

# Social Responsibility falls to the private sector

By Paul Creelman

With the new wave of conservative politicians firmly established in the White House, it looks like government involvement in social welfare is on the decrease. Tremendous slashes in domestic spending, including social security, unemployment insurance, the federal food stamp program, among other programs responsible for domestic spending in the U.S., are an essential ingredient of the new economic policy. Although Canadian officials have dismissed the 'Reagonomic' package as 'taking food stamps from the poor and giving tax breaks to the rich', it is a fact of life that there is still widespread support for Reagan's conservative supply-side economics.

With this new hands-off policy towards the less fortunate, the initiative for these programs must start to fall on the private sector. Private charity seems to be one of the few methods of helping your fellow countryman that the Republicans and their allies approve of in principle.

## COMMENTARY

As the Reagan administration reduces the dreaded threat of governmental interference, it is leaving a gap in financial support for non-profit social organizations. This gap could be almost \$90 billion by 1984. Private contributions would have to increase almost 150 percent by 1984 to make up for the impact of inflation and federal cuts.

William Norris, chief executive of Control Data Corporation, wrote recently that "business must address the unmet needs of society as profitable business opportunities and must work cooperatively with government and other major sectors of work. There is much more at stake for business than may be readily apparent: Unless the free-enterprise system can adequately address our country's societal needs, it will either lose its license to operate — or will be squelched by the advancing deterioration in our quality of life."

This is a warning which the industrial sectors in both Canada and the U.S. would do well to heed. On the positive side, many large corporations are indeed coming to the realization that they must become good corporate citizens. Investing in companies according to performance in occupational health, product safety and environmental protection as well as purely economic motives is a growing trend in the world of finance. A recent study by Georgeson & Co., an investor relations consultant, found that 20 percent of a random selection of stock investors in 7 companies rated corporate social responsibility performance as an important factor in their investment.

However, on the negative side, there are still many corporations whose approach to business strategy does not seem to be overly sensitive to social concerns. As a matter of fact, callous disregard, or total ignorance is still occasionally seen. For instance, a recent appeal was made by a large chemical-based manufacturer who defended dangerous working conditions in the factory. The argument made was that the law courts couldn't force the company to ensure the safety of their workers unless a cost-benefit analysis showed it was economically viable. This is an approach to business that everyone in North America can do without.

The final word on redistributing social responsibility to the private sector may have been spoken by Dr. Lowi of Cornell University, summed up a debate on the Welfare State reported in the New York Times on September 13th.

"It is not so much whether there's another system that is absent the contradictions of an unstable and fiscally risky liberal welfare system or a highly experimental heavily conservative system of markets... It is a question not of having a contradiction-free society, but of which set of contradictions you are prepared to live with."

Conservatives who claim that the new laissez-faire policies will not hurt the disadvantaged have a chance now for economic change. Maybe it's time they put their money where their mouth is.



## The Paparazzi Papers Part One: "The Asylum has no gates."

TOM OZERE PAUL WITHERS.

Paul Withers and myself, Tom Ozere, have been entreated by our desperate Gazette staff members to write a column that would present an interesting, fresh, brilliant alternative, to the oftentimes dry, and (let's face it guys), dull presentation of the facts usually featured in Canada's oldest student newspaper. So here's the column. Our first assignment: reviewing the engineers raid on Alexandra Hall.

Introducing the Engineer. The most recent animal on campus right? Wrong. They're a bunch of wimps. New fresh insight, right? Wrong. We came back to the Gazette offices and were informed that this was common knowledge. What a goddamn waste of everything... from hallucinogens, to time... and it was a damn wet night... all to see a bunch of little, mewling pinking mama's boys, who still miss being breast fed. Paul and I oughtta curb stomp our editors who sent us out on this joke of a story.

The night was full of wasn'ts. It wasn't clear and we wasn't stoned. Paul and I had even forgone dangerous drugs. We were looking for that special and unique high that unbridled psychopathic violence brings. We thought the engineers could deliver; we was robbed. The engineers' raid we witnessed the other night was not unlike premature ejaculation, it lacked timing and finesse. Engineer, after hapless engineer, fell prey to droogish Kings Campus policemen who, much to Paul's disappointment, did not

even smile as they crushed engineers in the oily mud. "Where's the fun in that?" Paul said despondently and he slunk over to kick a particularly obnoxious engineer in the ribs. For the rest of the night I couldn't help but admire the effortless way Paul, prima donna-like, tripped engineer after engineer while carrying on a conversation with the white-helmeted ring leaders.

With considerable pride, Paul recalled afterwards how he would deftly stick out a well-turned leg and send engineers reeling in his wake. "They just hung there, writhing in the air for what seemed like minutes." What was especially pleasing was the way they would lay there after they hit the mud, unwilling or unable to move. It was like a Sam Peckinpah film, terribly beautiful, slow-motion carnage." Well, I for one was glad that Paul participated. The only other high point of the night was when a pathetic shit-smearing engineer displayed his hard earned trophy. It was a goddamned shoe. That's it. A Shoe. We saw the three white stripes clearly. I think, and Paul backs me up on this one, that it was a blue adidas.

The Engineers seemed to have only one strategy. Tepid frontal assaults that were easily repulsed by bemused Campus policemen. Occasionally a single engineer would be drawn into the vortex of campus policemen. Sometimes they would emerge. One of the more lucky ones escaped with massive facial contusions. Others were not so fortunate.

Later on in the evening the engineers (those that remained) attempted to regroup for another try. Alas too many of their number lay groaning on the grass. What eventually happened was that the engineers sluck home, casti-

gated, and humiliated.

A few engineers tried to get into the SUB, only to learn that it was closed. The final humiliation. Bitterly disappointed, Paul and I slung our trenchcoats over our shoulders, and walked away. How long must

we endure this shabby treatment? When do we get the chance to let loose on a story so strangely weird that it catapults this prose into pure surrealism? It was still raining.

