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STUDENT ACTIVISM ON THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE

A. G. ISHUMI*

HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

In the beginning—that is, before the present era of school, the process of education was almost invariably conceived of in terms of an "art"—an aesthetic art of carving, shaping or producing an individual learner *after* and *into* an ideal model. Classical philosophers would have described it more aethetically as a method brought to bear on the individual or individuals with the intent of preparing them into modes of thought, action, taste and reflection compatible with the philosopher's (teacher's) view of what is excellent and acceptable. Social excellence, with the synonyms of tranquillity, orderliness, peacefulness, conformity with nature, and responsibility, was the ultimate goal in every philosopher's thinking; and the young generations were to be brought up in accordance with the prevailing mode of thinking and to be urged or even "shaped" to achieve this.

As it was, there were only a few teachers available (and "socially" approved) for the aesthetic art, and only few children with the unique opportunity to undergo the much envied process of instruction, it being more open to the few whose parents wielded social and political power and could afford the expense involved. However, those children who were lucky enough to acquire an instruction under a socially-morally respected philosophical "model" or "ideal", usually a private teacher, were sure to rise up the social ladder into other socially respected individuals. They thus struggled to follow the instruction intently and laboured to be ideal mirrors (or miniatures) of their teachers—in thought, in argument, in taste, in political beliefs and confessions, in everything. A difference in opinion would normally come in the guise of "expounding" the predecessor's ideas. For instance, the famous philosopher Plato was pleased to have been a "faithful" pupil of the preceding Athenian philosopher Socrates, and was in turn a lasting influence on his later followers.

Such a deliberate educational art frequently involved a one teacher—one pupil relationship, the pupils under one teacher at any given time rarely exceeding five. More cases of one tutor one pupil philosophy are associated to a greater or lesser extent with educationally famous men like Quintilian, Comenius, Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi, although the idea of public education was already taking root.[1] It was a philosophy which, in terms of

*A. G. Ishumi is a lecturer in the Education Department, University of Dar es Salaam.

teacher-learner relationships, characterised the "peaceful" era of *intellectual conformism*—an age of discipline and disciples.

Properly speaking, the beginnings of "open" radical thought, revolt or even anarchy among learners are to be ascribed to the age and realm of "public" education—of school. Public demand for education as a common good, strengthened by the new social demands of functionally trained and specialised manpower in a differentiating technological society, saw a proliferation of schools, colleges, and universities. This affected the earlier pedagogical pattern where teachers, still few as they were, were now instructing "many" children under their charge. The pupils themselves were from diverse socio-economic origins and had diverse expectations and temperaments. The teacher's role also steadily changed from that of a private home tutor to a public school teacher; and his expectations of a meek, conforming, uniform-minded class were at the same time vanishing.

With a steady increase of public schools, an increasing number of students were open to the realities of life outside their private home; they had access to an increasing range of ideas and literature, had a wider choice of alternatives and a correspondingly larger number of possibilities of independent action. The forms of action have varied widely, depending on the prevailing circumstances, but they all have ushered in a dimension of tension, insecurity, instability and a spell of "unpeaceful" relations with the wider society or section of society as well. The intensity and duration of the situation has varied, ranging from temporary and transient to permanent and endemic. A few historical documents will reveal the universal nature and historical continuity of student activism.

In the seventeenth century, in the heat of political controversy in Europe, and in England in particular, Thomas Hobbes, the Oxford philosopher who advocated unquestioning loyalty to the monarch, was quick to locate one of the sources of tension:

> The Universities have been to this nation, as the wooden horse was to the Trojans.... I despair of any lasting peace among ourselves, till the Universities here shall bend and direct their studies to the settling of it, that is, to the teaching of absolute obedience to the laws of the King.... The core of the rebellion, as you have seen by this, and read of other rebellions, are the Universities; which nevertheless are not to be cast away but to be better disciplined.[2]

Even before this, student riots and unrest had been an alarming source of tension elsewhere during the Middle Ages—in Paris (France), in Bologna (Italy), in Wittenberg (Germany), to mention but a few. It is related that at Wittenberg University Martin Luther found his most immediate support from students in his struggle against the Church. He was, however, "forced to hold the students in check to prevent them from going too far in their protests against Pope and Emperor".[3] In like manner, Melanchthon "also fought an

inclination to primitivism among students. Some of them carried their opposition to Aristotle and scholasticism to the point of rejecting all scholarship, and advocated the innocent simplicity of the Apostles".[4]

It would therefore be lack of historical restrospection to say that what we see today and what is happening on campuses among students and youth in general is completely unique and altogether sudden. There are certain general characteristics which show continuity from and similarity with the past. For instance, the tendency towards anti-intellectualism and dedication to absolute ends, glaring in many student protests today, are well documented in Moller's description above. Part of the explanation may be that once they have certain apparent ideals or objectives "in sight", the students press their absolute demands in the same direction of the apparent (not necessarily real or easy) target, closing their eyes and minds to several alternatives of action or strategy available. They see *no other* way than what they perceive at the moment and what they must instantly and irreversibly follow. The consequent accompaniments of this are intellectual (and decisional) narrowness, anti-intellectualism, forcefulness in the absence of genuine mass discussion, and sometimes only false or piecemeal concessions gained. A recent student of student politics was astounded by the phenomenon:

> What is curious about the campus strikes... is that frequently the strikes gain no benefit or advantage even if they win; the protests are presumably for the benefit of someone else. But even when they do stand to gain, or when the strike is against a specific grievance, the violence is out of all proportion to the benefit to be derived or the grievance suffered.[5]

