By Garr...

The Price of Freedom

By ALAN GARR
Canadian University Press

Simon Fraser University, the Bethlehem of student revolt, reached another golden milestone in the revolution when Tuesday (September 12) they unveiled a plaque to commemorate the reinstatement of five teaching assistants fired in March, 1967.

The young radicals did not wait all this time to order the "Freedom Square" plaque; indeed, it was ordered in March, 1967. But the battle to install the piece of metal which cost the students the equivalent of 150 copies of "The Quotations of Chairman Mao" took more man hours than the actual revolt it celebrates.

When the students announced they were going to order a plaque to be placed in Freedom Square dedicated to those "who gave of themselves in the cause of academic freedom", the administration balked.

Primarily a tourist attraction of Social Credit Government, Simon Fraser is, on free days, used by students. To mar the landscape of that memorial to free enterprise with gibberish would be, you must admit, somehow wrong. A reply was sent to the students:

"Dear students: We have checked the plans of SFU and can nowhere find an area designated Freedom Square. If, however, you do insist on making this plaque a gift to the university, it must be approved by the aesthetics committee.

Your servants, The Boys in the Front Office."

The student council saw this as a right-wing ploy. But, just as they were about to act, someone noted that the plaque had been mis-placed.

Arguments were presented by the left wing fringe that 150 copies of "The Quotations of Chairman Mao" would not have been as easily misplaced and, besides, they would give the students something to read until the plaque was located.

Some months later a young frosh, while busily looking for poster material to make up some welcome signs for the Canadian Legion Pincher Creed Ladies Auxiliary who were about to visit SFU, stubbed his toe on what he thought was a very hip door jam.

His burning investigative fervour, given to him at registration, drove him onward. He flipped the jam over and there, for God and everyone to see, was the plaque.

That night SFU saw undreamed of merriment and pizza eating. Another student had consciously and adamantly given of himself.

But what to do with the plaque now re-discovered? (The administration. . .they must have a safe!) And so, before another student could lift a beer glass in the name of freedom, the plaque was dropped into the bottomless pit of the bursar's safe.

Student newsmen immediately picked up the trail and went camera in hand, to snap a pix of the plaque. The administration balked: "If the students want a picture, the plaque must be important."

The newspaper received a communication via the Dean of Student Affairs: "Dear students: We have noted your request and shall look into the matter. A brief call to the aesthetics committee, however, indicates that no plaque has ever been approved. Further, we have checked the plans of the university and can find no space allocated for freedom. Bearing in mind that students are our most important product, we remain yours, The Dean etc."

The newspaper students saw this as a right wing play as they were about to act, someone noted that the camera had been misplaced.

Since then the level of student unrest has, like the moon, gone through many phases. Were it not for the bursar's annual spring cleaning program, the plaque and all it symbolized would have been lost in a dusty vault.

And now, gleaming on an otherwise dull cement wall, is a plaque which has found its final resting place. Misplaced and unwanted by many, it will, no doubt, come to share the same gangrene hue of the Government upon whose building it is mounted.

October 2

Election for Vice President, Education Representative on Council. Nominations to be submitted to student council office by noon Monday, 25 signatures necessary for V.P.; 10 for Ed. Rep.

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Sat., Sept. 21 — 10:00 A.M. Shinearama for Cystic Fibrosis

Sat., Sept. 21 — 8:30 P.M. Frosh Dance in Rink, Crowning of Frosh Queen

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