

The Malaise of the German University

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THE DISORDER which seems to be endemic to the universities of many Western countries is doubtless a reflection of the disorder of contemporary society. We are uncertain of what we want, of what we believe, of where we want to go; we are more inclined to be afraid than proud of the complex, highly developed world we have created for ourselves with the help of our science and technology. All this is reflected in the universities, and because of the nature of the university, in a magnified form. Such books as Adam Ulam's *The Fall of the American University* and Robert Nisbet's *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma*, the former a professor at Harvard and the latter at the University of Arizona, and both serious, respected scholars, describe the crisis of the American university; the situation of the German university is essentially similar, but because of the history of Germany and its position at the very center of the ideological and political storms of the modern world it is in the German university that the crisis has taken its most virulent form.

The German university, it is scarcely necessary to mention, has a long tradition and a history of great achievement. The Freiburg professor, Wilhelm Hennis, in a

recent article¹ remarked that his countrymen have not been particularly successful in developing institutions, but that two German institutions, the Prussian general staff and the Humboldt university have been imitated all over the world.

The Humboldt university, as is well known, was the model for the first American universities, Cornell, Johns Hopkins and the University of Michigan among others, both in their basic structure, and in such conceptions as that teaching should be a function of research, the freedom to teach and to learn, and autonomy in academic matters. But however much our universities may have borrowed from the Humboldt university, there are certain basic differences between the German system and ours which need to be understood. In the first place, all German universities are state universities, and the professor is a state official, a *Beamte*, with all that this implies, and has a lifetime appointment at full salary. Traditionally, the old German university was administered by the full professors, the *Ordinari*, but financing came entirely from the state, all appointments to professorships had to be approved by the state, as did the establishment of a new chair. The academic head of the university,

the rector, addressed as *Magnifizenz*, was elected by the full professors and served for one year, which was also the rule for the deans of the faculties. The university was divided into five faculties: Theology, Law, Medicine and Philosophy, the latter into the Natural Sciences and the Liberal Arts, which included philosophy, history, philology, archeology, etc., known as the *brotlose Künste*, because they did not lead to a state examination and a position.

As Professor Hennis points out in the article referred to above, all the early universities were founded by a ruler for the single purpose of training the officials his state required—the clergy, judges, lawyers, administrators, physicians. This tradition has continued, so that a university degree and passing the requisite state examination became the keys to a privileged and respected position. The German university was a professional school and a center for scholarly research; it was the close association of teaching and research, of *Lehre und Forschung*, which gave it its unique quality and character. It served quite a different function, therefore, than the American college. Entrance was open to all those who had finished the *Gymnasium* and passed the final examination, the *Abitur*. The *Gymnasium* went about two years beyond the American high school, and academic standards were high: it was a school primarily intended for the minority who planned to go into the professions.

The German professor was regarded, and regarded himself, as a member of an elite. To become eligible for a professorship, not only was the doctorate necessary, but what was called the *Habilitation* as well, which was a formal procedure administered by a committee of professors to determine the adequacy of the candidate's scholarship, whether he had demonstrated ability to do independent research and to teach. When a professorial chair was to be filled, a com-

mittee was appointed, consisting again entirely of professors, to select candidates. A list of three was submitted to the minister of education, who usually appointed the first, but was free to appoint one of the other two, or to reject them all. In his own field the professor was king—he was usually head of his own institute, selected his own assistants, gave the lectures and seminars he wished, and his doctoral candidates were completely dependent on his approval and good will. A student, on the other hand, was free to go from one university to another as he chose, and to study as much or as little, and for as long, as suited him. There was no such thing as a board of trustees or regents; the patron, originally a ruling prince, was the state, but the relationship was such that a considerable degree of independence, especially in academic matters, was preserved.

This, briefly, was the German university as it existed at least until 1933, and is the tradition from which the attempts at reform and the present situation must be understood. It was an elite university intended to produce a broadly educated, highly motivated professional class—clergy, judges, lawyers, physicians, as well as scientists, scholars and teachers, and was based on a structure which permitted a high degree of freedom to both professors and students, in which injustices were possible and no doubt occurred, but which worked for a long time and produced a level of scholarship which has rarely been surpassed or even equalled.

