

it through, whereupon the Colombian government restored the oil concession to Secretary Mellon's company! It is impossible here even to summarize the record which the inquiry has disclosed. The course of the State Department in giving its consent to the flotation of these blue-sky foreign loans impelled Senator Glass to exclaim that the federal government "was morally responsible for every cent of the two billion dollars which American citizens have lost." Yet in the face of the evidence, these financiers lecture the Senate and dilate upon their own virtue. I would wager all my Bolivian bonds against one copy of a Hoover prosperity oration that during the forty years in the wilderness Moses never used the word "moral" as often as Otto Kahn used it in one afternoon. Reversing an opinion recently expressed here, I must confess that I prefer hard-boiled men like Charlie Mitchell and Clarence Dillon, or that charming realist James Speyer, who whispered: "We are in the business to make a profit, Senator." Incidentally, one notes that the New York financial writers have vanished from the scene. The places of such little brothers of the rich as B. C. Forbes have been taken by journeymen reporters.

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BUT all is not tragedy and gloom in the Washington madhouse. For amusement one can always turn to the antics of Bob Lucas, master-mind of the Republican National Committee. It is impossible to remain permanently angry at the fellow; he is too funny. Recently he prepared a speech charging the Democrats with publishing "scandal books by *unnamed authors*." Requested to specify, he replied that the books he had in mind were "The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover," by John Hamill, and "The Great Mistake," by John Knox. Not only do the names of the authors

appear on the covers of both books, but Lucas mentioned their names in his explanation. It was the most diverting performance he has given since his public announcement that "Prime Minister Grotius of Germany" would soon visit America in the interest of world peace. On that occasion the most thorough search of Germany failed to reveal any such office as that of "Prime Minister," or any official named Grotius. Subsequently it developed that Bob was thinking of Dr. Julius Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, who resigned two days later after explaining that he had never expressed any intention of visiting the United States. As to the books, wonderment does not cease. They contain many statements about Mr. Hoover's past life which, if untrue, constitute plain cases of criminal libel. Yet the Department of Justice has started no prosecution against the authors or publishers, and apparently has no intention of doing so. Why doesn't it?

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I HAVE often betrayed a deep aversion to the personal ethics and official practices of Andrew Mellon. My conviction survives that during the past ten years he has been the most powerful individual influence for evil in this Republic. But now it is tinged with a certain pity. Every informed person in Washington knows that Ogden Mills is in absolute control of the Treasury. Hoover consults him constantly. When it is necessary to present the department's views to Congress, Mills is the official spokesman. Nobody consults Uncle Andy. Lonely, hurt, neglected, he lingers on in the twilight of a reputation which would shine today with redoubled splendor if only he had possessed the canniness which prompted his real affinity, Calvin Coolidge, to get out while the getting was good.

If I Were Dictator*

By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

IF I were dictator? Well, I am sure that what I have to say will disappoint many readers who look for far more radical and violent changes than I have to suggest. I am conscious that the immediate remedies that offer themselves to me will seem lacking both in originality and in thoroughness, perhaps because I have not lost faith in democracy or the workability of our institutions, provided that these are adjusted to modern economic, social, and political conditions. The fault, in my judgment, has been less with the economic and political system under which we have lived than with the men that we have chosen to work it. But the evolution of capitalism has given ever-increasing opportunities for the selfishness and greed of the average human being in industry and politics, and these traits are bringing down the structure. We in America have learned the bitter lesson that uncontrolled individualism, whether rugged or otherwise, leads but to despair.

