Space is significant only in relation to the earth, which is and will remain our home. Major Titov confessed to some homesickness, though he was away from earth only 25 hours and never more than 160 miles distant. We cannot, even if we would, shed the genes and environmental heritage of a million years. We cannot exchange our life on this green planet for an airless, dangerous and expensive environment. If a thousand men reach the moon and the nearer planets in the remainder of this century, it will be a remarkable enough achievement. Yet for every space traveler there will still be three million who will stay where they were born. If we keep our sense of proportion and recognize that the joys and agonies of humanity will still be of this earth, the achievements of the space explorers will not be the less glorious.

STUDENT LEADERS and CAMPUS APATHY

by Steven Roberts and Carey McWilliams, Jr.

Madison, Wis.
MONTHS before the annual Congress of the United States National Student Association began here August 20, journals eager to foster the supposed rise of collegiate conservatism carried dire threats that 1961 was the year of reckoning for the liberal leadership of the nation-wide confederation of student governments. The stories warned that “bus-loads” of disciples of a prominent Arizona merchant would descend upon the Congress at the University of Wisconsin, and establish the rise of the youthful right-wing as a political reality.

Representatives of Young Americans for Freedom, the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, and a brand-new front group called the Committee for a Responsible National Student Organization, arrived here early and set up shop in a motel near the campus. Their numbers did not fill a bus. In fact, they could fit quite easily in a Cadillac, with enough room in the trunk for a mimeograph machine, several prints of Operation Abolition and a complete file of back issues of the National Review.

The youthful conservatives, and especially the Young Americans for Freedom, are a group almost devoid of articulate spokesmen in their collegiate ranks. YAF, which claims a membership of 30,000, was born out of a conference on the Sharon, Connecticut, estate of Bill Buckley, and still receives a good deal of its nourishment, both financial and philosophical, from him. If it is a significant movement, and that is still a debatable question, it is a movement almost wholly directed from above. Even its membership rolls seem to have been fattened by judicious reporting in some of the more widely read weekly news magazines. As one critic of YAF put it, “They built their organization out of press clippings, and now are trying to fill it with people.” But if they have to leave the public defense of their cause to such venerable young Americans as Buckley and M. Stanton Evans, editor of the Indianapolis News, the young conservatives are masters at the fine art of issuing press releases. The barrage of paper they unleashed on the Congress from the very start hammered at one theme—that NSA is not representative of the American student, and cannot presume to speak as his voice.

Only 388 of more than 2,000 institutions of higher learning in the country are NSA members, so their argument went; few delegates (usually about 500 attend the annual ten-day meetings on a Midwest campus) are chosen in college-wide elections, the rest being selected by the student government. This is true, and nobody really disputes it. NSA is a confederation of student governments, not individual students; the figure of 1.3 million student members usually given by NSA apologists is specious. That number of students attend schools belonging to NSA, but a majority of them have no idea what the organization is, and probably could not care less. The people who come to the Congresses, where NSA policy is formed, are not representatives of their student bodies, nor are the five national officers and about ten staff men who “execute” policy from a rickety four-story building in Philadelphia.

The reason for all this is simple. Galloping apathy still dominates most American college students.

NSA IS NOT typical. It is an elite of interested students, awakening to a world they did not make, but a world they want to change. This has not always been so. For most of its fourteen-year history, NSA devoted itself to the issues which concerned its member student governments: college parking, home-coming dances, women’s hours, etc. It did so largely from necessity, because its claims to legitimacy rested on these student governments, which had virtually complete freedom to withdraw their colleges from NSA when dissatisfied with its policies. Contemporary collegiate student governments are, to put it mildly, a poor vehicle for transmitting political awareness. They reflect the desire of the college administrator to “avoid difficulties” at all costs by eliminating the student from all areas of controversy which might “reflect on the university.”

There is a close interaction between student government under these conditions and student apathy. The banality of student politics repels the student; the absence of student criticism and interest leaves student governments in the hands of those who find playtime bureaucracy and hom-
iletics about alma mater to be con-
genial pursuits.

It was these governments that sent
delegates to the NSA Congress; and
the delegates annually rose in re-
volt against whatever broader poli-
cies had been pursued by national
officers, threatening to withdraw or
to form rival associations. Under
such circumstances, even the most
far-sighted national officer was likely
to develop an ethic of cautious pru-
dence and “responsibility.” This led
to endless compromises, and a pand-
ering to the uninspired interests of
campus political regimes.