At the end of World War II, of the twenty-three universities of the pre-1933 period only fourteen were left in West Germany, and one of these, Giessen, seemed destroyed beyond hope of reconstruction. In spite of the material and spiritual destruction of twelve years of National Socialism and war, it seemed that the tradition of scholarship and teaching might be strong enough for

the German university to survive. A group of professors from the old Humboldt University in Berlin, which by the division of Berlin was in the Russian sector, not being willing to accept the Communist idea of a university, with generous American help founded the Free University in the American sector, and two new universities were founded with the encouragement and support of the French authorities in Mainz and Saarbrücken in the French zone of occupation. Wilhelm Hennis describes the immediate postwar situation as follows:

In spite of the most appalling external circumstances—a teaching body decimated by war and denazification, buildings inadequate to a degree scarcely imaginable today, empty stomachs and chronic illness, seldom have students in German universities worked with more joy and accomplished so much.²

There are now in West Germany some forty-five universities; vast sums have been spent for new buildings and facilities, stipends for students are generous and adequate and nearly 450,000 are studying, but with how much joy and accomplishment is an open question.

The number of students in the years immediately following the war was small—it was the generation of the depression years which had been further reduced by the war, but by the 1950's the number of students began to increase, and since few new universities had been built, overcrowding soon became general. In 1950 there were a total of 111,500 students in German universities, by 1960 their number had increased to 203,400 and by 1970 to 331,000.³ The old, professor-oriented university was not in a position to handle the flood of students, and seemed to be too rigid to adjust itself to a situation for which it had never been intended. The situation was made worse by inadequate funding by the individual states, the *Länder*, which control the

universities, so that student discontent was inevitable, and a movement to reform the university soon began to develop. The student revolutionary movement of the late sixties skillfully exploited the discontent of the students, but the two movements were not identical—the first was a movement for university reform, the second a revolutionary movement aimed at the destruction of all established institutions which made use of the former for its own ends. Actually, it appears, orderly reform had started and was making headway when the violence, excessive demands and sheer destructiveness of the student revolutionaries made a more drastic change of the old university seem necessary. The legislators, in any case, lost their nerve, and like legislators everywhere reacted with laws, as though a law, by itself, would provide such things as lecture rooms, libraries and faculty, or placate the revolutionaries, for whom one concession only aroused the appetite for more.

The purpose of the university laws, which have become a regular feature of present day Germany, was to *democratize* the university, as it was said, to bring it into the twentieth century, but the real purpose was to force the professors by the power of the state to accept a form of reorganization they never would have accepted voluntarily, and in view of what has happened since, the professors seem to have been justified in their opposition. Although not the first such law, the university law⁴ adopted by the City Council of Berlin, where the student revolt, not surprisingly, had been the most violent, was the most far-reaching. The Berlin law, which came in force August 1, 1969, it was hoped at the time, would create a university structure which would become a model for the whole world, as had the first Berlin university founded by Alexander von Humboldt in the early nineteenth century, but rather than a model, the Berlin law has created a mon-

ster, and has largely destroyed what had been a great university.

The attempt to reform the German university, of which the Berlin law provides a rather extreme, but by no means untypical example, has been largely dominated by ideological considerations, and from this fact of ideology, as I hope to be able to demonstrate, stems much of the malaise of the German university. The university, it was said, was to be autonomous and self-governing, as though an institution which receives virtually all of its financial support from the state, one of whose main functions is to prepare candidates for state examinations, and whose principle officers are state officials could be, in any sense of the word, *autonomus*. In addition, and perhaps, most destructive of all, the university was to function on a completely democratic basis: all those associated with the university—professors, assistants, tutors, students, employees—were to be thought of as members of the university community on the same level, and all were to have a share, in accordance with a prescribed formula, in all decisions affecting the university—the election of administrative officers, the nomination of professors, determining of courses of study, conduct of examinations. Finally, the old division of the university into the traditional five faculties was abolished in favor of American-style departments, and the office of rector, elected for one year, was replaced by an American-style president, elected for seven years.

Under the Berlin law, each department, or *Fachbereich*, is controlled by a committee of 15, of whom 7 are professors, 4 assistants, 3 students, and one an employee, who may be a typist, a laboratory assistant, a janitor, or whatever, who are elected by the group to which they belong. In connection with this, it should be mentioned, a Berlin professor, who had had long and depressing experience with such committees,

remarked that the employee members usually make much better sense than the students. This committee determines and controls the teaching program, the conduct of examinations, the awarding of degrees and nominates a list of candidates for appointments to professorships which, as before, must be submitted for final approval to the minister of education, or his equivalent. The academic senate, which is the chief governing body of the university, is made up of 24 members, consisting of 11 professors, 6 assistants, 5 students and 2 staff employees, and is elected by the departmental committees, as is the council, the chief function of which is to elect the president. There is also a body called the *Kuratorium*, which acts, supposedly, as a board of trustees, and which, besides the usual professors, assistants, students and employees, includes members of the Berlin City Council, with the governing mayor as chairman. This incredibly complex structure can only be described as an ideological nightmare, and rather than bringing reform to the university, has resulted in little else than chaos.