If I were dictator I should begin in the field of international relations, since it is in that field that we are today most menaced by conditions which not only threaten the peace of the world, but make an early recovery from the

economic chaos impossible. I should first of all muster out the fleet, laying it up as did Thomas Jefferson when President, and reduce the regular army to the police force of 25,000 men which it was at the outbreak of the war with Spain. I should retire every single one of the talking generals and admirals and send them all to Guam with the direction that they put that island into a state of 100 per cent preparedness and play at war maneuvers to their heart's content. Resuming the historic American attitude of being unarmed and unafraid, I should say to the rest of the world: "See how genuinely pacific we are. We have done away with the arts of war, have ceased to teach our soldiers how best to disembowel their fellow-men or how to kill innocent women and children by the use of aerial bombs and poison gas, which are not selective in dealing death and destruction. We are ready to take the risks of peace. We have faith not only in our own moral strength; we know that in modern war there are neither victors nor vanquished, but that all suffer alike, and that less than ever can one be assured that the heaviest battalions and the best generals will be on the side of right."

If I were dictator I should abolish every tariff because

* The last of a series of articles on this subject.—EDITOR THE NATION.

I know that the rapid rise of the three great industrial nations of modern times has been due chiefly to the fact that within their respective empires it has been free trade that has made them powerful and prosperous. Particularly I should say that this is true of the United States; that if tariffs are the blessings they are said to be, then we should surround every one of the forty-eight States of the Union with those magic walls which are supposed to raise the standard of living and bestow prosperity upon all inside their circle. I should put an end to the abomination that we must protect all trade within purely arbitrary geographic lines. I should first of all abolish the sugar tariff against Cuba, an island almost within sight of our shores, whose sugar would come into our country free and untaxed if the American flag floated over Morro Castle in Havana; instead of which, merely because Cuba is outside of our national lines, we raise the price of sugar to every man, woman, and child, and destroy the value of great American investments in that island. Also we help to reduce the working masses in that country to misery and despair, and help to render them the helpless and hapless victims of a ruthless dictator—merely in order to insure profits for some of our citizens who unnecessarily entered the sugar business at home.

If I were dictator I should serve notice upon Japan that if she did not withdraw within her former lines in Manchuria I should invoke an international boycott to compel her to do so, and, to demonstrate that I meant what I said in all sincerity, I should withdraw every last American soldier from Haiti, Nicaragua, Cuba, Samoa, and the Philippines. I should free the latter before their inhabitants had time to petition me for this action and so live up to our plighted national word. Then I should offer to China every possible help in the way of financial aid and expert advice and service to enable that harassed country to constitute a strong and honest central government. I should immediately recognize the Russia of the Soviets with every gesture of friendship and good-will to the Russian people. I should not be afraid of communism because I should set out really to constitute an honest and efficient government for the United States, one responding to the will of the American people as expressed through the initiative and referendum, and I am bold enough to believe that if I could have my way, our own system of government as reconstituted would not only challenge comparison with the Soviet program, but would seem infinitely more desirable so long as the Soviet Government is a bloody-handed class dictatorship.

To accomplish this I should do everything in my power to bring about economic equality, and equality before the law. As I do not believe in prisons as they now are constituted, I should relegate to prison farms every single American official—and their number runs into thousands upon thousands—who violates the law, believes himself superior to it, and connives at the abuse of personal liberties by men in the garb of police officers or in that of civil authority. For I believe that the chief explanation of our being the most lawless civilized nation is to be found in the fact that we have more lawless officials sworn to uphold the law than any other nation on earth.

I should remove from the statute books by one stroke of the pen every law regulating the private morals of individual citizens. I should declare that, however men and

women behaved in their relations with one another, it was their own affair, save where the public peace was disturbed. I should, however, continue and increase the control of the sale of narcotics, and my government would be as rigid as that of the Soviets in preventing the exploitation of the bodies of women for the gain of individuals. Censors of literature, art, or the theater would be my special game. I have long wondered where would be the proper place in which to exile the censors and snoopers, and then it came to me—the Virgin Islands! I should seek to find a method of dispensing liquors and wines in a way rigidly to control the drink habit, so that men should not profit by catering to that appetite of their fellow-men which undeniably has done more than any other one thing to fill our jails, our hospitals, and our asylums. I should appeal to my subjects to join me in treating alcohol from the same standpoint as that from which we treat the abuse of drugs, believing that unlimited use of alcohol is almost as much a danger to the race as is unlimited use of opium.

