

in blazes didn't you sign before?" demanded the boss. "Nobody explained it to me like this before."

Any person can readily compile his own list of corporate profiteers, or labor leaders, or government officials, or college executives, whose commendable motives, which brought them to positions of leadership, have yielded to the empire-building impulse and whose concern for their constituency has given way to the grinding and inhumane techniques of tyranny.

The degree to which the press for power leads to corruption of word and deed is dramatically illustrated in the Berkeley uprisings, and has been incisively analyzed by Ayn Rand in an essay entitled "The Cashing In." She observes:

To facilitate the acceptance of force, the Berkeley rebels attempted to establish a special distinction between *force* and *violence*: force they claimed explicitly, is a proper form of social action, but violence is not. Their definition of the terms were as follows: coercion by means of a *literal* physical contact is "violence" and is reprehensible; any other way of violating rights is merely "force" and is a legitimate peaceful method of dealing with opponents.

For instance, if the rebels oc-

cupy the administration building, that is "force"; if the policemen drag them out, that is "violence." If Savio seizes a microphone he has no right to use, that is "force"; if a policeman drags him away from it, that is "violence."

Consider the implications of that distinction as a rule of social conduct: if you come home one evening, find a stranger occupying your house and throw him out bodily, he has merely committed a peaceful act of "force," but *you* are guilty of "violence" and *you* are to be punished.

The theoretical purpose of that grotesque absurdity is to establish a moral inversion: to make the initiation of force moral, and *resistance* to force immoral — and thus to obliterate *the right of self-defense*. The immediate practical purpose is to foster the activities of the lowest political breed: the provocateurs, who commit acts of force and place the blame on their victims.

Force and Counterforce

The first problem inherent in the use of coercive power as a social instrument — the abuse of power by its agents — is a problem of human tendencies, albeit regularly recurrent tendencies. The second difficulty is an absolute and is always

available to those who would use it in the situations where power is used to produce change. If any action is taken because of applied force, then the logical means for bringing about a counteraction is to amass an even greater counterforce. We watch with well-justified squeamishness as the thrust for Black Power provokes the counterthrust to quash Black Power. Aggression begets aggression and feeds on itself. Unless there is a massive and convincing repudiation of the strong-arm tactics in the field of civil rights, and in the arena of student demands, we can expect to see civil disorder spreading to every other point where issues are joined. When the accepted vehicle for social change is coercion, the destination is ultimately either absolute despotism or primitive, savage anarchy. In either case strength prevails, reason is superfluous and compassion an impediment. The rallying cry of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, "Strike now, analyze later," is a monument to power gone berserk.

Let us remember that in the history of man, the usual condition of his life has been one of oppression. Tyranny has reigned over most peoples most of the time. We in this country have been blessed with a period of liberty and security and domestic tranquillity. It may be that our luck has run out — that it

was only luck — that reason and good will are recessive human qualities and aggression the dominant one. It appears as if our society is not only tolerating force as the means of social change but encouraging and even demanding it.

Let Government Do It

What can be done about a tendency of society to rely on force to accomplish its ends? Man has long sought a moral equivalent of war. Our problem here is to move that target a little closer with, perhaps, a better chance of hitting it. What we need now is a moral equivalent of *power*.

In the first place, most civilized men have a natural reluctance, individually, to jam something down somebody else's throat. The use of force seems to grow in acceptability as it becomes the instrument of a committee or a group, or better yet, an even more impersonal agency, the law. It would be a strange paradox, but I suspect one could make a good case for the proposition that the law has become a substitute for morality. In any event, to avoid the circumstances which invite the use of more force, the efforts to produce social change must be undertaken by individuals or by the smallest possible group of human beings. Change undertaken by large groups or by government decree seems to neu-