The personality of the first president elected after the new law went into effect, Rolf Kreibich, gave clear indication of what was to follow. Herr Kreibich, when elected president of the Free University of Berlin, was 31 years of age, a sociologist who had changed over to physics but had not yet completed his degree, and had had no administrative experience whatever. He had left his native Saxony in the German Democratic Republic a few years before the Berlin Wall made such changes of residence difficult or impossible, and had given as his reason for leaving reluctance to serve in the armed forces. He went back to his home in 1961 for a visit, and returned to the West a day or two before the completion of the Wall on August 13, 1961. The vote for Kreibich in the Council, which consists of

33 professors, 33 assistants, 33 students and 20 staff is rather significant: in favor, 2 professors, 21 assistants, 29 students and 11 staff.

Since participation in student politics is so time consuming as to be substantially a full-time activity, those willing and able to undertake it must have a strong political or ideological motivation, and be in a position to take the time from their studies this requires. The Communists fit the requirements perfectly—they not only have the necessary ideological motivation, there appears to be ample evidence that they receive careful training for such political activity at a special school in East Germany as well as financial assistance. In addition to this, they have the enormous psychological advantage, as things are going now, of having reason to believe that they are on the winning side, with all that this means for anyone who knows what happens when a Communist regime takes over. The results of student participation in the administration of the university as is provided for in Berlin and in a number of other German states, in those, for the most part, governed by the Socialists, are just about as one might have expected—the participating students, usually, are Communists* or members of other far-left groups and use the power and authority given to them to obtain faculty appointments for those who agree with them and to prevent the appointment of those who do not, to influence courses of study in a Marxist direction, and to harass and to sabotage the work of those with whom they do not agree.

In Berlin, harassment of faculty members who take a stand against the Communist-dominated student organizations is fre-

quent, often violent, and has at least the tacit support of the university administration. On April 20, 1972, as an example, the class of Prof. Scheler, who teaches English, was broken up (the German word for this sort of thing is *sprengen*) by a Communist mob; instead of taking action against the rioting students the president of the university ordered the professor to hold his classes outside the university. He and his students were allowed back in the university only after Prof. Scheler had agreed to allow the Communists to present their criticism of "bourgeois linguistics" in his class. Harassment continued, until the professor had to hold his classes in a private house. In April 1973, at the beginning of the summer semester, the Communists demanded that Prof. Scheler be expelled; his classes were interrupted again, and on one occasion he was beaten. The president of the university met this situation by insisting that the professor hold his classes in a club house, which was owned by the university, but several miles away.

A brief account of the circumstances surrounding the attempt by the economics department of the Free University to appoint Ernest Mandel, a Belgian journalist, a Trotskyite and head of the IVth International with headquarters in Brussels to a full professorship will give some idea of what can happen these days at a German university. The nomination of Mandel, who had not finished his doctorate and certainly had no reputation as a scholar, was made by the departmental committee, consisting as all of them are in Berlin of 7 professors, 4 assistants, 3 students and 1 employee, in full knowledge of the fact that the federal government had recently denied Mandel

*"The elections of June 1973 for the student members of the departmental committees [at the Free University] present a bleak picture. Of the 6,468 valid votes, 4,550 went to three groups one can only classify as Communist, 945 to the left

Socialists, and only 828 to non-Socialist candidates. The result: 50 of the 74 seats of the student representatives were won by Communists of various hues and virulence." Helmut Jaesrich, *Die Welt*, Dec. 4, 1973.

permission to enter the country because of his revolutionary activity. In addition, the committee submitted only one name for approval to the senator for science and art of Berlin, who corresponds to the minister of education in the other German states, instead of the customary three. A professor who opposed Mandel's appointment, Jürgen Zerche, was subjected to mob violence, his lectures were broken up, and several large paving blocks thrown through the window of his house. When the senator for science and art refused to confirm the appointment on the grounds that it was clearly in violation of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic, the Communist student organizations called a one-week strike in protest which, it was announced, was "Against the destruction of the democratic rights of the people and in favor of the firm alliance of the working classes with all persecuted groups of the population in the struggle for the socialist revolution." Although student support was minimal, the Communists, through violence, intimidation, good organization and the indirect support of the university administration as well as of their friends on the faculty were able to close down some departments completely and to disrupt the work of others.