I should at once tackle the disgraceful statistics which reveal to all the world that the death-rate in childbirth is higher in the United States than anywhere else. I should follow the policy advocated by Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York when he asked the legislature to see to it that every community in his State received adequate medical and nursing care, and I should make it possible for the poor to have not only adequate medical care, but the dental service of which they are today deprived because it is beyond their means. And, of course, I should make free for all the necessary information as to birth control. I should free our schools from the domination of all the politicians and all the priests. I should introduce self-government not only among the scholars, but among the teachers, and I should not only guarantee absolute freedom of teaching but see to it that every new or old ism was carefully explored within the classrooms of school and college. One of my first steps would be to make impossible the control of our colleges by boards of trustees comprising wealthy men devoted chiefly to the old order of society and to the prevention of the teaching of new doctrines and new theories of economic and political life. I should read to each board of university trustees the famous words of Patrick Henry: "Give me liberty, or give me death," and then give them their choice. I should ask them not to come to me to explain that there are "certain things" that must not be laid before the "immature minds of undergraduates," and that there must be some limits to liberty and free speech lest they degenerate into license. If anyone sneaked through into my audience chamber and began to address me with the words: "I believe in liberty and freedom, but there are limits," I should immediately sentence him to twenty-five years on my most northern Alaskan prison farm, in company with all those benighted citizens who might appeal to me to continue intercollegiate athletic contests under present conditions. William Green and Matthew Woll of the American Federation of Labor I should designate as Governor and Deputy Governor of the Aleutian Islands. For Mr. Hoover and his Cabinet, and other talkers of economic nonsense, I should reserve the Island of Yap with the requirement that morning and evening they should meet together to inform one another that prosperity is just around the corner, and that every day in every way things are getting better and better.

Then I should give my attention to the revision of our own government, to vital alterations in our Constitution, a noble document, admirably constructed for the use of thirteen struggling States along the Atlantic seaboard when they did not know their own hinterland, when not one citizen had yet crossed the continent overland. I should change the Constitution so that the state should take over and operate, either directly or through some government corporation like the Mississippi Waterways Corporation, the railroads, the pipe-lines, the telephone and telegraph, the radio, the mines, the oil wells, water power, and all other natural resources, thus making enormous savings, closing avenues to the making of excessive fortunes, and destroying the foothold of many masters of privilege. By income taxes and inheritance taxes I should make impossible the transmission from one generation to another of swollen fortunes. I should enormously lighten the burden of taxation by having the profits of public utilities go into the pockets not of stockholders, but of the communities which operate them, or into a general treasury. In other words, I should endeavor to create social control of institutions as a source of funds for a progressive social policy. I should further reduce the expenses of government by saving almost entirely the \$750,000,000 now devoted to the annual upkeep of the army and navy. I should seek in every way to redeem my country from the stigma placed upon its common sense by the present Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Mellon, when he twice declared in his annual reports that 85 cents out of every dollar raised by taxation now goes to wars past and future.

With the money so saved and earned and raised, I should rebuild our cities so that every slum would disappear. I should frankly and boldly imitate the Russian government in that I should stress above all else the welfare, the prosperity, and the happiness of the plain people of Abraham Lincoln. Instead of making this a government by and for the well-to-do and rich, I should make it a government primarily concerned with the welfare of the toiling masses, and I should let the rich go hang. The ablest men that I could find I should set to the problem of the farmer, gradually and voluntarily bringing about the creation of great co-operative farms, and working out the problem of large industrial agricultural enterprises versus individual farming. I should find some way of eliminating the middleman so that the farmer living within forty miles of our greatest cities would no longer get between three and five cents a quart for the milk that sells at around fifteen on the streets of the metropolis.

