming.

But dreams are worth having – for example if they are of the sort that Martin Luther King had.

Mine is exactly of that sort.

"sensitivity-training requirements ... are intellectually bankrupt ... because they assume that there is something wrong with the people to be sensitized – specifically that they are bigots. This presumption itself is a case of bigotry."

Edwin J. Delattre

Chronicle of Higher Education 94:12:14, A30

⁷ Rick Muirragui, "Tech Sensitive Crime Unit seen as free speech deterrent", *Collegiate Times* 95:9:15, A1,3

⁸ "The Sensitivity Police", *Richmond Times-Dispatch* 95:9:8, A8

⁹ "Virginia Tech's thought police", *Washington Times* 95:9:16, C2

¹⁰ Re core values, see p.14

P O T P O U R R I

Male professors' victory dents affirmative action

was a page-1 story at the end of August¹: the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had overruled an earlier summary judgment in favor of VCU's award of salary raises only to women. The legal challenge against those sex-discriminatory raises had been filed by Ted J. Smith III and four colleagues, assisted by the Center for Individual Rights (see p. 19 for more about the Center). A later story² reported that the Allen administration would like an out-of-court settlement with the male professors.

CIR's Michael McDonald has had calls from male faculty all over the country since the Appeals Court ruling was announced. "The appeals court ... questioned the statistical methods used in the VCU pay study", methods also "commonly used by other employers to determine whether discrimination exists. ... 'There were at least a dozen flaws'". So this judgment could have very wide ramifications.

The American Association of University Professors supported VCU against Ted Smith and his colleagues. Yet another AAUP action illustrating why more and

more academics are joining the National Association of Scholars and leaving the AAUP.

We wish Ted Smith and his confrères continuing success in their struggle to have salaries determined solely on the basis of

Affirmative Discrimination

If someone complained to the regents about discrimination against a black person, alarms would go off But we are numb to it if it happens to a white or Asian person. That has been one of the most frustrating things I have had to endure....

It's interesting that the university community is probably the only government institution fighting to preserve the right to discriminate on the basis of race

Regent Ward Connerly
of U. Cal's Board
Chronicle of Higher Education
95:7:28, p. A27

academic merit. When it's all over we hope the principals themselves will share with us the full story.

STOP PRESS!

Faculty core values elucidated

We were understandably electrified at this outcome³ of discussion by the Faculty Senate "of core values, directions, and goals for the university's faculty".

True enough, we've sometimes had the suspicion that there were

a lot of people around who have not the faintest conception of what a university is or ought to be about. But we used to think those ignorant folk were the administrators, the legislators, the journalists, not to speak of students, parents, or the "general public". It hadn't seriously occurred to us that *faculty* didn't know what values, directions, and goals they had chosen for their working life.

Should you ever wonder about the purpose or value of faculty governance, don't fail to remember this notable achievement.

Evaluating physics instructors

At Mr. Jefferson's University, the Physics Department Lecture Course Evaluation contains this question:

- 9) Do you feel that the professor treats students of different races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations equally? (If not, please explain below)

This prompts us to ask the following questions, of the Physics faculty and whomever else⁴ it may concern:

- In physics exams, do you also ask students what they *feel* by contrast with what the state

¹ Ty Clevenger, *Washington Times* 95:8:30, A1,16

² Ty Clevenger, "Allen wants settlement with male VCU professors", *Washington Times* 95:8:31, C3

³ *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 95:4:27

⁴ No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.... Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. (John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation 17)

of affairs actually is?

- On what grounds do you suppose that members of the class have data upon which to base a valid answer?
- For example, how is the professor to know the sexual orientations of class members? Is every professor supposed to be expert in identifying members of different races and ethnicities? Using what means?

Talking of physics

reminds us of President Carrier's attempt to abolish the Physics Dept. at James Madison University. That brought JMU exposure⁵ in the prestigious *Science* (circulation about 150,000):

physics professor Dorn Peterson ... who until recently headed the Faculty Senate ... thinks it's 'more than a coincidence' that the announcement [to eliminate the Physics major] came the day after the senate had objected to school president Ronald Carrier naming his son as a provost without consulting the faculty.