In the medical department of the Free University, once considered among the best in Europe, twelve professors, finding conditions intolerable, resigned within two years after the new law went into effect, and as of the Fall of 1973, nine chairs were still unfilled and had been for over two years. On March 3, 1973 the professor for internal medicine, Dr. Günter A. Neuhaus, a diagnostician of international reputation, resigned his professorship to become director of a large hospital. The following is from his letter of explanation to the governing mayor of Berlin:

The reason for my resignation is a direct result of the conditions and develop-

ments in the university clinics, which in turn are a direct result of the university law.

One of the most depressing results of this development is the fact that the patient has been removed as the central concern and replaced by the affirmation of faith in the democratization of clinical medicine. It is for me unbelievable that the responsible legislators of Berlin do not comprehend this consequence of the law. I must, therefore, express the suspicion that your actions were influenced by different motives, in other words, that concern for the patient received only secondary consideration in the formulation of the university law. That the needs of clinical medicine were admittedly neglected in the formulation of the law is bad enough, but that the consequences of this neglect have not been drawn is unforgivable.

Participation in the legally prescribed committees, which finally took more than half of my working time, cannot, in the long run, satisfactorily replace my responsibility for the care of patients, research, and teaching. Having to put up, in the everlasting committee meetings, with humorless mediocrity, opportunism, and political resentments, and above all the demand, which is driven to the point of an ideological fetish, that medicine adapt itself to the "needs of society," as well as the constant fight, through one committee after another for financing, personnel, and the opportunity for work leads to the exact opposite of collegial, professional cooperation, namely to distrust and finally hopelessness.⁵

The situation of the Free University, it should be made clear, is not typical of all German universities, although some approach it. Marburg is about in the same situation as Berlin, but some universities function quite normally, Mannheim, Mainz and Saarbrücken, for example; Munich is overcrowded, but the structure of the uni-

versity seems to be intact, and even in universities where there has been widespread disorder certain faculties are intact. At the University of Frankfurt, for example, where Marxist influence is strong and where demonstrations, breaking up of lectures, etc. have been frequent, the law school seems to be in order. Bonn, which has traditionally been one of the great German universities, has had its share of riots, *Sprengungen*, demonstrations and all the rest, but through the influence of a strong-willed and courageous rector seems to be on the mend. Heidelberg had a series of riots, strikes and demonstrations during the winter of 1972-1973 organized by the Communist students to protest the fact that several professors had had the temerity to join the *Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft* (Association for Academic Freedom), but the university is still a functioning academic institution, and the fact that it could take effective action against the rioting students a sign of vitality.

Some mention should be made of the new university in Bremen, which is frankly Marxist, and a case for itself. In all administrative organs of the university the three groups, university teachers, students and nonacademic employees, have equal representation—"no status group," as it says in the catalog, "is to have a majority position." A course is described as "Toward a criticism of the bourgeois sociology of youth—Problems of the materialistic investigation of the position of the working youth." This is followed by a long explanatory paragraph, which begins with the following remarkable sentence:

The concept of youth of bourgeois science, especially of the sociology of youth, has remained idealistic, as opposed to the fact that working youth is a product of historic development, that is to say, of the methods of capitalistic production and its results, because the

bourgeois conception of youth was generalized independently of its class position—from class conflict there arose the generation conflict.⁶

I would like to go back to my earlier assertion that the principle cause of the malaise of the German university is the influence of ideology. In order to bring some order into the university laws which the various states have enacted, a "framework law"—*Hochschulrahmengesetz*, is now before the Federal Parliament for consideration. This bill, which was prepared under the direction of the Federal Minister for Education and Science, Klaus von Dohnanyi, provides a good example of the pervasive influence of ideology. The new German university, the preamble to the bill proclaims, is to be *democratic* as opposed to the old Humboldt university, the goals of which, as it says, were "the formation of a small elite and research free of all social influence."⁷ But can any society survive without an elite, a group, that is, which assumes the task of carrying on and developing the traditional values of civilization? Scholarly research in the new German university, the bill goes on to say, is "to serve social interests," but who decides? In Nazi Germany we had "German physics" and "Aryan anthropology" and in Stalinist Russia "Marxist genetics"; were not all these to "serve social interests"?

