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## DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN and the ASSAULT ON EQUALITY

If you have seen today's Crimson, you may have read the article entitled "Cambridge Academics Waver on McGovern." The article begins, "While many Harvard and MIT professors who traditionally back Democratic candidates are now supporting the McGovern-Shriver ticket, there are a substantial number who are sitting on the fence." It goes on to discuss the political positions of various Cambridge professors, including the stance taken by the Harvard professor of education and urban politics who is speaking here tonight, Daniel P. Moynihan.

Moynihan, who served under Kennedy as Assistant Secretary of Labor and later as Nixon's chief advisor on urban problems, recently wrote an article (Life, Sept. 1) on "How Nixon Sees His Second Term". Regarding this article, the Crimson reports that Moynihan "has drawn fire from both columnists and fellow Harvard professors, who contend that he glorified Nixon and made poor arguments in support of his contentions."

"Joseph Kraft, in a syndicated column appearing in the Boston Globe on Sept. 11, charged that Moynihan was repeating "utter nonsense" in hope of finding favor with the White House."

"...Martin Kilson, professor of government, in a letter to Life dated Sept. 10, charged that 'Moynihan's equation of the new (second term) Nixon with the late Adlai Stevenson is one of the most extraordinary manipulations of truth for political ends I have seen in some time. Intellectual huckstering has, alas, clearly entered a new era.'"

Moynihan's support of Nixon's re-election is only the political corollary of a concerted intellectual assault on the goal of social and economic equality which has guided so many Americans in the struggles of the last decade. This assault is being carried out by what commentators on social policy have dubbed the "Cambridge Circle", a group of conservative Harvard academics which includes, in addition to Moynihan, Dean of the Faculty John T. Dunlop, Government professors J.Q. Wilson, Nathan Glazer, and Edward Banfield, and psychologist Richard Herrnstein.

Dean Dunlop is Nixon's chief expert on organized labor and collective bargaining; Glazer and Banfield, along with Moynihan, are the leading proponents of the "cultural" theory of permanent inequality, and Richard Herrnstein is the author of a theory which views the distribution of income in our society as a function of IQ. Since IQ is largely inherited, according to Herrnstein, progress toward legal, social, and economic equality will increasingly reveal the inherent genetic inferiority of blacks so that in "times to come, as technology advances, the tendency to be unemployed may run in the genes of a family as certainly as bad teeth do now."

In general, Moynihan and his associates say that it is impossible to solve many social problems because they have their roots in immutable individual characteristics, and the social costs (to the upper classes) of solving these problems would be too great. They cite the social turbulence, middle and working class backlash, and the inflationary spiral of recent years as evidence for their thesis. They bemoan the damage caused by the welfare system (lowering the incentive to work) but providing decent jobs to welfare recipients would, they regret, erode educational and civil service standards.

Somehow, Moynihan & Co. are able to assert simultaneously that ghetto residents are poor because they are apathetic and disorganized, and that our "fragile" social order is endangered by the strident protests of these same unorganizable slum people.

Throughout, the intended effect of their analysis is to reconcile Americans to the prevailing conditions of social inequality.

All of this is, of course, intellectual perversion of the worst sort. To voice doubts about the effectiveness of this or that social policy is legitimately within the realm of "social science" - to assert that significant improvements in social welfare are "impossible" is blatant class-biased ideology, has nothing to do with "social science", and flies in the face of recent history. Although perfect democracy may still be a long way away on the timetable of history, social equality is not, as evidenced by the high indices of economic equality in the communist nations, particularly China and Cuba, but also in certain western European nations such as Sweden, West Germany, and France.

Moynihan's contribution to the attack on equality has been extensive, and concentrated mainly in the area of government social policy. In 1966, for example, he suggested that the armed forces be used as a way of "socializing the poor."

"Very possibly our best hope is seriously to use the armed forces as a socializing experience for the poor - particularly the Southern poor - until somehow their environment begins turning out equal citizens."

--New Republic, Nov. 5, 1966

Summing up his vision for the next generation of poor blacks in a memo to President-elect Nixon in 1970, Moynihan wrote:

"They are not to become capitalists, nor even middle class functionaries. But it is fully reasonable to conceive of them being transformed into a stable working-class population: truck drivers, mail carriers, assembly line workers -- people with dignity, purpose, and in the United States, a very good standard of living indeed."

-- New York Times, March 11, 1970.

When asked once whether Nixon's welfare bill wouldn't force people into jobs that weren't meaningful, Moynihan exploded. "Middle class aesthetes are going around saying what is meaningful, what is meaningful employment," he said. "Most people work for a living to earn money for themselves and their families. They don't ask whether what they are doing is meaningful." (NYT, July 2, 1970)

Shades of Spiro T., but remember, you're at Harvard, where social prejudices are translated into "Social Theory."

Radcliffe-Harvard NAM (New American Movement)