**It's not our fault!!
We too are victims
of circumstance!**

Having just printed items about UVa and JMU, we don't mind sharing this letter:

Dear VS Editor:

I enjoy your publication a lot. My wife and I get a lot of bellylaughs out of it. But why do you keep using examples from Virginia Tech? It's the same here, and I'm sure it's much the same in most other Virginia schools ...

Secret Admirer

Response: Our sentiments ex-

actly! But we can only print what we know about. We'd love to get more news from other places. Why not drop us a line, or an e-note? Think how the administra-

LEADERSHIP

When the Church of England Synod voted in November 1993 on the ordination of women, those in favor were:

- House of Laity, 67.3%
- House of Clergy, 70.4%
- House of Bishops, 75%

Alumnus Chronicle
(Univ. of St. Andrews)
#86, June 1995, p.29

tors in *your* college could be made to quake in their shoes when they see their own deeds documented here!

Professional English

The May, 1995, issue of the *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association* contained a total of four essays (as well as non-essay items). The titles:

- > *Comparing Sappho to Philaenis: John Donne's 'Homopoetics'*
- > *Birth of the Cyberqueer*
- > *Of Creole Symptoms, Cuban Fantasies, and Other Latin American Postcolonial Ideologies*
- > *Heldris de Cornuälle's Roman de Silence and the Feudal Politics of Lineage*

There was also a Guest Column, "What does Queer Theory teach us about X?"

Modern

Languages

Association??

Black English

Like the rest of the world, we watched some of the O. J. Simpson trial even as we hated ourselves for doing so. The rewards were few and far between. One was to watch Johnnie Co-

chran berate his fellow African-American Chris Darden for taking seriously a witness's remark, that he could identify some people, solely from hearing their voice, as African-Americans.

What would Cochran say about the following e-mail message, sent by an African-American professor to his colleagues who are largely *not* African-American?

Yo Homies:

Some y'all been askin' what I mean by STAGE PARTY so I thought I better try communicate. Word:

Ain't nobody have to be crashin' the stage party. Ya'll SPOS'D t' be up there anyway. Ain't no big thing. R— say you can hood anybody in the HOOD when you up there; just get up off your chair and wrap that thang 'round their neck. Onliest peoples ain't SPOS'D t' be up there's people be greetin or marchin' them students in or usherin' folks or things like that. Everybody else gone be up on that stage. So just g'on up there and chill. Anybody need a translation call my pager at X-XXXX. Word.

S—

Administrative English

"Dr. Ping speaks out strongly for the Leadership Imperatives he will **eschew** [sic, emphasis added] at our Leadership Forum" ⁶

Oleanna,

the play by David Mamet about a professor charged with sexual harassment, was performed at the Barter Theater, Abingdon (VA) last August (1994). We found it a harrowing experience to watch: so true to contemporary mad-life.

Even more harrowing, though,

⁵ "The end of physics?" in RANDOM SAMPLES, edited by Constance Holden, *Science* 267 (95:2:24) 1095

⁶ Flyer from University Leadership Development attached to Provost's memo of 95:9:14 at Virginia Tech

was the discussion among audience and cast after the play. It illustrated very well that many people, even some associated with colleges, are unaware of the hold that PC has gained.

Speaking of “harrowing”: Next to me on a flight this summer was a coed from a Virginia Institution of Higher Education (*not* Virginia Tech). I mentioned that I had found a book she asked about “emotionally harrowing”. There was a noticeable pause before she said, “I don’t know that word”. Reminded me of the time I asked, on a multiple-choice quiz, “Which of the following is a good generalization?” Upwards of a dozen students, out of 150 or so, asked me what I meant by “a good generalization”.

Do circumstances alter cases?

Toward the end of May I sent the following letter to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. A phone call indicated that it would be published, but so far it has not been:

Dear Chronicle:

Four decades ago, the Supreme Court found segregated schooling to be unconstitutional. Racial discrimination was taken to have been outlawed. “Massive resistance” to the Supreme Court ruling was called for by politicians of the Old South. Their stance was roundly condemned by all right-thinking people.

Subsequently, “affirmative action” has increasingly been interpreted as allowing racial discrimination: that is, making race a primary consideration in decisions about hiring, college admission, etc.