The "framework law" further states:

Educational policy in the democratic society begins with the principle of the right of the citizen to education. University reform, therefore, must lead to a structure of the university which offers every citizen an opportunity for education and career which corresponds to his talents and inclinations, independently of the income and educational level of his parents.⁸

This sounds very fine, we have heard it before, and is quite typical of present-day So-

cial-Democratic Germany, but does it really take into account the interests of the individual and of society, and correspond to the realities of the human condition? Is the son of a working man, for example, who sacrifices several years of his life to earn a diploma in sociology and then gets a job, if he is lucky enough to get a job at all, in, let us say, opinion research, which is big in Germany now, better off and a better man than his working-class father, or if he would be had he followed the traditions of his family? In the new Ruhr University in Bochum no less than 3,000 are enrolled in the social sciences—sociology, economics, political science, etc., at Frankfurt 800 are studying sociology alone, and in Munich 1,500 are in political science. When one asks what all these people will do when they finish their studies the answer is usually a shrug and some such remark as “Join the academic proletariat,” with all that this means in the way of frustration, discontent and social unrest. Can any society, and least of all that of West Germany in its exposed and highly vulnerable position, afford to spend vast sums to educate young people for careers that don’t exist and in fields for which there is no need? It is all very well for the protagonists of the “new university” to speak disparagingly of the old Humboldt university for its concentration on the formation of an elite, but no society can exist without an elite, and what society needs an academic proletariat?

Mitbestimmung, the participation of all those associated with the university in decision-making bodies—professors, assistants, students, and nonacademic employees, is another one of those ideological conceptions which is typical of present-day Germany, and has been applied to the universities, irrespective of the consequences, ever since the student revolts of the sixties. The proportion among the groups varies: in Berlin, as has been mentioned, on the departmental

committees it is 7 professors, 4 assistants, 3 students, and 1 employee, in Bremen in all organs of the university it is on the basis of 3 professors and assistants taken together, 3 students, and 3 employees; in Hamburg, the university senate is made up of the president of the university, the vice-president, 7 professors, 4 teaching assistants, 4 scientific assistants, 4 students, and 2 employees. The new “framework” act, not unexpectedly, provides for *Mitbestimmung* (usually translated as “co-determination”), but leaves the actual proportion between the groups for the individual states to decide so long as no group has a majority, except in matters pertaining to research and academic appointments the professors and assistants as a group are to have a majority—this in deference to a recent decision of the German supreme court, which ruled that in such matters professors *alone* were to have a majority.

Co-determination is based on the theory that the university is to be conducted on a democratic basis, that all those connected with it are members of the university as a corporate body without distinction; the old distinction between *Mitglieder* and *Angehörige*, members and associates, is abolished, so that a full professor and an entering student are considered to be on the same level. The whole conception of co-determination, as the forgoing makes clear, is based on a misconception: a university is not a democracy and cannot function as one, the interests and capabilities of student and professor are not the same, nor are the manner of their association with the university nor their purpose for being there. The experience with such participation has been uniformly disastrous—it has led to such absurdities as the nomination of a Belgian Trotskyite journalist to a full professorship, the election of a Kreibich as a university president, to disruption, to antagonism between the different groups and among the

groups themselves, to the politicization of the university and to the lowering of academic standards. In addition, it wastes an enormous amount of time, but it is an expression of an ideology, and therefore beyond the reach of reason and experience.

Although the educational bureaucracy attaches great importance to co-determination, it is apparently a matter of indifference to most students. In student elections it is rare that over half even take the trouble to vote, and in most cases it is 25 to 35 percent. The vice-president of the Free University told me that when he asked a non-Communist student to become a candidate for membership on one of the governing committees the student remarked, "Running the university is your job, mine is to study," and this, no doubt, rather accurately expresses the attitude of most students. Having been once granted, however, it is a "democratic right" which it will be difficult to take away—the Communists, who are the principle beneficiaries, know how to terrify timid legislators with threats of demonstrations and strikes, and for the Socialists it is a part of the ideology of equality, and therefore inviolable. It should also be pointed out that co-determination is expensive: since the introduction of the university law in Berlin, the number of administrative employees in the Free University has increased from 85 to 555, and the fees paid to students for attending the various meetings now run to over one million marks a year.