Another general feature of student radicalism is "unwillingness to be disciplined" by the authority and adult groups. Hobbes' pessimistic observation in the 1640's of student indiscipline was not an accidental anecdote; discipline and search for everlasting peace between ruler and the ruled had been his preoccupation as a royalist citizen and philosopher, to the point of resigning his chair at Oxford and offering to be private tutor to the exiled English Prince Charles. Unwillingness to subject themselves to adults' discipline was however also noted two centuries later by Friedrich Engels in his description of their activities in the 1848 Revolution in Vienna:

> [T]he students, about 4,000 strong, well-armed, and far better disciplined than the national guard, formed the nucleus, the real strength, of the revolutionary force, and are nowadays willing to act as a mere instrument in the hands of the Committee of Safety [the governing organ of the revolution]. Though they recognized it, and were even its most enthusiastic supporters, they yet formed a sort of independent and rather turbulent body, deliberating for themselves in the "Aula"... preventing, by constant agitation, things from settling down to the old everyday tranquility, and very often forcing their resolutions upon the Committee...[6]

When twenty years later he learned that revolutionary students from Russia were planning to emigrate to Western Europe, he did not hesitate to

express his fears in a letter to Marx about the possibility of these students corrupting the proletarian movement there:

> How awful for the world . . . that there are 40,000 revolutionary students in Russia. . . . If there is anything which might ruin the Western European movement, then it would have been this import of 40,000 more or less educated, ambitious hungry Russian nihilists: all of them officer candidates without any army.[7]

One other feature common in student movements is the incessant, sometimes illogical feeling of urgency, and a desire to achieve their absolute demands or concessions all at once. There is always an expressed demand that their "opponent" or "enemy" (whatever this means in the real or imagined conflict relations that underlie the movement) give in, and unconditionally. The movement frequently loses a rational, mature dimensions and assumes or even adopts what the Marxists from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Trotsky called "left-wing adventurism" or "putschism", denoting a loss of rational consideration of realistic alternatives or possibilities.

Karl Marx, in the formative years of his life, used to be at odds with his friends who pushed too far the idea of communism and revolution, when he thought for one thing, that the idea was not yet ripe and for the other, that the protagonists had not actually mastered the intellectual and philosophic meaning and implications of it. In short, they were simply political romanticists and naive left-wing adventurists. As he himself testifies:

> By their political romanticism, vainglory and boastfulness, they might compromise the success of the party of freedom. . . . I called for them to show less vague reasoning, fine-sounding phrases, conceited self-admiration and more precision, more detail on concrete circumstances and more knowledge of the subject. I explained that I held the smuggling into incidental theatre—reviews, etc, of communist and socialist dogmas, that is of a new world-view to be unsuitable and indeed immoral, and that I desired quite a different and more profound discussion of communism if it were to be discussed at all.[8]

Indeed, years later, Lenin who himself joined the revolutionary movement while a university student, was to complain of the same problems of imprecision, vagueness, intellectual naivity and forceful infantile leftism among the post World War One pro-Communist youth in Europe. He constantly impressed upon them the idea that even a progressive revolutionary movement required an allowance for compromises and retreats; that it needed time and effort for a really serious, rational and analytical study of situations; that it had taken Marx twenty years of research in the British museum before he produced *Das Kapital;* and that even before that Marx had been a thoughtful, critical as well as self-critical person both as a student and as a professional and intellectual.[9]

This as well as the other well-documented instances and anecdotes provides strong evidence that student radicalism and activism in our modern

era is not an altogether new phenomenon. What is "new", perhaps, is the general public notice of the phenomenon's ever-increasing dimensions and the consequent public reaction in terms of either widespread cynicism against it or popular enthusiasms and participation in it—depending on particular situation, section of the population affected and prevailing circumstances.

It is precisely because of this belated public awareness, coupled with the differential attitude (public uproar in rejection or acceptance) towards the movement, over time, plus the irreversibly changing demands and pressures that call for more action or reaction, that student politics and activism have presented a major headline in national as well as international forums. For, generally speaking, it was not until the late 1930's that student and general youth radicalism began to appear as a social force that could not be dismissed offhand or discounted without a risk of serious implications. The period since then has been marked by a turmoil of "dissenting voices"—sometimes open, sometimes latent; sometimes clear and articulate, sometimes jumbled; and frequently spilling across a wider spectrum of the population, especially in the presence of other situations of crisis. It has been a period characterised by what Shils has called "dreams of plenitude and nightmares of scarcity",[10] a period which has not ended but "continues" as long as *the struggle* (or *the revolution*) *continues*—to use one of the most favoured statements of absolution in student demonstrations.

THE ROOTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL TREND

An important question which follows from this retrospective outline is: what are the real causes of this student phenomenon? In complex events such as student demonstration and revolts it is difficult to single out individual causes or reasons that have led to the happening. For, frequently, there is no single cause but a series of them, genuinely logical or not, and sometimes the triggering causes overshadow the basic or fundamental ones. Many explanations of student action have been in terms of triggering causes and superficial events, mainly because the fundamental questions quickly become concealed behind the more dynamic and emotionally touching events that precipitate the crisis.

Accordingly, it is not the intention of this paper to examine or re-examine the "secondary" causes or events mainly because they have been better illuminated elsewhere,[11] and also because they have varied with circumstances, location and time and hence would require a much more elaborate treatment and detailed discussion. Rather, in consistency with the general historical context of the phenomenon, it is more vital to locate the fundamental root cause underlying student activism in the world.