Now the Supreme Court has reminded us that if words are to honestly mean what they say, barring racial discrimination means not taking race into account when awarding scholar-

ships, for example. At once, massive resistance to the Supreme Court ruling is threatened by academic leaders. On CNN television, the President of the University of Maryland promised to find a way around the decision. The Chancellor at Berkeley is quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* to the effect that “We can come up with some tricks”.

Can we now count on all right-thinking people to condemn this proposed massive resistance to the Supreme Court just as they did forty years ago?

We were prompted to this by reading such things as:

Many institutions ... said they planned to keep minority scholarships.... Colleges were urged to do so by the American Council of education⁷

and

The Education Department plans to continue upholding the legality of minority scholarships⁸.

WANTED!

a consensus builder who is skilled at framing issues and moving groups toward the achievement of abstract and sometimes challenging goals ... [including] preparing a newsletter⁹

We sure are glad that the goals are not concrete ones. An “abstract” newsletter might not generate as much bumf as a real one would. (The ad was for a Director of a Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. We certainly agree that nothing concrete should be expected to result

⁷ Scott Jaschik, “No’ on black scholarships”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 95:6:2, p.A25

⁸ Scott Jaschik, “Education Dept. sticks by policy upholding minority scholarships”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 95:6:9, p.A28

⁹ *Spectrum* (VPI&SU) 95:5:4, p.6

ANYONE OMITTED?

The University of Minnesota has been at the leading edge of the PC world ever since it consented to be governed by a Court-appointed Master because it had not hired a chemistry instructor who happened to be female. (A decade ago or so, one of the senior administrators there said that they would never have consented had they had an inkling of what would follow.) For a Dean of Agriculture they seek someone with “demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, cultural diversity, and equal opportunity for women and minorities”, and their footnote reads:

“The University ... is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.”

(advert, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 95:4:28, p.B39)

Reminds us of Tom Lehrer, who recalled his stint in the Army which did not discriminate on those grounds “or on grounds of ability”.

Recalling that such enumeration implicitly **excludes** any non-mentioned category, I note that the University of Minnesota feels free to discriminate against parents, bankers, sailors, and numerous other classes of people.

from that.)

JOSEF MARTIN GETS ALIENATED

(‘Josef Martin’ is the author of *To Rise Above Principle: The Memoirs of an Unreconstructed Dean*)

For quite a long time I’d been unable to understand how anyone could believe that aliens in UFOs have been in the habit of abducting US citizens and interrogating them. **AND THEN IT HAPPENED TO ME!** At one moment I was lying in bed, and the next I was confronted by someone who was clearly not a human being. Yet we were able to converse:

- ALIEN: We would appreciate your helping us to understand how men’s minds work.
- J.M.: Of course I’ll be delighted, if I can, but I’m hardly an expert on that. Why me?
- ALIEN: Because your book helped us make sense of what goes on in your colleges.
- J.M.: Oh! I’m so pleased to hear that. But there’s a lot goes on that even I don’t pretend to understand. I just didn’t write about those things.
- ALIEN: Our main problem is to puzzle out why your leaders say one thing and do another.
- J.M.: How do you mean?
- ALIEN: Well, for example your governors, legislators, and college administrators are all now saying that “education” is their primary function, mission, and purpose.
- J.M.: Yes?
- ALIEN: So how does it happen that the budgets of academic departments are reduced at the same time as perfectly good concrete sidewalks and paved roads are replaced?
- J.M.: Oh, that’s because different sorts of money are used for roads and for academic departments.
- ALIEN: How many sorts of money do you have? We only knew of what you call “green-backs”.
- J.M.: I’m afraid I can’t help you there. I do know that there is “private” money and “State funds”, and all sorts of others as well. In practice it means that when a Dean needs money there isn’t any but when Buildings or Student Affairs needs money, there is some.
- ALIEN: Isn’t there some means of exchanging different moneys? As dollars can be changed into yen? Couldn’t the legislators and governors and administrators who say that they want to spend money on education find ways of converting non-education money into education money?
- J.M.: I do wish you’d ask them. And if you can get an answer, please let me know what it is. But what brought this to your attention?
- ALIEN: Two recent items in your newspaper. One said that the budget for buying things for your Library had been reduced from \$6 million to \$5 million. The other said that your football coach had received a new contract worth \$250,000 per year. Why was that \$1 million not taken from the athletic program rather than the academic program?
- J.M.: Different sorts of money.
- ALIEN: But the university’s budget doesn’t show them as different sorts of money. The athletic department has been a department just like any other for quite a few years now.
- J.M.: That can’t be right.
- ALIEN: Communicating with you earthlings has all sorts of difficulties. When you say “right”, it’s quite ambiguous. It enables you to confuse “correct” with “proper”, for instance. Where does the money for the athletic program come from?
- J.M.: Student fees, gifts from alumni, and so on.
- ALIEN: Where does academic money come from?
- J.M.: Student fees, gifts from alumni, and so on.
- ALIEN: Who decides which student fees are academic money and which are athletic money? Who decides whether to ask alumni for athletic money or for academic money?
- J.M.: Well, it’s not really a matter of *asking*. Everyone knows that alumni will give money only for athletic programs, and that the last thing students want at college is anything academic.
- ALIEN: But what about the governors and legislators?
- J.M.: Well, you’ve got to understand that they feel it necessary to say things that everyone expects them to say, but no one expects them to do what they say. They’re *politicians*.
- ALIEN: Ah! And your university administrators are *also* politicians?
- J.M.: You’ve got the idea. Now may I go back to sleep?

NATIONAL ALUMNI FORUM: ENLISTING ALUMNI IN THE QUEST FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

At the NAS meeting in Boston we learned of the intention to establish an organization through which alumni could help in the colossal task of making academic excellence the actual priority in higher education. The list of supporters is impressive and encouraging. What's needed now is to enroll as many influential alumni as possible from as many colleges as possible. You can help by letting NAF know of any trustees or alumni of your college who are supportive of our efforts: contact Dr. Jerry L. Martin, President, National Alumni Forum, 1625 K Street N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20006-1604; phone (202) 467-6787, fax 6784, 76544.1367@COMPUSERVE.COM.

Heading the Forum's distinguished National Council are former NEH chairman Lynne V. Cheney and former Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm. Here are some extracts from the Forum's leaflets:

THE NEED: In recent years, scholars from across the political spectrum have warned about growing political intolerance on our nation's campuses. As Cheney has observed, all the rules protecting academic freedom were designed to resist outside pressures. Now that the threat is from within, members of the larger academic community, including alumni and trustees, must step forward in defense of the life and liberty of the mind.

THE MISSION: Through its national voice and by helping alumni work with their alma maters, the Forum will promote academic freedom and excellence, while challenging policies and practices that threaten freedom within the university.

THE MEMBERS: Graduates of colleges and universities understand what education should be. Giving \$2.9 billion annually, they are the largest private source of support for higher education. Immune from the pressures of academic politics, they are free to speak up for fundamental academic values.

THE ORGANIZATION: The Forum will inform alumni and the general public about events that affect academic freedom in higher education and will alert them to ways they can support academic excellence. Initially, the Forum will establish:

- A NATIONAL VOICE that directly challenges threats to academic freedom wherever they occur in higher education.
- TIMELY INFORMATION SHARING through a newsletter and an electronic network as well as through documented studies and reports.
- COLLEGE ALUMNI NETWORKS to provide for the discussion of campus issues, to help alumni serve on search committees and boards of trustees, and to identify outstanding academic programs to support.
- REGIONAL FORUMS for alumni to share information, hear speakers, and discuss issues in their city, region or state.
- PHILANTHROPY FOR EXCELLENCE that helps alumni target activities worthy of support.

Councils and Committees of the Forum

The National Council includes Lynne V. Cheney (Chairman); Richard D. Lamm (Vice Chairman); Hank Brown (U.S. Senator, Republican, Colorado); Chester E. Finn, Jr. (Former Assistant Secretary of Education); James H. Higgins (Former CEO, Mellon Bank Corp.); Irving Kristol (Co-Editor, *The Public Interest*); Joseph I. Lieberman (U.S. Senator, Democrat, Connecticut); Philip Merrill (Publisher, *The Washingtonian*); Martin Peretz (Editor-in-Chief and Chairman, *The New Republic*); Laurence H. Silberman (U.S. Circuit Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit); William K. Tell, Jr. (Senior Vice President, Texaco, Inc.); Herman B Wells (Chancellor, Indiana University).