Having referred a number of times to Communist students and student organizations, it is fair to ask how widespread such groups are in the universities and how much influence they have. A professor who has studied the situation carefully told me that in a German university of 20,000 students there would be no more than 100 to 300 hard-line Communists, and perhaps the same number equally committed, but unor-

ganized, in opposition, but that there would be 2,000 to 3,000 Communist sympathizers who can be mobilized for demonstrations, strikes and elections. The rest of the students, he thought, were rather indifferent, but probably more anti-Communist than otherwise. It is the *Milläuser*, those who are uncommitted but go along who constitute the real danger, since it is they who give the small number of actual Communists their strength and influence. The strongest and best organized Communist group is *Spartakus*, which in Berlin is called SEW; it is sympathetic to the German Democratic Republic, and apparently receives financial and other forms of support from the East. There is another far-left group which was formerly associated with the Social Democratic Party which the party officially expelled, but which still has connections, it is claimed, with certain elements of the party, and there are other groups, some Maoist, some anti-Soviet, but all are united in their wish to destroy what they call "the system." The same professor remarked that it is all very reminiscent of the Nazi movement—the methods of violence and intimidation are the same and even the vocabulary is almost identical: then the enemy was the Jew and the object of veneration "das Volk," now the enemy is the capitalist, and the object of veneration "society," but in both cases it is "the system" that must be destroyed.

But why, in prosperous West Germany, with its free institutions, ample opportunity for study and all the rest, would a large proportion of its student population be sympathetic to Communism? Many influences, of course, have a part in this situation—the division of the country, the apparent aimlessness of the West, antagonism toward technology and science, and many others, but one important factor which can be singled out is the influence of the press, TV and radio, and another, the clergy. In

a brilliant and perceptive essay on the strategy of the modern revolutionary, the sociologist Helmut Schelsky remarks:

Just because the "world" of modern man is grasped almost entirely through the intermediary of paper, sound, and picture, those "intermediaries" who control paper, sound, and picture have been placed in the position of a ruling class.⁹

In Germany this "ruling class" is predominantly left-liberal, and has done much to create an atmosphere which gives those without strong convictions reason to believe that the left is the side to be on. The clergy, particularly the Protestant clergy, have contributed to this situation, and elements of the Catholic clergy are not blameless either. It is significant that President Heinemann, who has strong ties to official Protestantism, in 1968 pardoned all those who had been arrested in the student riots and demonstrations, an act which made law enforcement subsequently much more difficult, and gave the student revolutionary movement a degree of moral approval it did not deserve and added greatly to its prestige and influence.

The German university, as a center for scholarly learning, research and teaching, once enjoyed a reputation almost without equal in the world. How does it stand today? It is generally agreed that while much good work is still being done by individuals, there has been a precipitous decline of academic standards in general—the German professor has lost his self-respect, as one professor put it. A major factor in the decline of academic standards, besides those I have already mentioned, is overcrowding, and this again is at least partly a result of the ideology of egalitarianism—everyone should have an opportunity to study, regardless of the needs of society, and in the pursuit of the "equalization of opportunity," which is another current German slogan, no tuition is charged to attend

a university. In Bochum, for the 3,000 students in the social sciences there are 11 professors and 20 teaching assistants, and in the law school in Freiburg there are 2,500 students, of whom 650 are in the first semester, with 19 professors and 25 other teaching staff. In the law school at the University of Chicago, by way of contrast, there are 509 students with 30 full professors, 2 visiting professors, 6 lecturers and 5 teaching fellows.

The German university is becoming a professional school, devoted almost entirely to teaching, but as a minister of education remarked, a university where no original scholarly work is done is a school, not a university. The once proud German university which in the period 1900 to 1944 produced 44 German Nobel prize winners and contributed to the education of a large proportion of the rest is in danger, as a German professor remarked, of becoming an American junior college. It seems to be rather generally agreed that some other institutional form will have to be developed to assume the work of scholarship which was formerly centered in the university. This might be an academy, or the present Max Plank Institutes, which are now primarily, but not entirely, devoted to the natural sciences, may take over this function. The Max Plank Institutes are financed by the state, but separately from the universities, and the directors are usually university professors. One professor remarked that the best solution would be several private universities on the order of one of the better American graduate schools, but in present-day Germany this seems to be out of the question, both for financial and, again, ideological reasons.