A survey of past (and present) events and of relationships in formal educational institutions reveals one general institutional feature. Basically, there existed an internal friction on campus between different groups, namely the trustees, the administration and the faculty, each of which claimed a

larger share of the power of governing or influence on the institution's affairs. At the top level of the institution's structure was the lay, legitimising board of governors (or trustees). They viewed themselves—and wished to be viewed —as the final authority in matters pertaining to the life and existence of the institution. Down below the bureaucratic structure, the administrators became a threat as they believed (and have believed) themselves to be the actual runners of the institution, while a sharper challenge issued from the faculty, who claimed to be the actual backbone of the academic life on the campus. The tug-of-war has thus existed between the three traditional pillars of the institution—the "political" boards, the administration and the faculty. The institutional clients, the students, were an "inert" force at the bottom of the pyramid. Their loyalty, complaisance and quiescence have always been presupposed or presumed.

More recently has come in another, fourth force. It has given the institutional relationship and crisis an additional dimension. This is the *students*, everywhere voicing their claim for *power* (*cogestion* in France, *Drittelparitat* in Western Germany) which has long been alienated from them. The frequent student demonstrations and pickets both on and off the campus are a signal of belated awareness on the part of the students of their long lost potential power to share in the tasks traditionally appropriated by the three institutional bosses. Although not always clear or articulate on the demand, the new institutional forces are seeking power to have an influence on the conduct and running of the institution; to have a democratic say in the definition or re-definition of the institution's goals; to be represented on all the institution's forums; to be represented in the constitution of the institution's organs; etc. Indeed, students and youths are everywhere today struggling for power to actually share (with the adult society) in the formulation of society's goals and policies.

That the adult society has always been "slow" in the consideration, formulation and execution of society's (the nation's) business; that the adult society has always "looked down upon" the youth in their demands; that the nation's institutions have been "traditional" and "conservative" along with the reactionary attitudes of the adult society; that it is all these conservative pillars that must be "uprooted" to realise a faster progress ahead—all these account for student radical outlook and "revolutionary" activism. That the demanded concessions do not necessarily follow or are not granted all at once, is enough conviction on the part of the "struggling" students that they are in a permanent, continuing revolution. Whether the "revolution" is really a revolution is the observer's own problem of definition, not theirs.

Just a random look at the international scene. In Indonesia, student power in the 1960's was principally a political nationalist agitation against the ruling regime and aimed at revolutionising the society. In collaboration with, though by no means dominated by, the army, student power was directed at

redefining national goals. Considered "reactionary", President Sukarno had to retire to give way to a more radical regime.

In France, the conflict has been against two strong pillars—the political regime and the education system—which are interrelated. Both have been accused of conservatism and reactionary resistance to change: the political regime (de Gaulle's) having "betrayed" the national social revolution, and the education system being elitist and, by various means such as the rigid and discriminating examinations, helping to perpetuate the existing socio-political structure.

The student struggle in North America has, on the one hand directed its thrust at the injustices and imbalances in the socio-economic structure, seeking to redress the inequalities and institute fairness in the access to and distribution of life chances and opportunities. On the other hand, at a micro level, it has sought to influence the socialisation process in educational institutions in terms of the ideology, curriculum practices and research, in accordance with the desired social ends.[12] Consequently, student politics and activism have diversified, with situational demands, time and opportunity, ranging from the students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—fighting for general racial and economic equality and harmony in society; to the more inter-cultural Black Students Association (BSA)—fighting for dignity, equality and recognition for the blacks in America, Africa and elsewhere; and the more pragmatic University Action Group (UAG)—a reinforcement pressure group on the "watch out" on the campus and in the vicinity for "appropriate" action when necessary.

On the African scene, student crises have not been less noticeable. Recently, a trail of them throughout the entire continent has concerned almost everybody, although the point at stake and the demands vary remarkably. Since the mid-1960's and more intensively in the 1970's, nearly every African country has in one way or another experienced a shake-up by student outbreaks Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Congo, Zaire, South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, to mention but a few round the map. Again the triggering causes vary and are frequently shaped by local situations; but a closer examination reveals a basic struggle for "power" to influence and/or actually participate in the affairs of national (sometimes even international) politics and education—ranging from formulation of national goals and policies, to formulation of school/college curricula, to internal and external administration of the educational and cultural institutions. And this has not been without success. The students' radical role in their educational institutions is to be seen in their relations (conflicting as they have always been) with the authorities—faculty, administration, trustees or boards of governors—which have led, directly or indirectly, to certain "apparent" or real changes and adaptations.

In national politics, too, the role of student activism should not be underestimated, although continentally it may not have acquired the necessary

political consideration, organisation or recognition. In Peter Enahoro's estimation, "in the [African] continent-wide context there is no evidence to support the view that these scattered eruptions signify a specific new role in society among Africa's young generation, or that they are an indication of a continent-wide student rebellion. Perhaps the only general interpretation which can be read into them is that they show that Africa's students are less inhibited than other organised groups (such as the trade unions, for example) when they feel the need to express their grievances. Otherwise, the issues on which they base their demonstrations have been distinctly local".[13]

While, truly, the student eruptions have been "scattered"—though, significantly almost uniformly distributed—throughout the continent, they reflect the different pressures and strains, frequently of a local nature but also of a continental or international character, which many times emerge from social, economic and political problems and policies beyond the control of the national government, although not infrequently created within. All these appear as a challenge which the younger generation (students and youths) readily wish to take up "urgently" and solve "at once". Often, the most convenient means to this, at least "guaranteed" by "academic freedom", is student demonstrations, revolts, pickets, etc., on campus or outside in the immediate vicinity. Naturally, they cause electrical shocks and awakening in the general public, sometimes to their dismay, although at other times they strengthen the general demands and sentiments of the sympathising general population. True also, they help to remind the authorities, positively or negatively, of the pledges and promises they make to the people, of their deeds and actions, of their own self-conceptions as rulers and human participants and of the viability of their programmes.

