

# Student Revolt with Special Reference to the New Left: Further Thoughts

Franklin Merrell-Wolff  
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There are further thoughts in connection with both the student revolt and the subject of *tulku*<sup>1</sup> which I think should be formulated and rendered available. Let us consider first the subject of the student revolt.

There is an old saying that where the light is brightest, the shadows are darkest. Now, let us look first at certain dark and shadowy sides of the student revolt. It will be remembered that at the time of the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, that there was a massive so-called revolutionary action by a number of young people. No doubt many, perhaps most, of the young people were not directly responsible for the action at that time. Youthful enthusiasm and adventurousness may have well led many into something of which they had only an imperfect understanding, but there were leading or guiding individuals in that demonstration that used methods revealing a very dark motivation indeed. Unless the news media were engaged in massive fabrication, which I do not believe was the case, there were some very evil and dark things done. It is reported that the demonstrators employed bags containing human excreta, other bags containing black widow spiders, and still other containers having within them caustic alkalis; that these items were hurled at the police; and that there were several policemen who were blinded by the caustic alkalis. Now, only entities with a dark and evil imagination would ever have employed instruments of warfare of this sort. Men who have any element of nobility in them would have refrained from the use of such instruments, and probably would not even had the imagination that would move in that direction. There is such a thing as a nobly restrained form of battle; that we have seen back in the days of the Middle Ages when the conflict was between noblemen and knights and professional soldiers, and the civilian population was left alone. There was a certain code at that time. But when we use instruments of this sort, there is manifest something profoundly, even abysmally, evil. Add to this the disturbances in the courts in which all sorts of vile methods were employed—obscene language, obscene decorum, and so forth—here we can see that there is something very definitely from the shadow side, namely, the dark and evil side which abides in the subconscious depths, the hellish depths, of mankind's psyche.

Let us consider for a moment what the effect of success in the destruction of the method of due process in courts of law would involve. It would involve the break up of judicial procedure. Then what would happen? A state of anarchistic chaos would be induced. In this condition there would be a development of dictatorial power by some entity or group of entities that could manage to develop the necessary power. There would be established, then, either a dictatorship of the Right or, something almost

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<sup>1</sup> Wolff doesn't address the subject of *tulku* in this audio recording. See the audio recordings "On Tulku," parts 1 and 2, for a presentation of this subject.

infinitely worse, a dictatorship of the Left. Then there would be lost to us all of our constitutional guarantees. There would be a revolution, indeed, but the effect of the revolution would be something far worse than now exists regardless of whether it was a dictatorship of the Right or a dictatorship of the Left.

This is the dark side of the picture, but there is another side, which I have personally contacted. I know from my own experience in the meeting of students who are more or less in revolt against something, at least, of what is, something that is dark which should be rendered light. I have spoken of the goal of yoga, including the renunciation of individual enjoyment of the *nirvanic* state in order that effort might be put forth by such an individual for the redemption of mankind as a whole. It was the vow of *Kwan-Yin* that I quoted, which to remind you, I will repeat now:

Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever, and everywhere, will I strive for the redemption of all creatures throughout the world.

What impressed me deeply was the fact that a number of the students responded very positively to this ideal. I felt, indeed, that here were young, old souls. That is the opposite pole of the student movement, as lofty as the other pole is dark and evil.

Now, there is no one valuation, obviously, which is valid for all of these young people. Some belong to lofty motivations and respond positively to the Great Renunciation in order that effort can be put forth for the redemption, not only of the human whole, but of all creatures. No critic of the student revolt can justly neglect this fact. To be sure, there is no language too severe for the condemnation of the dark side of the movement, and it is hard to imagine any action that would be too severe for the treatment of that dark side. Society, indeed, must protect itself from that just as it would have to protect itself from the scourge of bubonic plague, that which caused the Black Death in Europe in the Middle or Dark Ages. Life has a right to defend itself from that which would destroy it; and society, when attacked by an evil of this sort, has the right to defend itself by such means as it can employ. There is, thus, no one classification that is valid for all of this.

There are two words of a very noble sort that have been employed by the revolting youth. These are the words 'peace' and 'love'. As abstract ideals they are noble beyond question. These are even 'God words' as someone has noted. But what is meant by them as used by the students? Do they mean by 'love' the lofty use of the term such as the identifying of the Buddha with the principle of compassion or of the Christ with the law of love—a good will extended to all men and ultimately to all creatures? Or do they mean it in the purely biological sense as the attraction between the sexes, as the more or less animalistic contact of bodies? If it is this that is intended, then it is not lofty. It is merely the use of lofty words to satisfy a sensuous attraction. That is not the true love. And do they mean by 'peace' that lofty state of consciousness in which all of the heavings and manifestations of clashing that are characteristic of the vital nature are still—a state in which there is no more war either in one's own feelings or in the conflict of groups, in which there is no more competition either in a business sense or in the games of men? Do they mean a state of dispassion that looks through eyes of compassion upon all this world and all creatures within it? Or do they mean purely a personal distaste