Some people connected with the universities feel that the situation is hopeless, that the German university is beyond saving, but as dismal as the picture in many ways is, there are reasons to believe that im-

provement is possible. For one thing, many people are aware of what is happening to an institution that has played an enormously important part in German life and culture, and in a constructive and intelligent way are trying to do something about it. In Berlin, a group of professors in December 1969, shortly after the new university law had gone into effect and Kreibich had been elected president, organized a committee called the *Notgemeinschaft für eine Freie Universität*, which has received considerable support and now has some 600 members, about half outside the university. The *Notgemeinschaft*, or emergency committee, devotes itself to publishing factual material describing what goes on in the university and to studies of the educational situation in general, and to making constructive proposals to restore the university as a viable institution. The Berlin committee is now associated with a national organization, *Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft* which was founded in Bonn in 1970 by a group of professors. The *Bund* is expertly led, gets out well produced, highly professional documentary material and has become an influential force in German education, as is evidenced by the almost hysterical fury with which the far-left groups have reacted against it. The *Bund* bases its position on two principles:

1. In matters of scholarship only those who have demonstrated their scholarly qualifications should have a decisive voice.
2. The person who has demonstrated his scholarly qualifications and has been appointed by the state to the office of university teacher must be protected from the pressures of political opinion and may not be overruled in matters involving scholarly research by those who are unqualified.¹⁰

The fact that it is necessary to make such a statement at all is indicative of how seri-

ous the situation of the German universities has become.

If the assertion is correct that the primary cause of the malaise of the German university is ideology, an improvement will come about only when this influence has been removed. The Social Democratic Party, the dominant party of the present ruling coalition, is historically an ideological party, but gained political power only after it had disavowed its ideology. Now, however, through the influence of its youth organization, the *Jungsozialisten*, which is dominated by far-left students and recent university graduates, the Socialist party is being pushed again into an ideological position, which may very well split the party and greatly lessen its political influence. It is significant that some of the leading people in the *Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft* are members of the Social Democratic Party, while those responsible for the educational policies they object to represent the more ideological element of the same party. Ideologies induce a counterreaction, and so far, fortunately, the counterreaction is not itself ideological. It should also be remembered that students are always inclined to take a position in opposition to that of their teachers, the more so the more extreme their teachers' position happens to be; in present-day Germany this reaction must almost by necessity be anti-ideological.

In spite of all the talk about "reforming" the universities and the many laws that have been passed, higher education in Germany has not been *reformed* in any significant way. Academic control of the universities has been taken away from the professors and turned over to heterogeneous bodies having no central aim or purpose, the fiction of university autonomy has been cultivated to the point that the university has become powerless to protect itself so long as it adheres to such a fiction, and

finally the university has been made accessible to far greater numbers of people than ever before, with calamitous results to the universities, and doubtful results for the students. All this has been done, but it cannot be said that in doing so higher education has been better adapted to the needs of the student or to the needs of modern society; the quality of the old university has been largely lost and nothing of comparable worth put into its place.

Just as we in this country learned much

from the old Humboldt university, there is much that we can learn to our profit from the present crisis of the German university, but I will mention only two truths this tragic situation should make clear to us: in the great variety of our institutions of higher learning, and particularly in our private colleges and universities we have an asset of inestimable worth to the preservation of the free society, and ideology has no place in education.

¹Wilhelm Hennis, "Notwendiger Abschied vom Akademiker," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift*, February 1973.

²*Ibid.*, *Die Deutsche Unruhe, Studien zur Hochschulpolitik* (Hamburg: Wegner Verlag, 1969), p. 13.

³*Handbuch für die Kultusministerkonferenz*, Bonn, 1971, p. 288, and *Der personelle Aufbau der Universitäten 1960-1970*, Bonn, p. 1.

⁴*Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für Berlin*, A3227A, July 19, 1969.

⁵Notgemeinschaft für eine Freie Universität, Berlin, July 5, 1973.

⁶*Veranstaltungsverzeichnis*, Universität Bremen, 1973-74, p. 169.

⁷*Hochschulrahmengesetz*, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, Bonn, 1973, p. 3.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Helmut Schelsky, *Systemüberwindung* (München: Beck Verlag, 1973), p. 25.

¹⁰*Wer wir sind, wofür wir sind*, Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft, Bonn, 1971, p. 3.