This is an important political role by student activists which the other sections of the population, especially the elderly and the established, refrain from or reluctantly or inconspicuously join. The manner in which they express their grievances may not be coherent or rational and, frequently, their immediate objectives and strategies are not consistent with the sound aims declared in their assemblies. The concessions they gain may be temporary or merely token. Moreover, wielding no authority or power in society, and falling frequent victims of tendencies to clandestine (though not necessarily sinister) action, "revolutionary" students have not always been in favour with the authority; and any basic trust with the political elite is reserved, in spite of their verbal praise of "student vigilance". Against these observations of everyday student life, Enahoro's conclusion is corroborated, that:

> It is doubtful therefore that the students are making the kind of impact guaranteed to generate any immediate public movement in their favour. They may be slowly succeeding in challenging the conscience of their elders, but it will be some time yet before any overt evidence of their success is seen in action. One immediate achievement, if that is the word, is that they may be educating the population of their various countries

to see that even monolithic systems of Government can be questioned publicly and challenged in the streets if necessary. For it should not be forgotten that demonstrations have been carried out often in the face of deliberate and stern efforts to discourage them by the authorities.[14]

It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into the educational and political ethics of student revolt in Africa and elsewhere, for the intention here is an outline historical and sociological survey of the manifestations and character of a phenomenon. It is enough to remark here that many of the student crises in the world today, notwithstanding their inevitable local and regional uniqueness, reflect a fundamental search for power "denied" or "alienated" from them, in the first instance, by the educational-institutional establishment, and, latterly, by the adult political society. Thus, accordingly, more relevant questions of sociological interest are: who are the students that revolt (or have in history revolted)? That is, is it the whole student body that is actively involved in student politics and struggle? What are their characteristic ideas or value orientations? How do they feel about life in general and about the situation they find themselves in? What are their immediate objectives and their ultimate goals? They are nevertheless complex and difficult questions to answer in a simple fashion, for they require an intensive investigation of a wide cross-section of the student population in terms of their value systems, their sensitivity to ideas, their reactions and practical options and tendencies—which are not always consistent, manifest, permanent or reliably representative of the respective personalities in different situations and times. An attempt at such as exercise and the generalisations on the dynamics, such as follow, could naturally not be free from shortcomings resulting from these constraints.

EAST AFRICAN CAMPUS STUDENTS

In a recent study conducted on university campus students,[15] a number of findings emerged that seemed to bear significant relationship or indicators to student political sensitivity, radicalism and/or activism. Only those directly relevant to our present topic will be summarised here.

THE GENERAL STUDENT BODY

An attempt was made to gauge the aggregate level of political awareness or consciousness of the general student body and their attitude towards their immediate (formal, "custodial") educational institution.

Regarding awareness of and participation in national or local political events, three test items were used which indicated considerable political emotional sensitivity among the majority of the students. For instance, regarding daily local or foreign newspapers (e.g. *Daily News, Daily Nation, Uhuru, Ngurumo*), well over 80% of the sample indicated that they read them daily or regularly, while the rest read them rarely or when they had time to do so. On attending political or politically significant meetings such as public rallies,

political lectures or speeches or ideological classes on the campus or outside in town, 50% of the sample said that they did so always or regularly and 28.8% only when time allowed or when they were scheduled in good time. The third item consisted of some "politically charged, emotionally obtrusive" terms (Marxism-Leninism; a One-Party democracy; the student Revolution; the People's Republic of China, etc.), to which the sample subjects were asked to react. The results were such that over a half of the students gave (recorded on the questionnaire form) their reaction (in terms of either favourable or unfavourable comments and opinions), although well over a third gave "undecided" reactions (don't know; no opinion, etc.), or did not respond at all, a possible indication of political apathy or indifference.

As to the general attitude to their institution, there was an assortment of responses in the general sample. To the question "Do you enjoy your stay at this University?", 15.2% were strongly positive (Yes, very much), while 3% were strongly negative (No, not at all). 51.5% were moderately positive (Yes, fairly) and 28.8% were moderately negative (Not so much, things could be better)—two categories which are not totally exclusive and which tend to include mixed feelings and reactions, depending on circumstances and situations. Expressed reasons for respective positions were many and varied; and indeed some of them contradicted each other, given the varied differential individual dispositions. Thus, some students enjoyed their stay because of "the good and conducive learning atmosphere that prevails" on the campus; others enjoyed it for the "freedom of activity and speech" and because the "varsity is an ideal place for our struggle against all forms of reaction, imperialism and exploitation"; and yet a number enjoyed campus life simply for the cheerful social atmosphere and friendship networks and possibilities prevailing. Those who did not enjoy their stay or life at the campus gave reasons ranging from unsatisfactory refectory conditions, thorough "reactionary lecturers and incompetent tutors", "too many course assignments" and "irrelevant course requirement", and an "insensitive bureaucracy in the administration", and "too much politics", to personal problems of finance and family obligations back at home. These observations show that the attitude and feeling of the students towards their own "custodial" institution is not uniform and cannot be generalised for the whole population. This suggests another important observation below.