The top staff of NSA realized that
it was not truly representative. Con-
sequently, it tried even harder to
please, and largely submerged any
trace of boldness or imagination it
had in the silence of the times—a si-
lence punctuated only occasionally
by a boisterous football cheer or a
shrill female scream.

THE LAST two years have seen an
already much-discussed “awakening”
of the silent generation. The sit-ins
in the South, sympathy pickets and
selective buying in the North, pro-
tests against the House Committee
on Un-American Activities, the
Peace Corps, Algeria, Cuba and nu-
clear testing.

The stimulation of the unique stu-
dent protests aroused NS An to take
positive stands on important ques-
tions, but in doing so it was acting
not as the National Student Associa-
tion, but as a conscious group of stu-
dent leaders, far removed from the
sentiments of their campuses and
constituency. The value to those who
have participated has been immense,
but they are few. NSA has almost
completely failed to transport the
initial enthusiasm of the “move-
ment” back to the campus, largely
because of the understandable con-
cern of idealists for the moral con-
tent of issues rather than the struc-
ture of social and educational power
or the day-to-day realities of student
life.

THIS IS where NSA stood as the
fourteenth National Student Con-
gress began here. The difference this
year was the conservative “chall-
enge,” which forced NSA leaders to
take a long look at the association.

YAF leaders like “Howie” Phil-
rips of Harvard (scholastically in-
eligible for delegate status) pre-
ched that the liberal NSA was not rep-
resentative, and should be reformed.
The conservatives would like to
change the structure so that more
“indiffereats,” responsive to con-
servative influence, would come to
the Congresses.

But structural issues aside, the
rightist groups were almost wholly
devoid of the ability to articulate
their “resurgent ideology.” The ex-
pected intellectual offensive of the
Right materialized only in the per-
son of William F. Buckley, who spoke
outside the official program of the
Congress at the motel headquarters
of his minions and attracted prac-
tically all the delegates. Emotion ran
high in the crowd, packed tightly in-
to a parking lot. On one hand was a
hostile silence, on the other, an al-
most frenzied enthusiasm. The for-
mal speech passed with little con-
troversy, but the questioning period
was different. Time and again Buck-
ley parried questions with rhetorical
ripostes, and the crowd grew restive.
In answer to a question about co-

lonialism from a Ceylo, see exchange
student, Buckley asked if he could 
quote Jefferson, Washington and
other Founding Fathers with “Mo-
butu, Lumumba, Kasavubu, and the
other semi-savages in the Congo.”
It was a fatal concession to flippancy,
and his value to the right-wing cause
was destroyed in the ensuing chorus
of jeers and hisses. National Affairs
Vice President Jenking typified the
sentiment of the crowd when he said
in an impromptu speech, “We have
unmasked the final reality that exists
behind the façade of the conservative
image.”

Though their prophet had fallen,
the conservatives did mount an at-
tack on a resolution advocating abo-
lition of the HUAC. Basing their po-

tion on the argument that aboli-
tion would be directly against the
Supreme Court majority and the 412
Congressmen who had recently sup-
ported the committee, the conserva-
tives appealed to the moderate bloc
of delegates. They said that such a
vote would be “irresponsible” and
might jeopardize all NSA influence,
and tried to substitute a resolution
that strongly condemned HUAC but
stopped just short of calling for aboli-
tion. They appealed, in other words,
to precisely those values of bureau-

cratic caution which had character-
ized the prior history of NSA.

THE CHALLENGE forced a novel
degree of courage and clarity upon
the liberal wing of NSA. With emo-
tion and sincerity, Ken Cloke of the
University of California asked, in the
words of Justice Black, for “the cour-
age to be free.” Barney Frank of
Harvard lashed out in hard pragmatic
terms against those lacking the
courage to pursue their ideals of
academic freedom in the face of such
opposition as Congress and the
Court. The resolution calling for
abolition carried 236 to 216.

The debate proved that NSA
vitally needs a vocal opposition, and
will suffer if the conservative with-
drawal threatened by Fulton “Bud-
dy” Lewis III ever materializes.