Turning to the States, I should so devise their constitutions as to abolish the bicameral legislatures along the lines of a plan suggested by Senator Norris, creating a single chamber of some twenty-four members, more in the nature of a governor's council, to be elected without benefit of party. I should take every office now bestowable by a politician and put it under rigid civil-service rules. So with our municipalities, I should eliminate politics and make the office of mayor a scientific job to be held by professional mayors freed from all political control, precisely as is the case today in Germany, instituting local referendums that the people might vote upon policies. Judges I should put to work, real work, and I should make them simplify the processes of law so that they would be humanized and speeded up, as is the case in England; and, as is the case in Russia, I should abolish

the death penalty, and go farther than Russia by abolishing it for political offenses as well. Divorce would be, as now in Spain and in Russia, by mutual consent, and as in both those countries, there would no longer be any distinction, legal or social, between children born in or out of wedlock.

As for the immediate emergency, I should at once introduce the five-day week, and remove from industry all children under the age of eighteen. I should institute a scientific system of unemployment insurance, and make the system of old-age pensions recently adopted in New York State nationwide. To take care of the existing unemployment, I should immediately sell a bond issue running into the billions and utilize the proceeds for great public works, and especially for the rebuilding of our cities so that no city dweller should remain in dark and unsanitary quarters. Planning? Of course. Not only for caring for the unemployed today but for a general overhauling of the economic system in the belief that it is not overproduction but underdistribution which is troubling us and especially to prevent the recurrence of depressions like these. Naturally this would entail first of all planning to end the enormous waste of the competitive system in such an industry, for example, as that of the makers of rubber tires or of the producers of oil. But the most important means of ending the existing economic crisis would be those measures for the regulation of international trade, including means of putting an end to the hurtful heaping up of gold in this country, which I have already outlined, the abolition of tariffs, the forgiving of debts and reparations, complete disarmament, and the ending of the rule of fear and suspicion and hatred among peoples—at least so far as our example could bring this to pass.

By this time, I am sure, more than half the people of this Republic would have risen against me; the generosity of my dictatorship would be too much for them to stand. But one last thing I should strive to do before I was led off to the guillotine. I should close two-thirds of the churches of the country, allowing only those to remain open that were absolutely dedicated to peace at any price, whose ministers agreed that they would go to prison—our present type of prison abomination if you please—for life before one word of approval of mass killing should cross their lips. They would have to promise, moreover, to preach but one sermon a year dedicated to abstract theological doctrine. The rest of their time they would have to give over to social endeavor, to true spiritual leadership, according to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, preaching sermons directly connected with the problems of society and the practical welfare of those about them. Finally, just to show that I was human and therefore extremely inconsistent, I should once more turn censor myself and abolish lip-sticks, high-heeled shoes, silk hats, all remaining Ford cars of the original model, the Navy League, the Civic Federation, and the Protective Tariff League, not to mention *Ballyhoo*, *College Humor*, the tabloids, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. I should send Henry Ford himself, with his humbug reputation as a model employer of labor, to join the heads of the American Federation of Labor in the Aleutian Islands.

If these things that I have outlined seem inadequate to some, too radical to others, as well as inconsistent, please remember that I have none the less stressed liberty in all the relations between human beings, and that I have had no other object in view than social, economic, and political equal-

ity. In other words, I have suggested nothing which does not seem to me in keeping with the true spirit of American institutions, with democracy and the desire for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Sometime, soon it is to be hoped, we must come to some such recasting of our governments—city, State, and national; if we do not, then we may be sure that a totally new system, whether that be com-

munist or something else, will have to be devised to insure equality of opportunity and of life, to curb and restrict greed and appetite for wealth, and to end all the special privileges which have been established under our modern industrial system and our government—as it has been perverted from the control of the masses into the hands of the dominating few.