Advisory Committees include a Trustees Council, an Alumni Leadership Council, a Presidents Council, and a Scholars Council.

LET'S DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO SEE THAT THIS PROMISING VENTURE MEETS WITH RESOUNDING SUCCESS. TELL YOUR TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI ABOUT IT AND ENLIST THEIR ACTIVE SUPPORT.

GOOD READING

Swamped is how we feel most of the time by the pile of books and magazines waiting to be read or at the very least scanned. So we don't re-read often enough the much smaller pile of stuff that bears re-reading. One of the benefits of teaching is the stimulus to look again and again at some key pieces. Rarely do I re-read something without noticing an approach or an idea or an insight that I'd missed before.

We notice most easily, of course, things germane to what happens to be on our minds at the time. This summer I was reading – for more than the second time – **C. P. Snow's *The Two Cultures: and a Second Look***. The "second look" comments in passing on the degree of personal abuse some of Snow's critics had heaped on him after *The Two Cultures* was first published. Snow's understanding of how to behave in public controversy struck me as relevant to academics nowadays who stand in constant danger of being called, for no good reason, something like "anti-diversity", "racist", etc.:

Let us imagine that I am called ... a kleptomaniac necrophilist (I have selected with some care two allegations which have not, so far as I know, been made). I have exactly two courses of action. The first, and the one which in general I should choose to follow, is to do precisely nothing. The second is, if the nuisance becomes intolerable, to sue. There is one course of action which no one can expect of a sane man: that is, solemnly to argue the points, to produce certificates from Saks and Harrods to say that he has never, to the best of their belief, stolen a single article, to obtain testimonials that even after a convivial evening, ... [his friends] have not once seen him lurking in the vicinity of a tomb.

Such a reply is not on. It puts one in the same psychological compartment as one's traducer. That is a condition from which one has a right to be excused.

That seems to us absolutely right. When one cannot afford to ignore, then one should take the initiative: file a grievance, use whatever procedures the institution has for disciplining those who speak or act unprofessionally. Times being as they are, it may be necessary to seek redress by extra-institutional means. It has been very heartening that recent years have seen a few lawyers and groups of lawyers enter the lists against the evils of PC.

One notable group is the **Center for Individual Rights**, which we've had occasion to mention

before. VAS Secretary Bob Detlefsen has just joined CIR as Director of Research & Education. We wish him much success and satisfaction in a preeminently worthwhile task.

Just to hand is the Center's **Docket Report** for the second quarter of 1995, with cheering news from a number of pending cases. A couple of them pertain to Virginia: UVa's refusal to fund a Christian student magazine on the same basis as other student magazines; VCU's awarding of pay raises to women on the basis of invalid statistics (see p.14). Others have to do with racial discrimination in admissions and so on. There can hardly be a cause or group more worthy of support than this Center. They accept contributions, and welcome offers from other lawyers to assist *pro bono* in appropriate cases. Contact Center for Individual Rights, 1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 260, Washington DC 20036; (202) 833-8400, fax 8410.

MIT DER DUMMHEIT KÄMPFEN GÖTTER SELBST VERGEBENS

(Against stupidity the very gods themselves contend in vain)

That quote from Schiller's *Joan of Arc* is another benefit I reaped from re-reading Snow's *Two Cultures*. We had best bear it in mind as we hear about "re-structuring", "innovation", "breaking the lecture-hour-credit-hour mold", "diversity", "retention", and so on and on.