But conservative criticism of struc-
ture, while failing in its objectives,
produced the most significant chang-
es in the traditional outlook of NSA.
Outgoing President Richard Rettig

The Nation
said in his report to the National Executive Committee, "The gap that exists between the local campus activity and the activity of NSA has widened because of the expressed concern by the Association with the new developments on the domestic scene and the continuing commitments of the Association on the international scene, and the neglect in relating these events with clarity to the local campus. Many campuses feel alienated and distant and unrelated to the activity of the Association." The new officers of the Association are about evenly divided between the moderate and more extreme liberal factions, but the tone for the administration was set by President Ed Garvey, a former student-body president at the University of Wisconsin.

Why, recognizing that "NSA must continue to respond to the sit-ins and HUAC," he emphasized the need for bringing the experience of a Congress — the deliberations and, most important, the defense of an ideal in the face of strong opposition — to all students. This can only be done, he said, "by structuring the Congress so that delegates won't leave and forget what has happened, but will go back to their campuses, fight for the stands they have taken, and translate policy into specific programs."

Symbolic of NSA's renewed interest in educational problems was a resolution condemning the theory of in loco parentis as restrictive to the full intellectual and social growth of the student. This doctrine, which gives the college legal authority to act as a "parent," forces the student into a dependent relationship with the school, rather than the beneficial mutual give and take of an intellectual community.

NSA, after years of frustration, has finally emerged as a voice, if not of the American student, then of the American student leader. The question is now whether it can translate the enthusiasm of a few into a device for awakening the still "silent" American college community.

WELFARE à la NEWBURGH

by William B. Rollins and Bernard Lefkowitz

ON JULY 10, The Wall Street Journal said in an editorial:

"It's a fine commentary on public morality in this country when a local community's effort to correct flagrant welfare abuses is declared illegal under both state and federal law. That is exactly where the matter rests in the case of Newburgh. The small New York city has announced a 13-point program to reduce the burden caused by its bums, cheats and loafers, many of whom came to the town and remained for the deliberate purpose of living on relief—which is to say, on the hard-earned tax money of honest residents.

On the same day, a motorist was told by Thomas Chalmers, gas-station attendant at the Newburgh city line: "You know, there's a sign in a railroad station in Durham, North Carolina, or Montgomery, Alabama, that says, 'Come to Newburgh and live off relief. You'll never have to work again.' That Mr. Mitchell's a brilliant man. He's going to make them take that sign down."

No doubt Mr. Chalmers is telling his customers the same thing today.

Far down Newburgh's main street, Joseph McDowell Mitchell, City Manager, leads a welfare reform movement before the television cameras: "The bleeding hearts and welfare fanatics are enraged. . . . They apparently will go to any lengths to prevent Newburgh from joining the growing number of communities which have already taken steps to tighten relief operations." And in a nearby office, Newburgh Mayor William D. Ryan tells whoever will listen, "This man Mitchell has fooled us all."

Joseph McDowell Mitchell has always managed to stay one step ahead of the cynics during his relatively brief career as a city administrator. The balding, thirty-nine-year-old City Manager, who had held six "hateful"—his term—minor federal jobs in ten years, plunged into the maelstrom of municipal government about five years ago. The city manager profession hardly felt the shock, but in his first two municipal jobs, Mitchell managed to shatter the calm of Marlape Township, Pa., and Culver City, Calif. in rapid succession. It took Mitchell's bosses in Culver City, where he had served as Assistant City Manager, only a year to get rid of him (his job was abolished). They were slower in Marlpe. There, the Board of Supervisors waited two years before pressures gathered sufficient to force Mitchell to resign as township manager. Both communities are still feeling the after-effects of his administration.

THE TAXPAYERS of Culver City may remember Mitchell for a fanciful garbage pick-up proposal which he insisted would cost the community only $2 per day per truck ("Why, $2 wouldn't pay for the gas for one truck," commented a Culver City newspaper editor). But his colleagues on the municipal payroll are inclined to remember him more for his political belligerence. Mitchell eschewed the anonymity that is the trademark of the professional city manager. He was brought to Culver City by its then manager, Dean Seeger, who found the young man in an American University classroom. Seeger now says the disenchanted with Mitchell began four months after his arrival. "Our relationship started to deteriorate very rapidly," Seeger said. "Joe was more interested in political power than anything else.