Subcultural Heterogeneity

As a formal educational (socialisational) institution, a school sooner or later develops its own culture—its unique way of conduct, valuation, value symbols, and an automatic mechanism of moulding or conditioning the thoughts, behaviour and standards of its clients accordingly. And, as a unique institutional culture, the school's culture is a subculture in relation to the whole culture of the macro-social system of which it is a part. As such it may be expressing the values, beliefs and thought systems prevailing in society,

Table 1. Student Subcultures by Values Orientation and Relative Sample Weight

Sub-culture	First-choice responses	%	Selected points of valuation (In spite of everything else, this University is or could be personally gratifying in that)
"Social/Collegiate"	94	34.8	. It is a pool of people, workers, students, teacher, from different backgrounds, with whom one can establish understanding and exchange ideas, and from whom one can choose friends.
			. This is co-educational institution. It is relatively easy, at least a good idea, to have a friend of the opposite sex. One can even acquire a partner for marriage.
"Nonconformist/ Revolutionary"	64	24.2	. The University has a wealth of the works of great leaders and social reformers, such as Marx, Lenin, Bakunin, Mao, Che, Castro, Kim, and others. A discussion of their works is particularly fascinating and beneficial to the revolutionary transformation of our society and the world at large.
			. It is an ideal place for demonstration of progressive ideas, student power, freedom and action.
"Academic"	40	15.2	. There are facilities necessary for serious academic work, namely books teachers, a quite library, seminar rooms, bookshop, etc. One can reasonably devote oneself to serious individual and/or group study, research and other course assignments.
"Vocational"	32	12.1	. There are possibilities and opportunities for job training and reading materials and information related to various forms of employment and jobs.
			. This is an ideal place for preparing for a future career.
"Ambivalent"	34	13.5	. None of all these is specially more appealing than others. I have no special choice. Sometimes one, another strikes my attention.

although, on the other hand, it may at some points be at variance because of the inevitable contradictions between young and old, new and established, radical and conservative forces.

The same phenomena could be observed even more clearly on a higher level at college and university, where institutional cultures in certain aspects sometimes crystallise to perceptual concreteness with passage of time.[16]

A more detailed examination of the internal dynamics of the institution (specifically, of the University), however, reveals a more interesting phenomenon. Contrary to the general expectation, it points to culture heterogeneity in terms of the diverse value orientations and interaction patterns among the students. This, too, is a function of at least two main factors: the ideas to which the student is exposed or acquires in the course of his stay, and the time length. Following the general criteria used by Clark and Trow,[17] the survey discovered the existence of four solid value orientations (or subcultures) and a fifth less permanent and diffuse "pseudo-subculture". The four are the social collegiate, academic, vocational, and non-conformist/revolutionary subcultures. The fifth is ambivalent. They are presented in the table below with their representative weight (by first-choice responses) and their characteristic valuation points. An outline description of each of these subcultures will serve also to point to the actual internal heterogeneity in students' value systems.[18]

(i) *Social/Collegiate*

Students of this orientation are those who express their liking of the university for its social worth and social facilities. They saw it as a place where there is a pool of people for possible personal friendships and interactions and with a wealth or potential of "socialising" activities. They tended to detest "bookworms" and hard-going intellectual debates unless the points of discussion are "socially" and emotionally stimulating. They nevertheless worked sufficiently hard to justify their continued stay at the campus, to avoid failure at examinations, which was viewed as a disgrace before other friends, and to keep the good name of their institution. Otherwise, theirs was a world of parties, fraternising, cinema, dancing, and happy conversations.

(ii) *Non-conformist/Revolutionary*

This category consisted of students whose manner of expression, speech, action and general confession characterised them as non-conformist and/or revolutionary. They seemed to be the core of general student activism and non-conformism. Students in this category seem to be (at least attempt to be) widely read and conversant with a wide range of issues which stimulate divergent thinking, dissenting ideas and "heated" arguments and debates. They tend to be more "political", more "ideological", hence more "revolutionary" and their preoccupation leads more and more to the radical works of historical social activists and idolised revolutionary theorists e.g. Marx, Lenin, Bakunin,

Fanon, Mao Tse-tung, Kim Il Sung, Ernest Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Many of these works are often not read to entirety or in detail, and so the student tends to use the name or the generalised idea of the idol rather than the intricate issues of the idea as a basis for arguments. The apparent "opponents" are quickly (and often emotionally) put off as reactionary. This is probably because of the little tolerance they have for one who seems to hold a different view and who is probably too fast or too slow in the seemingly hot and/or important discussion, or revolution.

Students of this orientation seem also to have little sympathy for, and little identification with, the institutions. There may be several factors to explain this, but one which frequently manifested itself in the survey was their view that the university as an established academic institution is conservative, "traditional" and resistant to change. They would like to see it change its perspectives and practices *as fast as* they expect. When this is not forthcoming, the university is to them a conservative, reactionary institution. Constant latent or expressed friction then reigns. The "student struggle" is directed against teachers, the administration or the trustees, depending on the prevailing situation and on who is associated more with the point of conflict. From the manner of their perception, attitude, reaction and sometimes irreconcilable argument, students of this type of value orientation form the core or the driving force behind student revolts and demonstrations on campus in times of crisis.