Hardly had we typed in this bit about **CIR** than their Special Issue (August 1995) of the *Docket Report* came: "We're not normally given to indignation. But in the case of *James B. Maas v. Cornell University*, filed on August 1 ..., we'll make an exception". That indignation is more than justified. Maas was punished by a panel that *didn't find him guilty of any specific charge*, after a hearing in which his choice of advisor was vetoed, he was not allowed to witness the complainants make their charges, and the panel's chairman "brushed off Maas's procedural objections by insisting that the ... [panel] would 'make up the rules as we go along'". We knew of Maas-type hearings in Nazi Germany, in the Soviet Union, and in similarly procedure- and individual-rights-respecting societies. Now it's happening at what used to be our finest universities. **How did that become possible?**

Not through any one single thing, of course. The overwhelming mass of faculty took for granted that the civil-righters and affirmative-actionists and EEOers were doing and would continue to do good and right things – not a bad assumption up to a couple of decades ago. Most faculty don't read *Academic Questions*, *Heterodoxy*, or even *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and it's easy for them to brush aside horror stories they happen to hear as "only anecdotes". Too many administrators apply a double standard, expecting empathy and understanding and forbearing from well-established, secure, white, full professors while excusing the poor down-trodden when they lie, libel, smear, steal, and threaten.

The chief trouble, though, has come because there have been established AA/EO offices, Vice-Presidencies for Minority Affairs, and other bureaus and bureaucrats whose sole purpose is the rooting out of implicit racism, environmental hostility, and the like. Only the cassation of these partial, partisan, self-interested functionaries will spell the end of politically correct, Nazi-American happenings. Since that's a long way off, every teacher had better be prepared to be charged with racial or sexual harassment by any female or minority individual who happens to have a grudge. As preparation, read the recommendations¹ of Judith Kleinfeld, who refused to knuckle under and eventually defeated the bad guys:

1. Don't offer false apologies: this is a legal not a social matter.
2. Quickly solicit allies and support from faculty organizations.
3. Hire and pay a lawyer, who will make your enemies realize that you aren't defenseless and that their attack is not going to be cost-free.
4. Keep meticulous records, collect every document, make detailed, dated notes of every event and conversation.
5. Consider going public; choose the forum for your fight. Many people in the community, already suspicious of PC, will take your side.
6. Occupy the high moral ground; explain in clear language why your position benefits students.

Don't imagine, one might add, that any seniority or awards or long, loyal service will bring you the support of your institution or its administrators. Many cases besides that of Maas, say that of Al Mandel-

stamm at Virginia Tech², illustrate the old saw that virtue is its own punishment and that institutions have no memory and no gratitude.

MOKITA

Scientific, dispassionate discussion of the nature, use, and abuse of the IQ concept is, in our time and place, uncommon. Here are extracts from a rare instance³:

The first reactions to *The Bell Curve* were expressions of public outrage. In the second round ... some ... suggested that Herrnstein and Murray were merely bringing up facts ... well known to the scientific community, but perhaps best not discussed in public. A Papua New Guinea language has a term for this, *Mokita*. It means 'truth that we all know but agree not to talk about.'

... A certain amount of intelligence seems to be needed to gain entry to an intellectually demanding field, but beyond that point success is determined by the effort put into the job, social support, and just sheer experience IQ score measures something with decreasing marginal value....

Intelligence, as measured by the tests, really does matter in both school and work-place, although it may matter in somewhat different ways than *The Bell Curve* suggests....

... although you might change the exact numbers reported by Herrnstein and Murray a bit, intelligence is a substantial predictor of indicators of social problems....

With a few exceptions (primarily involving language tests in Latinos) test items that appear to have the least cultural bias show some of the largest ethnic-group differences. Herrnstein and Murray asserted that the tests are equally valid for minorities and majorities; although too strong, this statement is closer to the truth than the claim that the tests are totally invalid....

... blacks with graduate-school experience have, on the average, writing and computational skills equivalent to whites who have only a community-college education the issue is the changing of skill levels, not certification levels!

Not every professor of English, not even at Harvard, is a deconstructionist or the like. "What

¹ Paraphrased from Judith Kleinfeld's review of *Dictatorship of Virtue* by Richard Bernstein, *Academic Questions* 8 #2 (Spring 1995) 90-93

² See *Virginia Scholar* #1 (December 1993) 12-15 for an annotated bibliography of the Mandelstamm Affair

³ Earl Hunt, "The role of intelligence in modern society", *American Scientist* 83 (July-August 1995) 356-68

price correctness?"⁴ by Robert Brustein, artistic director of the American Repertory Theater and professor of English at Harvard, is full of robust good sense:

The time is nigh when 8-year-olds ... will be better instructed in how to use a condom than in how to apply the rules of grammar....

