

## FEATURE

# THE LIBERAL TONGUE-LASHING; IT'S BACKLASH

By Ron Thompson

Canadian University Press

In October, 1968, Graham Spry, former ambassador to Saskatchewan House in London and a respected name in Canadian communications theory, was granted an honorary doctorate by the fall convocation of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina campus.

In his address to the convocation and audience, he expressed his fears at the striking similarities he perceived between modern North American student radicals and Nazi youth of the thirties.

Minutes later, a student at that convocation refused his degree, asking to speak in rebuttal to Spry's remarks. The chancellor refused to allow it.

"Oh, my God," said a woman in the faculty wives' section after the student had removed his robe and left, "I was afraid he was going to set fire to his robes."

There were no such illusions among the administrators on the stage.

Their only worry was that they would probably have to call in the police to remove

the student.

It was the beginning on an ideological debate that was only slowly to become concretized.

Nine months later, in Saturday Night magazine, George Woodcock, author of a number of books on anarchism, authored an article which raised again many of Spry's fears.

Documenting several examples of similar critiques by many western leftists, Woodcock wrote, "In Canada we are not far behind the rest of the world in a type of activism which pretends to be libertarian but is in action authoritarian and in prospect totalitarian."

"Like academic freedom, fair play is unrecognized by authoritarian activists."

He defined fascism for the purpose of his argument. "Fascism is not conservatism... nor is a police state necessarily a fascist state... Fascism is in fact a radical movement aimed at social transformation."

Two months later the debate continued in the letters column of Saturday night.

Woodcock says in a letter to the magazine, "I am not implying anyone can at present be termed a fascist; I am talking about tendencies and threats."

Virtually every article or program in the mass media has raised the spectre of "extremism" in coverage of the problem of 'student unrest.'

## CANADIANS MILITANT?

Since the fire in the Sir George Williams computer, even Newsweek has seen fit to consider "Canadian students... among the most militant in the world,"—a merely parenthetical comment in a report on student unrest in the U.S.

But almost every university and college administrator in the country is by now on record as 'in favor of change' so long as it is achieved through 'the proper channels'—that they like students to be 'concerned with change, so long as they aren't extremists.'

In this context, all the terms are applicable anywhere, because they remain undefined.

For instance, the chancellor of Carleton University, Lester Pearson, talk of the need for change and the dangers of extremism; although extremism is hardly descriptive of the situation at Carleton.

At Carleton, 'radicalism' is at the stage of a student attempt to get a petition to ask the senate to set up a committee to look into overcrowding in the university.

Yet Pearson sees fit to warn against extremists, and Davidson Dunton, the administration president, has already been established as the sole person who can give the directive to the police to come onto the campus.

At any rate, this past year has seen the creation of a new label in student 'politics'—the moderates.

## COPS ON CAMPUS

1968-69 also saw two incidents that were firsts for Canadian campuses — at Simon Fraser University on the west coast and the University of New Brunswick on the east, the RCMP were called on campus to remove and arrest protesting students.

Perhaps that is the function of the 'liberal philosopher' in this society — a symbiotic relationship that allows him to retain a position on the fence, edging away from taking a stance, while the society feeds off his rhetoric to create a climate for repression.

The rhetoric of 'anti-democratic disruption' creeps into the press statements of the 'liberal' administrator.

And when confrontation occurs, the issues are shoved under the table.

When a charge of racism is raised at Sir George Williams University, and over the year escalates to an occupation and a destroyed computer, the problem is seen merely as one of control. A new discipline code is introduced which outlaws all dissent.

It somehow follows, in that kind of an atmosphere, full the rhetoric of disorder and anarchy, using a logic which defines the strongest dissent around as dangerous extremism, that Simon Fraser would work out the way it has.

This time it is the department of political science, sociology and anthropology, trying to shuck off an administrative trusteeship imposed over the summer which resulted in the probation, demotion or firing of eleven PSA faculty.

Students and faculty eventually voted to strike. Faculty said they were on strike but that they would teach a class if only one student wanted it held.

But the rhetoric in the air was against them. The Canadian Association of University Teachers, the university faculty lobby, was going to have no part of such "emotion-laden atmosphere of confrontation and strike."

Strand, right on cue, called the whole thing "threat" and "coercion" — it was depriving students of their rights (although nearly 700 PSA students had voted for the strike) — and said the university could not operate under such conditions.

A week later nine profs had been suspended pending their dismissal. Now they fear only a court injunction to keep them off campus.

Only eight months ago, such an injunction resulted in a demonstration that ended in a police raid.

And, well, if the police are there, that just about proves that the students really are, if not fascists, then tending that way.

## A Question Of Conscience

By David Carr

What are we doing at university? Why are we here? Are we using any of our own ideas or thoughts? Are we getting a 4-year course in regulations? Are we doing anything but regurgitating in class and on an exam paper that we read from a book or hear a professor say? How far in life can we go without using an original thought or answering any of our own questions?

It would seem this year at U.P.E.I. we are starting from nothing, aiming nowhere and getting nowhere. We are in a veritable cesspool existence — of our own making! Education can serve no purpose if we never have or use an original idea or thought. Ask yourself honestly — 'How long has it been since I had an original thought or idea?' It need not be anything profound but just original! Has it been a day, a week, a month? — have you ever

really considered the question? If no one on the faculty has inspired some thought, we, as a student body, are in bad shape and are getting nowhere at all in facing the realities and questions we must face in everyday life outside the university atmosphere.

If you have had an original idea ask yourself — "Could I express it in class?" If the answer is "no" then you should ask yourself "Why Not?" If the answer is "Yes, but I never express them anyway" you should question your reason for remaining at university. You have never left high school!

University should be an experience which goes both ways — giving and taking — and if it is all taking and no giving you are wasting both your time and the university's time by remaining here.

This does not only go for,

class work but for the overall picture this year. The apathetic rate, if read on a meter, would probably push the needle over the top. Even if the interest only went as far as class work we would certainly realize a far less apathetic rate. We are not facing ourselves honestly and we, as students, are not asking the faculty the question that most affect us in our lives. Everyone here seems to be searching for a reason for remaining at university — especially this one. The answer to this question is very easy — you are responsible for your own reasons and you can only find the answers within yourselves. Do not allow others the privilege of elitism by cutting you off before you have a chance to express yourselves and try for once to maintain a sense of honour and prestige within yourselves as students and it will bring more respect to both yourself and your university than you can imagine.



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