

# STANFORD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Harry Press

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA  
ZIP 94305.  
(A/C 415) 321-2300, Ext. 2558

*Southern California editors may  
contact Stanford Regional Office,  
621 S. Hope Street, Los Angeles  
Zip 90017. (213) 627-0653*

EDITORS: This story was transmitted on Business Wire 8/12/70

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN FRANCISCO—Universities will survive only if their leaders keep them independent of politics, Acting President Richard W. Lyman of Stanford University said here today (Wednesday, Aug. 12).

But at the same time, "both by precept and example," university administrators should encourage "an active responsibility for political judgment and action on the part of individuals," he said.

He spoke at a luncheon meeting of the Stanford Men's Club of San Francisco.

This approach, Lyman said, is "the essential alternative to the kind of coercive tactics and direct action espoused by the far left, and often the far right, tactics which are predicated on the assumption that our political processes won't work and cannot produce change."

Lyman warned the alumni that "the university cannot remain the true home of free inquiry if it is subordinated to political purposes. A great university does not exist to make people feel comfortable by confirming their prejudices. It exists to keep alive the impossible but essential human quest for answers to the ultimate question, What is Truth?, and to all the lesser questions that flow therefrom.

"To convert it into the ally or pawn of new left, old right, or middle-aged center, is to betray that purpose."

While universities often are involved in politics, whether making views known in Washington on Federal support for higher education, or meeting with neighboring officials on land problems, Lyman said, on broader issues a university would lose its important tax-exempt status if it became involved in political advocacy.

But much more important, Lyman warned, is that "once the university permits itself to become the instrument of political causes, it will be an instrument that everyone will be eager to enlist and control." In the subsequent buffeting, "freedom for all points of view can hardly be expected to survive."

Today's conditions are very close to just that situation, he said.

"Freedom of speech on the campus has in some respects been carried to extremes that are profoundly shocking to many, probably most, of the over-30 generations. But in other respects it has begun to be circumscribed, not by censorship but by the power of a mob—even a small mob—to heckle, deride, interrupt, and intimidate any speaker whose views that mob happens to dislike."

(more)

8/12/70

There are many campuses, he admitted, where Jerry Rubin or Eldridge Cleaver might appear without trouble, while Spiro Agnew or Ronald Reagan would need "massive protection and preparation."

But the difficulties faced by universities today go beyond society's polarization, Lyman said.

They go, he warned, "into the ominous country of 'groupthink' and the outright denial of freedom for the individual. More and more—and from both extremes of the political spectrum—one hears people excusing and rationalizing the denial of freedom. The numbers are increasing of those who argue that the *other* end doesn't understand and won't respond to anything but force or the threat of force."

The answer is not removal from political action of individuals connected with universities, he insisted, but more responsible political action.

Lyman defended the right of university officers to speak out, if they speak as individuals and selectively on "issues of real moment." Silencing them would "amount to depriving all but the most lowly-placed or unattached Americans of their right of citizenship," he said. "The ills of democracy are to be solved by *more* active participation in political life on the part of informed and responsible citizens—not less." Furthermore, he said, "silence generally operates in favor of the status quo, whatever that may be at the moment."

But when a university president or provost does speak out, Lyman said, "he must never forget that he is an educator, not a politician. He should avoid political invective, he should try not to be polemical, he should be at pains to make clear that he knows honest minds can differ and that durable political progress in a free society is more likely to come from the interplay of viewpoints and the working out of compromises, than from having one side bludgeon the other into submission."