(iii) *Academic*

Students belonging to academic value orientation seem to be strictly "academic"—serious readers devoting much of their time and effort to the library, course work assignments and "intellectual" discussion. In the survey, they seemed to be less "social" and less "political" in their orientation than the two categories mentioned above, for to them academic pursuit was the central value and everything else was secondary. Consequently, they were much perturbed by a lower mark or grade in the examinations and course work assignments, and equally perturbed by fellow students who interrupted classes to ask a question totally unrelated to the theme. Just as the non-conformists/revolutionaries restrict their intimate relationships to fellow "progressives", so the academic students extend their friendships mostly to fellow "academic readers" and those who are intellectually stimulated and/or intellectually tolerant.

(iv) *Vocational*

Students who are career-oriented view the college or university primarily as a means to their principal goal—a job or a vocation. It is seen and valued only as a stepping-stone, as an institution which is respected and accepted by prospective employers as giving (or capable of giving) the necessary skills for

job performance. It is these skills (and the necessary certification) that the vocationally-oriented student is seeking in staying at college.

Much of his time tends to be shared between seeking and reading employment and job bulletins and the job-opportunities page of newspapers on the one hand, and reading course materials related to the demanded skills of the target vocation on the other. All the other readings are done to enable the student to pass his/her examinations and earn a certificate and/or a testimonial. As such, long intellectual discussions and debates in the classroom or outside do not seem to appeal to the vocationally biased students, at least from the observations in the survey. In classes, they would stay on in as far as such discussions may be a "compulsory" course requirement and/or might in the long run contribute to the needed vocation or job performance skills.

Like the "revolutionaries", the vocationally oriented students identify less with the institution, for the education it offers is to them only a means to an end. Unlike the former, however, they nevertheless "like" it for its custodial and instrumental function. (The "revolutionaries" in the survey talked of *tolerating* it rather than liking it).

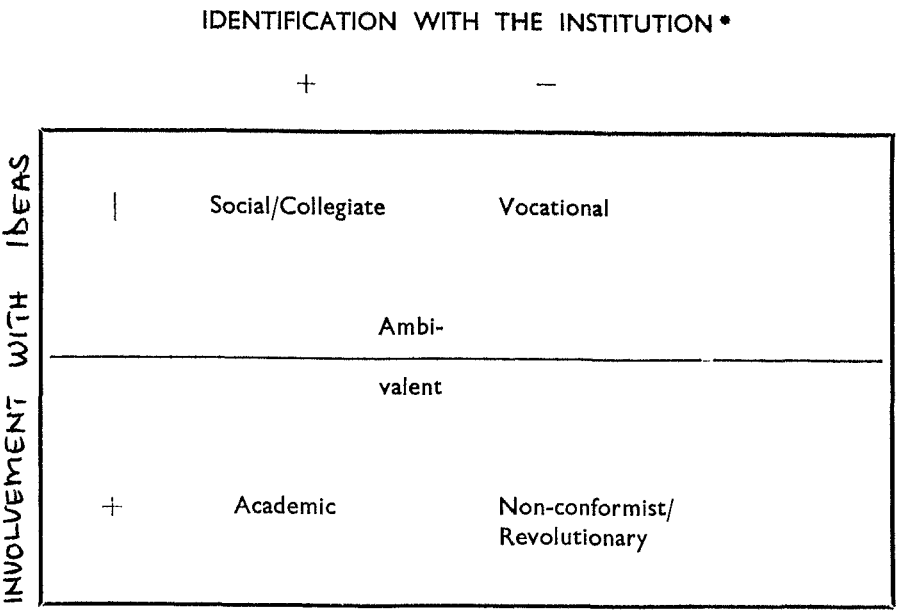
(v) *Ambivalent*

There are a number of students on the campus who tend to be "everything" and therefore nothing systematic or consistent in terms of their ideational development. It may be a conscious tendency depending on the individual's perceived goals; but sometimes this is "accidental" and unconscious, given the many and varied ideas, values, pressures and strains that reign on university campuses, and given the uncertainty about means and ends many students experience in their happy, "free" university life.

Thus, ambivalents will at one time side with the die-hard revolutionary/non-conformists, and at another desert them in favour of another line of action, depending on expediency. They will often take no firm stand on issues that disturb the minds of others, nor do they feel secure enough to appear indifferent to others. They are therefore naively ambivalent. This was observed in the study.

The existence of this rather diffuse pseudo-subculture helps also to explain the fact that in spite of the undoubted heterogeneity in the general institutional culture, there are checks and balances which tend to lessen extreme polarisation and extreme activism. For, alongside whatever current of events is prevailing, there are always stop-gaps which exercise a measure of influence and somehow (though not always successfully) check the extent. It also explains the riddle of the co-existence on campuses, and in student politics in general, of apparent contradictions of "reason" and "unreason", "radicalism" and "conservatism", "revolution" and "reaction", "a sense of emergency" and "a sense of stability and security" which startle many admirers and critics, students and graduates of college and university student life.

Figure 1—University Subcultures by their positivity or negativity towards (1) Identification with their Institution and (2) Involvement with Ideas.



*Cf. Clark and Trow in *Broom and Selznick*, op. cit., p. 454.

~~INVOLVEMENT WITH IDEAS~~

The various student value orientation or subcultures outlined above serve to illustrate the point that in spite of the generally perceived overall institutional culture, within it there is a value differentiation tendency towards more refined subcultures which (except of course, the ambivalents) develop characteristics, at least identifiable, thought patterns and world outlook. They are naturally a function of both the ideas, realities, strains and stresses students become exposed to on enrolling with the institution and of the time period of their stay or life in the institution, with the involved differential stimuli, responses and adaptation to the given situation.

Of immediate interest to the theme of the essay now is the non-conformist/revolutionary group in the generally politically aware and action prone student body.