... as if achievement was produced by self-esteem and not the other way around. ...

In July of this year, an assistant dean at Harvard's School of Public Health wrote an op-ed piece in *The Boston Globe* attacking 'Jurassic Park' because the survivors were blond and the victims were dark. She has no comment about the color (or sex) of the all-female dinosaurs.

Don't neglect to read John Leo's columns in *U. S. News & World Report*. (Our reading of them is greatly facilitated by Nick Egoroff, who sends them to us regularly by e-mail after receiving them via CompuServe). We were reminded of that by the item about *Jurassic Park*, which had also been mentioned by Leo (94:1:31). In the same column he reported the desire by the State of Massachusetts to have warning signs on the roads changed from "SLOW CHILDREN" to "WATCH CHILDREN".

There's some sense to that, actually: very few cars slow down when signs tell them to. On the other hand I worry that "WATCH CHILDREN" might be construed as an invitation to pedophiles.

Signs so frequently don't mean what they say. At many hospitals and clinics I've seen "PATIENT PARKING" signs, but never what would be more appropriate for me, namely "IMPATIENT PARKING". This summer in Inverness (Scotland) I was bemused by the immodesty of a tombstone maker who flaunted the advertisement, "MONUMENTAL SCULPTOR". Throughout Scotland we saw indications of how run-down the place is, nothing seems to work: everywhere there are signs reading "DISABLED PARKING" and "DISABLED TOILETS".

Toilets reminds us of another Leo column (95:8:7) reporting (ex-*Commentary*) Wendy Shalit's "fruitless search [at Williams College] for a women's bathroom that doesn't have men in it (barring men from the premises would be 'exclusionary of one gender' and might imply that males and females are somehow quite different – a no-no in the PC world-

view)".

I had been surprised, on my first visit to Japan in 1956, how quickly I was able to get used to uni-sex toilets, which were already then standard there, decades ahead of Williams College. That, one must now infer, demonstrates the very high status women have traditionally enjoyed in Japan. Doubtless it stemmed from the fact that titles and pronouns in the Japanese language have no gender: women and men are both addressed as "-san", for example. We can therefore be confident that, when English has finally been purged of all sexist expressions, the status of women in Anglo-Saxon lands will at last attain the desirable eminence that it has so long had in Japan.

Local newspapers too have their occasional breath of freshness. A public-relations officer for Planned Parenthood had been quoted as saying, "You can't say to teens, 'Just say no.' That doesn't work. That's turning your back on the 50 percent who are already sexually active" and "talking about sex ... is taboo". In response, **David McKissack** asked⁵,

Does anyone believe ... that if we lowered the driving age to 13, that we would have fewer accidents, regardless of how much driver's education we offered?

and pointed out that

sex and its consequences are something we talk about all the time. The pleasures of chastity and individual responsibility are things we don't talk honestly about.

After the 1993 election in Virginia, the defeat of Mike Farris was ascribed by some to "America's anti-faith bigots"; which prompted **Jim Marchman** to ask,

Can the politically correct movement survive inclusion of the religious right in its litany of the oppressed? ...

I do ... look forward to a renewed celebration of the inclusiveness of multiculturalism by all the people in PC-land as the religious right joins with their gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, abortion-rights feminists and other people of victimhood in ascribing their oppression to the bigotry of the rest of society.

⁴ *Chicago Tribune Magazine* 94:1:16, 10-14; originally published in *Partisan Review*

⁵ *Roanoke Times & World-News* 94:1:30, p.NRV2

THE LEVEL OF SKILLS INCULCATED BY SCHOOLS continues to drop. At the 27th International Chemistry Olympiad (Beijing, 12-21 July 1995), "For the first time since 1990, the U.S. did not finish among the top five countries" ⁶ which were China and Iran (tied), Romania, Russia, Czech Republic.