Portrait of Undergraduate Yale

By RICHARD S. CHILDS

I
MISCONCEPTION brewed by generalities and much nonsense has distorted the common picture of undergraduate life. For one acquainted with the mass of reading matter on *College Life in America* there is little to be observed in New Haven to strengthen the validity of the usual assumptions. "Collegiatism" as popularly conceived is heartily despised. Fraternity life is important only through sophomore year as marking a tentative social recognition, and "houses" are frequented mostly as a refuge from the toasted-bun and coffee fare of New Haven Smoke Shops. The national brethren are apt to scowl on Yale. Old graduates bemoan the passing of something known as *College Spirit*. While the old-Ford-rah-rah-painted-slicker figure of collegiate mythology has not been replaced by that of the passionate scholar, a new figure has arisen, drawing its life from within the confines of York and College Streets, that, with allowances made for the inevitable caricature resulting from generalities, may be fairly described as the Yale undergraduate.

"You did not come to Yale for an education. If you had wanted only that you could have gone to some other place. You came here for other reasons: because your father did, because you had friends coming, or because of the contacts you could make here. You came for the *real* things that Yale and no other place could offer you." Not in mockery, not as broad satire, but earnestly were these words spoken by a graduate not so very many weeks ago. He was not an older graduate dreaming of the '90's; he was a young man. Just out of Yale. Just in business. He knew. He was believed and applauded by his undergraduate listeners.

Now, Yale is not the same university it was last year, the year before that. Year by year it has been making and will continue to make a little sandier the greased slide of minimum credit requirements. Reading periods and a postponement of midyear examinations this year show that the educational veneer is to be thickened by a layer or two, and New Haven tutoring schools and cramming institutions will become correspondingly enriched. All of this is so—yet it is only by realizing the full significance of the words "You did not come to Yale for an education" that any perspective may be gained on the undergraduate of today—and probably of tomorrow. Perspective is essential in a portrait. Educational systems will come and go. But the subject of our portrait will remain constant, and these same key words will continue to give meaning to an otherwise paradoxical spectacle as long as systems exist intended to care for young men whose main reason for being in college is to partake

primarily of a university's social facilities, to make their bow of conformity to a fetish of American so-called upper classes.

Forget for a moment the *nouveau riche* blatancy of Gothic buildings and assume that Yale is a university where young men are gathered who thirst not only for knowledge but also for the inspiration that comes from contact with the creativeness of the past, where teachers are in their own minds still students, a little farther along the way perhaps and eager to indicate the paths they have discovered. Make this assumption, and Yale the reality becomes immediately meaningless, open to violent criticism. Incredulity, indignation, and amazement must swim together confusingly before the spectacle of 3,000 undergraduates in daily forced attendance in the lecture rooms of New Haven, suspected, checked, tested, and ranked according to a still hovering form-routine—the privilege of education still held a doubtful one by teacher and scholar alike. Are the unfit and uninterested a university's concern? Can men be hired to face daily insult on the lecture platform? The whole thing is a nightmare! A travesty on educational ideals! "What is it for? What is it for?" must be the cry.

Yet such protests, while constantly recurring, are quite empty. They unnecessarily confuse matters because they spring from a wrong premise, that Yale College is exclusively an institution of higher education. Return to the key words, "You did not come to Yale for an education," and all swings into line with a certain inevitability. Confusion vanishes. Systems and methods of teaching become clear, tacit affirmers of the same attitude. And at last, in this light, the Yale undergraduate is understandable. And sympathy should follow understanding.

"If a man by his years at Yale learns to live more richly and more happily, he has not spent his time in vain. The measure of success is not a lot of canned knowledge, but the ability to get out and do something. The social side of his life at Yale is often more important to his development than his classes." It is essential that this point of view, one recently expressed in an editorial in the *Yale Daily News*, be fully grasped with all its implications. Yale and her undergraduates can never be torn from the background of American society on which they are patterned, and separately examined, if anything approaching comprehension is to result. To contrast present conditions with ideals of pure learning is hopeless at the outset and can only distort a not too horrible picture. Social life—learning to live through experience with other men, the chance to *do something* whether it be on the field of sport, in journalism, or what not, the opportunity to get somewhere through making friends, establishing

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