The Non-conformist/Revolutionary

To be "politically aware" or "action prone" is not necessarily to be "politically active" or "politically involved," although the probability of contagious influence by the politically active on the politically aware is

always great, especially in crisis situations. As one student of social relations on campus has noted,

> The University campus is an ideal place in which to be a radical activist. Many universities have tens of thousands of students concentrated in a small area. [But] It takes only a small percentage of these massive student bodies to make a large demonstration. Hence, campus-based radicals may have great influence even though, as Herbert Marcuse has pointed out recently, the majority of students in all countries are politically quiescent and moderate in their views. Opinion data . . . indicate that the leftwing students are in a minority, often very small, even in countries where leftist demonstrations have made international headlines.[19]

For the observation seems to be universally true, particularly in the light of recent research findings on different countries and campuses.

In the Dar es Salaam campus study, this group, characterised as "non-conformist/revolutionary", formed a little less than a quarter (24.2%) of the sample student body. The group, small as it was, nevertheless appeared to be the core, or at least the driving force behind general student radical activism. The general description of this group, *vis-à-vis* the other identifiable subcultures, which has been given above, seems to confirm this generalisation. It is further corroborated (directly or indirectly) by a few other indicators observed below.

(i) *State objectives*

In the questionnaire survey, an open question was asked, which was among many other questionnaire items: "Apart from the job or employment you hope to take up after your studies here, what special vocation, interest, hobby, or activity would you like to devote yourself to?" While many and varied responses were given from the general sample, some responses seemed to be specifically bent on "revolutionary" preoccupations: "Joining fellow progressives in the cause of revolution", "To continue the struggle against reactionaries and remnants of colonialism"; "Liberation of mankind from the bondage of imperialism"; "I simply won't compromise with reactionary robots whose intention is to betray the cause of revolution"; "Reading and writing progressive novels with characters such as Che or Lenin in them"; "Debates and open discussions"; etc. It many be observed, however, that almost all of the responses (except possibly the last two) are not specific in themselves, nor indeed clear at least on the means to the end. Also, in the informal live interviews, students of the "non-conformist/revolutionary" orientation tended to be more rhetorical and demagogic than precise, analytical and articulate.

(ii) *Attitude towards life in general*

There tended to be general scepticism among students of this orientation towards "life as it is now", and the expressed wish that something could

be done to better it. They were sceptical of fellow students who seemingly did not hold their point of view; sceptical of everybody and every institution which they believed impeded progressive social revolution (such as "reactionary" lecturers, and "insensitive" administration, and "capitalistic" or "imperialist" course assignment); and strongly sceptical of what in their view were "traditional, conservative and reactionary" social institutions such as "bourgeois" literature and religion.[20]

Similarly, they tended to have little tolerance for the politicians and national leaders in general who were not "revolutionary" enough to effect social and economic changes in the country "as fast as they should" (at whatever cost, it appeared from the interviews). The frequent weapons used in arguments of this nature were phrases and concepts frequently borrowed from writings by famous revolutionaries—Fanon, Mao, Lenin, Che, etc., although when it came to the specific question of revolution, few had a clear working idea or definition of the term. Although all of them hinted at *change* few had a clear idea of the nature, objectives, or means of the change. Only few were articulate on this, pointing out that the *revolution* they talked of and advocated was fundamental change in society—its political system and values and the socio-economic relations, which aimed at instituting a profoundly different socio-political order.[21]

All in all, the significance of this radical value orientation is to be seen in the short term view as providing a driving, triggering force to situations in which the needs and grievances within the general student population receive the "urgent" notice of the authorities and the wider public. The long term significance lies in the ultimate changes and adjustments in the educational-institutional as well as in the socio-political arena which are introduced directly or indirectly in response to student radical pressures.[22]

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY

This paper, as its title indicates, is not a treatise on the ethics of student action; it is simply an outline survey of a phenomenon which to many people today appears to be a unique sudden development in the normal everyday life of nations. Amid scarce and fairly scattered records, it is attempting to explore historical incidents in which students and youth in general have been involved and to survey the character of the participants. In so doing, the paper comes up with several generalisations.

Firstly, from the point of view of the known (recorded) student events in the past, it is argued that student radicalism or activism (in the form of demonstrations, riots, confrontations or pickets) is not a strange or even sudden development of the present era. It has a long tradition going as far back as the beginning of the age of school, or public education. The intensity and perspectives may, and often have, changed from situation to situation over time, but the phenomenon as such has a continuous tradition in the history of the world.

Secondly, students have directed their radical action consciously or subconsciously to either or both of two social arenas: (a) their (formal and custodial) educational institution; and (b) political/public life. Many and varied grievances and manifestos have been sounded—sometimes logically and clearly, sometimes irrationally and inarticulately; but they all point to one fundamental issue; desire for or demonstration of power in affairs concerning the conduct of life in the institution and in the political society at large.

Thirdly, although there is no evidence of an international "conspiratorial" network of communication and activities, the world-wide spread of the phenomenon suggests a commonality of certain basic issues at stake among many institutions and countries. There may be (and often there are) specific internal elaborations and regional differences and adaptations, and hence the external forms of student expression would vary accordingly. But there is evidence to show that the radicalism is a result of growing political awareness and sensitivity in terms of national and international affairs and a manifestation of the need for recognition by the adult population.

