

The University: A Community or Image of General Motors

If there is one common sentiment among the people who work, study, teach, research, type, organize, administer, service people and machinery at U.P.E.I.-it is that the current strike is a "bad thing": teaching and learning conditions have become insufferable (Faculty Assoc.); academic life has been badly disrupted; physical conditions of buildings, grounds and washrooms, residences have become deteriorated badly; tensions among people are high; divisions; strife, hostilities, conflicts are evident between and among faculty, students, support staff, and all those individuals who-less and less comfortably have to see themselves identified with the "administration" At some time in the (hopefully near future, the students (Those who did not drop out) and the faculty (who are not dismissed) will find themselves back in the classrooms, being served by the support staff (who are not fired) and the support staff will find themselves back in the company of their supervisors (who are on the "management" side) Will have to get along with each other once again, and that will be the more difficult, the higher the tensions and divisions have risen, and the longer the strike will have lasted. It should be clear to everyone by now that this is not a good way to run a community.

Yet, it is important to realize that under the labour-management model, the hostilities, divisions and strife are not aberrations but are necessary and consequent ingredients of the system itself. Interest groups who exert pressure against the community, power-politics, machiavellian manoeuvres, deep divisions aluminating in strikes and lockouts are very much part and parcel of this system itself and they cannot be considered foreign to a university basing itself on this model: quite to the contrary, they are to be recognized and expected as essential ingredients of the labour-management system.

It is crucial that members of the university-whether students, staff or faculty, recognize this benefact, and that we dispell any motions that such divisive and hostile behavior are somehow inimical and foreign to the system as we have accepted it. The Labour-management model is a Conflict Model, and a model of Power-

Politics, A Model of Right Makes Right, in its very essence, at its very core.

If we continue to accept this system for decision-making within our university we should not be surprised at power-plays and pressure tactics: we should expect them: and indeed there is every indication that we will continue to get them: not less than before, but rather more than before as support staffs become unionized, as faculty becomes unionized, (which is a logical consequence), as students find that the only effect pressure is that of power in numbers and the willingness to exercise that power, ruthlessly, against what ever group or groups stand in their way. In the labour-management system-in the pluralist interest group model which governs much of our great society-arguments based on justice, on equality or on any ethic whatsoever are quite meaningless. The only things that count are: how much power can you display: how many men and how much money do you have? On how much force you can mount, and how ruthless you are prepared to be? How much of your humane and compassionate sentiments can you suppress? To how low a level can you bring your feelings of responsibility and caring for the other guy, for the good of the community as a whole? This is no place for Bleeding Hearts!! Neither, quite evidently, is it a place for those who would seek social justice, or Right or Truth, or Harmony, Peace and Brotherhood for Man. And that is why the labour-management model is essentially inimical, is fundamentally incompatible, with a Humanistic University. Only a university which essentially rejects the status quo,-the division in society in which we now see it developing, and hence the inevitable disaster caused by unbridled competition, growth, the centralization and monopolization of power leading to human and physical disaster. Only a university which essentially rejects and refuses to imitate this triumph of power can deserve the trust, the responsibility, the funds and the academic "freedom" (and hence, the tenured positions of its faculty) which society grants it. If the university is not willing to accept its responsibility to help lead our society out of this path to disaster, who should? Who will? Who can? If the

Intelligentna forsake their Bretheren we will see a new Treason of Intellectuals

and soon the dawn of the Brave New World, of 1984, or the Doomsday predictions of MIT come true! The university, the mind and soul of man, having failed to find a "viable" solution for its society will with its society, die.

That is why the Humanistic University,-indeed any University worthy of the name and of the responsibility for a higher learning -needs to consider alternative models of decision making and devise other means of running itself as a community based on higher, nobler, and fundamentally more viable capacities of man.

The capacities which we will have to try to resurrect from the dim corners of the human soul, where they have been pushed or where they have sought refuge from the constant attacks and vilifications of the present system, are the capacity to seek justice in human affairs, the capacity to strive for harmony among men and between man and nature, the potency of love, the device of peace the will to seek the good.

In the present context, the capacities which we need to use are quite simply the willingness to try-however cautiously and circumspectly to work within and among

the existing "groups" to work hard and honestly, and with determination, to try to develop a way to run this university as a community, rather than a model of General Motors. This means giving our highest priority to the development of procedures for decision-making which are honest, open, fair and which involve every existing sector (group, estate) of the university community.

Much to its credit, the Faculty of the University is on record as favouring this procedure through a motion passed by its association some four years ago. The President, himself has recently indicated his willingness to try such an approach, quite regardless of the motivations which prompted these suggestions, such a new method of running OUR University deserves to be sought, to be discussed, to be developed to be tried. The issue at stake is much larger than the personalities involved: it is much larger than the current generation of administrators, faculty, students or support staff now working at U.P.E.I. The issue at stake is our intellectual, emotional, ethical, physical practical ability to create humane, workable, and just structures that will be viable-that will sustain human life and civilization on the earth.

Fred Dregg

Toward a System Of Social Justice

To: Faculty, Students, and Staff of U.P.E.I.

Till now, I have assumed that our unions have wanted to negotiate for salaries within the normal framework of labor-management relations, that the Faculty Association has wanted salaries that are comparable with those of other universities, and that our students wanted fees and services that are roughly comparable with those in other universities.

After discussions with students and faculty yesterday, I have decided that I may be wrong, that there may in fact be a case for a policy on salaries and fees within the university that is based on concepts of "social justice" and the best allocation of the university's resources.

At present, I think that there is something of an ideological conflict taking place with the lowest paid members of the university caught in the middle and suffering the most.

Consequently, I propose that the three union locals on campus, the Faculty Assocai-

tion, the Student Union, and representatives of the administration meet to see if they can agree on a policy for the university that distributes our resources equitably, setting fees, salaries, and services.

Obviously such a policy is not going to be worked out overnight since it might involve a radical redistribution of the university's resources and so that the maintenance people do not suffer further loss of their income and the university further loss of their services, I propose that the strike be suspended while the union locals, the Faculty Association, and the Student Union discuss mechanisms for meetings to arrive at a new policy for the university in accordance with the wishes of all parties.

I do not want to pretend that I am optimistic that we could reach a settlement on what is in effect an income policy, but enough people seem to think that we could to me believe that we should.

R.J. Baker, President