for a particular conflict, in this case the war in South Vietnam? Do they disapprove of this conflict while approving of others? Then the call for peace is a dishonest one. It is the use of a lofty word with a lofty meaning for only a personal preference. Is it a call for peace in order that one may avoid the inconvenience of being drafted and the sensuous discomfort of actual physical conflict? If in both cases the words 'love' and 'peace' are used in the lofty spiritual sense, we have here the noblest kind of motivation. But, if these words are used to disguise an ignoble sensuous indulgence or a defense of the most vicious kind of enemy of mankind, then it becomes utterly ignoble, a profanation of noble terms. One cannot honorably take a stand as a conscientious objector, or as a proponent of the principle of peace in the name of objection to particular selected conflicts, with honor. It must be done in the name of the elimination of conflict as such in all cases. And love must be used in the sense of a good will to all creatures and not in the sense of a sensuous bodily enjoyment. I am not here deciding which is the use that is employed. I suspect that the use is not always of the noble sort, but an intention in some cases to use noble terms for the achieving of an ignoble objective, and therefore a profanation.

There are other sides of the movement which need our further attention which are not related to the principle of conflict. These are the tendency to collect in large aggregates or bodies of many individuals, and, second, the indulgence in a primitive kind of music involving a monotony of beat, particularly drum beat. Let us consider first the tendency to move in large aggregates. Whenever many individuals come together in large crowds connected with some sense of purpose, you might say, there is a tendency to form, which is almost unavoidable, what is known as the psychological crowd. There is built a sort of collective psyche which takes possession of the crowd. The effect of this is to suppress the ability for logical thought and discrimination or discernment in general and to accentuate the quality of feeling both in a generous and in a destructive form, most commonly in the latter. This is a very disturbing aspect of the movement. There is no good thinking connected with it. There is no sense of responsible thinking. And that points means that it is not to be rationally understood as a movement but, rather, psychologically, as was pointed out last Sunday. There is no such thing as a responsible crowd. There is no such thing as a noble crowd. The crowd is always merely the victim of affect, which implies irresponsibility. Crowds can be the playthings of malicious entities. To be sure, there are spell-binders who may have good motivations who know how to manipulate crowds, but men with evil motivations are far more effective in handling crowds than men of noble motivations, for with a man of noble motivation, truth and soundness occupy a premier position, and truth and soundness is the last thing that is ever manifested by a crowd. While a crowd can be generous under some circumstances, it is far more natural for it to destroy and to tear to pieces. Everybody who is oriented to truth, to nobility, to honor and decency, will avoid the crowd as a thing of profound poison.

The next consideration is the use of music involving monotonous beat. Such as I've heard over television in connection with certain phases of the student movement, the music has had a very primitive quality. It suggests the drumbeats of the primitives of Africa or of other countries. Now, monotonous rhythm produces a hypnotic consequence. In a hypnotic state there may be some indulgences that feel comfortable, to be sure, but the effect is denigrating. I do not know whether the use of the monotonous drumbeat has any positive value with primitive peoples. It may well have, since one finds it a very

common practice among primitives. But there is no doubt whatever that its effect upon Caucasian man is denigrating. It makes him less than what he was. It drags him radically downhill. And this should be avoided just as the crowd should be avoided if the individual is oriented to anything like truth or goodness.

There are other factors in the general activities and tendencies of the day which, while they are a part of the New Left as a students' movement, extend beyond these limits. This is the tendency towards the use of profanity, obscenity or smut, the engagement in pornography, and the viewing of ugliness as a fit object of art. I will say a few words concerning this which is to be understood as extending to a larger circle than simply that of the revolting students, but including the dark side of this revolt as well. This represents an orientation to ugliness, filth, falsehood, darkness, and evil. It serves no good purpose whatsoever. If successful it would make this world infinitely worse than it is today. There is no language sufficiently strong for the adequate condemnation of movement in these directions. They are explicitly, in the words of Norman Brown, an orientation to anti-Christ, and equally an orientation to anti-Buddha, and therefore an orientation to *Mara* or Satan. The following four names: Karl Marx, Marcuse, Norman Brown, Abbey Hoffman designate what we may call the apostles of darkness, falsehood, ugliness, and evil; and those who follow such may well be represented as the excreta of the dung beetles of humanity. There is no darker evil ever been in this world than that represented by just these men and their followers.

I will read a portion of Canto 8, Book 2, Part 1 of *Savitri*, written by Sri Aurobindo. The section is entitled, "The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness." And this is the picture that fits this aspect of the movement in the world including students and others.