Fourthly, a closer examination of the whole student body on campus at any given time, however, suggests a differentiated (heterogeneous) student culture. Over time, and given the varied stimuli, ideas and values they are exposed to, individuals tend to adopt characteristic ideas, value patterns and action options. Five categories in the general student body have been identified, namely the social/collegiate the non-conformist/revolutionary, the academic, the vocational, and the ambivalent. Of these, the non-conformist/revolutionary are the more politically and more ideologically active, who tend to be the rallying core or the driving force behind most of the student movements.

Finally, more detailed studies and research have yet to be done in this wide area of student radicalism and youth movements in general. Perhaps this will illuminate many of the numerous questions that remain unexplored or unanswered about this educationally, socially and politically significant phenomenon in the history of nations.

FOOTNOTES

1. The transition can be detected in the position of the great Roman teacher of rhetoric, Marcus Fabius Quintilianus: "There is nothing to prevent the principle of 'one teacher, one boy' being combined with school education." See R. Gross (ed.), *The Teacher and the Taught* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963), p. 14.
2. In his book *Behemoth: The History of the Causes of the Civil Wars, and of the Counsels and artifices by which they were carried on from the Year 1640 to the year 1660.* Quoted from S. M. Lipset and P. G. Altbach (eds.). *Students in Revolt* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), p. v.
3. Moller, H., "Youth as a Force in the Modern World". *Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 10,* (April, 1968), p. 238.
4. Ibid., p. 238.

5. Kemelman, H., *Common Sense in Education* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970), p. 14.
6. Christman H., (ed.) *The American Journalism of Marx and Engels*, (New York, 1966), p. 40.
7. Engels to Marx, 25 April, 1870. Quoted in Shlomo Avineri, "Feuer on Marx and Intellectuals", *Survey, No. 62*, (January 1967), p. 154.
8. Marx, as chief editor of *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal-intellectual paper in Cologne in 1842, to Ruge. See W. Blumenberg, *Portrait of Marx: An illustrated Biography* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 46-47.
9. And this is very true. A close associate and a one-time house-mate (Ruge), who was himself confessedly less scholarly and narrower-minded, testifies in a letter to another associate (Fuerbach), in 1843: "He (Marx) reads a great deal; he works with extraordinary intensity and has a talent for criticism, which occasionally degenerates into dialectic. But he never finishes anything; he is always breaking off, and then plunges again into an infinite ocean of books.... He may well have been born to be a scholar and a writer..." See Blumenberg, op. cit., p. 54.
10. Shils, E., "Dreams of Plenitude, Nightmares of Scarcity", in Lipset and Altbach (eds.) op. cit., pp. 1-31.
11. For instance, see articles in Lipset and Altbach (eds.) op. cit.
12. A recent student attack on Harvard's Professor of Psychology, R. J. Herrnstein's article on the role of intelligence and heredity in the American society ("IQ, *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1971), was one of the most virulent student struggles against the then labelled conspiracy of class, racism and scholarship which the university campuses and the public in general had witnessed in that year. This is of course not to mention the equally strong and more frequent demonstrations and pickets against international corporations (and big Universities that invest in them) that are involved in the exploitation of Africa and Asia or else support minority regimes there and in South America.
13. Enahoro, P., "Student Demonstrations", *Africa: An International Business, Economic and Political Monthly, No. 32*, (April 1974), p. 21.
14. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
15. See Ishumi, A. G., "The Educated Elite: A survey of East African Students at Higher Institutions of Learning", Education Department, University of Dar es Salaam (mimeo). The survey was undertaken at the University of Dar es Salaam campus between 1972-1973. A little more than 85% of the student sample were Tanzanians, while about 14% were Kenyans. Understandably, the general University population included students from Uganda, and also from Sudan and West Africa, although they have always been in a diminishing minority and did not actually appear in the sample. The study has been published in part in *Access to Education in East Africa, Rural Africana, No. 25* (Michigan State University, Fall 1974).
16. E.g. the "Cambridge school of thought", "the Eton way of Life", the "Oxonian tradition", the "Harvard line", the "Dar es Salaam school of historiography", "the Bostonian look", "The old school tie", "The blazer", etc.
17. Clark, B. R., and M. A. Trow, "College Subcultures", in L. Broom and P. Selznick (eds.), *Sociology* (New York: Harper and Row, 3rd ed. 1963), pp. 453-456. Their analysis has brought out four subcultures: collegiate, vocational, academic and non-conformist.
18. See also Ishumi, A. G., *Education: A review of concepts, Ideas and Practices*, Institute of Education, University of Dar es Salaam 1974, pp. 68-71.
19. Lipset, S. M., in Lipset and Altbach, op. cit., p. xvii.
20. All the students in the category were among (in fact a majority of) the 39% of the sample students who had a negative attitude towards religion. For instance, to the

test item on "Religion and the Salvation of Mankind", the frequent reactions included: "It's a myth"; "Opium of the people"; "No such thing"; "Sheer nonsense"; "Something promulgated to make you forget your troubles for a while"; "To hell with your religion and salvation"; "A reactionary force against progressivism".

21. Cf. Lubasz, H., (ed.) *Revolutions in Modern European History* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966).
22. This view is verified by reference to various incidents in the past—at Dar es Salaam (in 1966, again in 1971-1972), at Makerere (in "solidarity" sympathy for their fellows at Dar es Salaam, in 1966), at Nairobi (in 1968, 1972, 1974), at Haile Selassie I (effectively since the 1970's), at Cairo, etc. While in these instances it was this group that acted as a core or catalyst, it could be assumed that it is the same type of student culture which has played a leading role in the various historical events mentioned earlier in the paper and those which are reported from various countries from time to time.