

# CHOPPING BLOCK

by Jens Andersen

No wonder the senile right is so firmly in the saddle! Look at the shape the opposition is in.

This thought came to me over and over again as I studied the Canadian Federation of Students' campaign to entice U of A students into joining their ranks. CFS is plainly an outfit of social activists, but the way they are conducting themselves they will fall flat on their faces before they make a dent in the political status quo.

The first mistake of the CFS campaigners is soft-peddalling their social activism. To read their current pamphlets, or their ad in the Tuesday Gateway you would think CFS is nothing but a nice little service organization which sometimes approaches the government and politely asks it to stop kneeling colleges and universities in the groin.

In fact, CFS, through its policy directives, supports the revolutionary FDR-FMLN in El Salvador; it has condemned the Chilean junta; it has come out for organizing with the Canadian Labour Congress; it has called for total elimination of nuclear weapons, beginning with the US and the USSR (though it provides no guidelines as to how this should be accomplished); it has demanded Canadian withdrawal from NATO and NORAD; and



finally, it has called for sanctions against South Africa.

There is no mention of these policies in CFS advertising, much less an explanation of them. I suspect the reason for this silence lies in the campaigner's view of our campus as a bastion of conservatism which would reject CFS if it got wind of these policies.

No doubt this is true. Nonetheless, the campaigners should have bit the bullet and tried to explain. First of all, the explanation will have to come sooner or later, and better now than later, as a messy, embarrassing revolt in the middle of some political campaign.

Secondly, the silence invites charges of sneakiness, possibly deserved. And there is the irony that so many of these policies are worded to indicate that they are put forward "resolutely" (beloved word of activists everywhere!) Where is the resoluteness in hiding these policies from the light of day?

Most significantly, the silence indicates a peculiar mentality of some sort. Is CFS so defeatist that it has given up trying to win over conservatives? Or does it have a mind-set against conservatives, that they must stay in their stereotyped position as obstructionists who will never agree with activists? If so, the campaigners should be informed that even reactionaries like Barbara Amiel have blasted apartheid and the current plans for Canadian secret police (another CFS target). And there are plenty of politically cautious students stacked up like cordwood in classes and labs who would be willing to kick down Dick Johnston's door if they could be convinced that doing so might get the university running properly.

But this timidity, shiftness, defeatism - whatever the reason might be - is only one problem. CFS also displays the all-too-familiar myopia towards Soviet

Russia which afflicts so many activists. Specifically, after lambasting South Africa and Chile, CFS showed no qualms about sending a delegation to a conference of the International Union of Students, a puppet organization of the Russian bloc - this move despite the plain admission by CFS members that there are "problems" with democracy and lack of student control in the organization.

Apparently after expressing their horror at apartheid, there was no indignation left over among CFSers to vent on the Gulag "sewage disposal system," or the government that maintains it. Not even to the extent of avoiding a few toadies of the regime.

This remarkably selective indignation leaves CFS wide open to charges of being dupes of the communists (probably untrue) or, more likely, being pathetically ignorant about what goes on in the USSR. If CFS had deliberately tried to alienate people they couldn't have done a better job.

In short they are the sort of blundering, self-destructive idiots who would make Ronald Reagan laugh himself to sleep if he knew about them. In fact, they remind me of a Saul Alinsky comment about some sixties radicals who "couldn't organize a cake-bake."

The average U of A student will have forgotten them by Christmas, whether they win their referendum or not. The rest of the world will pass their lives in blissful ignorance of the fact that they ever existed.

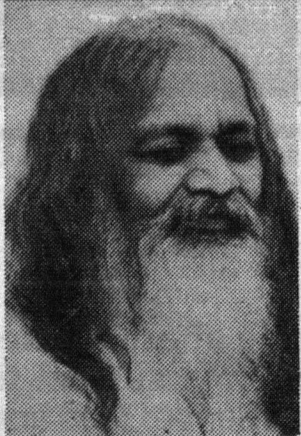
Of course this is not entirely the organizer's fault. As history has shown with NUS and CUS, it is absurd to try to unite Canadian students into one political organization. Students in Canada simply aren't like-minded enough. The field of student politics must therefore be occupied by smaller groups based on common interests and beliefs.

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1983 The Year of the Unified Field

# THE TALLY STONE

Fiction Serial  
by Gilbert Bouchard

### Part two

Tracy really hated her Aunt Geraldine, with a hate that bubbled up from the toes till it foamed and seethed in her brain.

But then again Tracy's Aunt Geraldine was quite hateable. A petty, minor woman with petty minor concerns like right now, she was fusing with a particularly hideous black pillbox hat in front of Tracy's hall mirror getting ready to pop off to yet another funeral.

Geraldine had a thing for funerals, a real black angel, she attended funerals of relatives, close, distant, barely related, friends, near friends, people she despised, strangers, whatever, she went.

That, Tracy could live with, a person was allowed a certain number of eccentricities, hell, she had quite a few of her own. What she really hated about her Aunt Tracy, was what Tracy would look like 20 years down the road. Both showed the same boyish form, a little stockier in Geraldine's case still quite athletic in both women, same clear square face, broad cheeks and large lips, the almost transparent green eyes and the mass of auburn hair that neither woman could control or style in any fashionable manner. And just knowing she shared this silly old woman's appearance was a constant source or irritation for Tracy.

But his visit was short, Geraldine had just popped in between funerals to pry into her

"favourite" niece's life, that much Tracy could understand. And while the old biddy fished around in her purse for her compact Tracy slipped out to the kitchen for a fresh glass of port.

Tracy was digging about the freezer compartment of her fridge groping about the frozen pork chops for ice cubes when she heard a glass clink against her kitchen table. With a plastic tray of cubes in hand Tracy spun about on her heels fully expecting to see Aunt Geraldine helping herself to some booze, but instead she saw her mother sprawled in a dirty house coat, drunk as a skunk, and almost as appealing, sitting where she had always sat, at the far end of the kitchen table by the window.

Now the fact her mother's liver went critical mass a month ago and they almost had to pour the old bat into her coffin didn't sink in too rapidly, Tracy couldn't react.

She just stood there with a tray of ice cubes melting in her hands. After all, what do you say to a dead parent.

The apparition seemed to be amused by her daughter's surprise (eyes bulging mouth open et al.) and burst out laughing, a strange hollow laugh, metallic and distant.

"Stop it, stop it, you filthy bitch, stop!" Tracy just lost control, and the ice cubes scattered across the floor. No her mother's sarcastic laugh was too much, too much, too soon.

The apparition reacted to this as she had dozens of times in life: she hurled the whiskey glass at Tracy and hit the girl square on the left temple.

"Oh dear me, what is the matter, turn about for an instant, powder my nose, and next thing I know you're tearing your kitchen apart. Oh dear me, you cut yourself, well you wait here and I'll get a clean cloth." Geraldine hadn't entered the room, just stuck her head inside the door, she'd just heard the commotion, she hadn't seen the broken glass, the melting ice cubes, or the late morning sun streaming over an empty kitchen chair.

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