Then could he see the hidden heart of Night:  
The labour of its stark unconsciousness  
Revealed the endless terrible Inane.  
A spiritless blank Infinity was there;  
A Nature that denied the eternal Truth  
In the vain braggart freedom of its thought  
Hoped to abolish God and reign alone.  
There was no sovereign Guest, no witness Light;  
Unhelped it would create its own bleak world.  
Its large blind eyes looked out on demon acts,  
Its deaf ears heard the untruth its dumb lips spoke;  
Its huge misguided fancy took vast shapes,  
Its mindless sentience quivered with fierce conceits;  
Engendering a brute principle of life  
Evil and pain begot a monstrous soul.  
The Anarchs of the formless depths arose,  
Great titan beings and demoniac powers,  
World-egos racked with lust and thought and will,  
Vast minds and lives without a spirit within:  
Impatient architects of error's house,  
Leaders of the cosmic ignorance and unrest

And sponsors of sorrow and mortality  
Embodied the dark Ideas of the Abyss.  
A shadow substance into emptiness came,  
Dim forms were born in the unthinking Void  
And eddies met and made an adverse Space  
In whose black folds Being imagined Hell.  
His eyes piercing the triple-plated gloom  
Identified their sight with its blind stare:  
Accustomed to the unnatural dark, they saw  
Unreality made real and conscious Night.  
A violent, fierce and formidable world,  
An ancient womb of huge calamitous dreams,  
Coiled like a larva in the obscurity  
That keeps it from the spear-points of Heavens stars.  
It was the gate of a false Infinite,  
An eternity of disastrous absolutes,  
An immense negation of spiritual things.  
All once self-luminous in the spirit's sphere  
Turned now into their own dark contraries:  
Being collapsed into a pointless void  
That yet was a zero parent of the worlds;  
Inconscience swallowing up the cosmic Mind  
Produced a universe from its lethal sleep;  
Bliss into black coma fallen, insensible,  
Coiled back to itself and God's eternal joy  
Through a false poignant figure of grief and pain  
Still dolorously nailed upon a cross  
Fixed in the soil of a dumb insentient world  
Where birth was a pang and death an agony,  
Lest all too soon should change again to bliss.  
Thought sat, a priestess of Perversity,  
On her black tripod of the triune Snake  
Reading by opposite signs the eternal script,  
A sorceress reversing Life's God-frame.  
In darkling aisles with evil eyes for lamps  
And fatal voices chanting from the apse,  
In strange infernal dim basilicas  
Intoning the magic of the unholy Word,  
The ominous profound Initiate  
Performed the ritual of her Mysteries.  
There suffering was Nature's daily food  
Alluring to the anguished heart and flesh,  
And torture was the formula of delight,  
Pain mimicked the celestial ecstasy.  
There Good, a faithless gardener of God,  
Watered with virtue the world's upas-tree  
And, careful of the outward word and act,

Engrafted his hypocrite blooms on native ill.  
All high things served their nether opposite:  
The forms of Gods sustained a demon cult;  
Heaven's face became a mask and snare of Hell.  
There in the heart of vain phenomenon,  
In an enormous action's writhen core  
He saw a shape illimitable and vague  
Sitting on Death who swallows all things born.  
A chill fixed face with dire and motionless eyes,  
Her dreadful trident in her shadowy hand  
Outstretched, she pierced all creatures with one fate.<sup>2</sup>

And here's the picture that emerges out of this movement of the far Left, the movement oriented to darkness, ugliness, falsehood, and hell. For these who further such objectives, there is no suffering too great for their part. They have forfeited their right to all sympathy from the gods and of all men of good will. They are servants of evil absolute, demons of darkness. And may they be driven back into the blackness of the great abyss until some day in the eternity of time they may have learned the folly of their ways.

This dark picture of the Leftist or sinister movement of our day does have another meaning, for where the shadows are darkest, we also may know that the light is near. The first thing that seems to be stirred up in this world when there is an impingement of great light is the activation of the sinister or dark forces of the Left; therefore, this darkness, evil, ugliness, and falsehood of the present time is in a certain sense a forerunner of a great light. That is the bright lining of this dark shadow.

A final word I should like to say to those young people who are representatives of the light pole in the student movement: that they should take care to isolate themselves from those who by their methods and speech identify themselves with the pole of darkness, falseness, and evil. Physical cleanliness and order are aids on the way, but psychical cleanliness is an imperative absolute. He may not enter into the sanctuary with foul feet and speech. He may not enter into the sanctuary who has not cleansed himself of the darkness in his psyche. This is imperative. The dark way must be eschewed. The light way affirmed in unmistakable terms. To those who take this course and upon their heads I would place my blessing.

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<sup>2</sup> Aurobindo Ghose, *Savitri*, vol. 28 of *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centennial Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1970), 220-221.