I have long worried that our schools' concern with "access", "self-esteem", "social promotion", with innumerable fads and newly invented "learning disabilities", would ensure that the only children to get a useful education would be those who come from intellectually elite or striving-to-become-intellectually-elite families. Who were the U.S. representatives at the Chemistry Olympiad, drawn from 10,000 competing high-school students around the country? Jason Wong, Prashant Mishra, Elliott Waingold, G. Michael Sawka.

Since World War II, the United States has been pre-eminent in science, in graduate education, in the vitality of and support for academics. But the greatest initial impetus for that was a flood of European refugees, as detailed in *The Intellectual Migration — Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Donald Fleming & Bernard Bailyn, eds., Harvard University Press 1969). It remains to be seen whether entirely home-grown American education can give bright children here the same opportunities that bright children enjoy in so many other places.

Elsewhere, of course, children are not so distracted from substantive learning by, for example, politically correct tinkering with their native language. *First Things* (which we recommended in our last issue) reported ⁷ a nice finesse of "non-sexist language" idiocies:

At the start ... [the professor] declares that his feminist convictions prevent him from going along with the idea that centuries of English literature using 'he' were not influenced by women. Therefore ... he will use 'he' to include both men and women, thus appropriating the tradition for the feminist cause.

The logic seems no less impeccable than that used by radical feminists.

Some relevant quotes from a review⁸ of **Lost Victory: British Dreams, British Realities**

⁶ *Chemical & Engineering News* 95:7:31, p.6

⁷ April 1994, p. 65

⁸ Andrew Neil, "Resting on our laurels", *Sunday Times* (London) 95:7:9 p.7-3

1945-1950 by Correlli Barnett (Macmillan):

Clement Attlee's Labour Government set about the creation of a hugely expensive New Jerusalem even though the country's coffers were empty ... [it] concentrated on distributing wealth before it had created it This book is the study of what happens when a well-meaning but muddled mindset gets hold of a country.

THE WEST IS RESPONSIBLE for all the bad things anywhere in the world, according to *Radio Times* (UK). For example, on the poaching by Native Africans of supposedly protected wildlife: "Only with the West's recent acceptance that the animals are not ours at all, but that they belong to the African people, has genuine conservation begun" ⁹.

Western aid is an illusion¹⁰:

When we think of Africa many of us think of our government handing out aid to relieve the suffering there. But in fact Western governments have taken back more money from the Third World than they have given. Even now, for every £1 given in aid, 50 pence [= ½ £] is taken back in debt repayments.

And the story continues by explaining how the Third World's debts are really not the Third World's fault. As to Rwanda, "Western governments did little to stop the bloodshed", which is most reprehensible since it's obvious that it's the West's responsibility to do so, to save Africans from themselves. (No, Virginia, that's quite different from the old Colonial attitude that the natives needed us to look after them.)

It's the West's responsibility in part because "militant elements are taking delivery of weapons from Europe". But what would *Radio Times* say if Europe *refused* to sell arms to Third-Worlders?!

THE BBC'S first series aimed primarily at a gay audience began a six-week outing on 29 June, 1995. The blurb had promised "a report from New York's Harvey Milk High, the world's first school specifically for lesbian and gay students" ¹¹, but that promise remained unfulfilled. The 35-minute program did, however, feature an interview with an apparently embarrassed and tongue-tied Martina Navratilova.

We're curious: does Harvey Milk High really ex-

⁹ "Africa's Big Game", *Radio Times* (Scotland ed.) 15-21 July 1995, p.25

¹⁰ *Radio Times* (Scotland ed.) 15-21 July 1995, p.37

¹¹ *Radio Times* (Scotland ed.) 24-30 June 1995, p.104

ist?

The Virginia Association of Scholars

believes that rational discourse is a necessary foundation of academic life and of a democratic society.

So we seek to foster and protect

- the free exchange of ideas;
- academic freedom — *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*;
- the substance and integrity of scholarship and learning;
- respect for our intellectual heritage;
- rigorous standards of excellence in teaching, learning, and research;
- the evaluation of students strictly on the merit of their individual performance.

And we aim to

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- ideological corruption of teaching and scholarship;
- intimidation of students or faculty who voice unfashionable views;
- treatment of students, faculty, and others as ciphers and symbols of groups instead of as individuals worthy of individual consideration.

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