

The Dalhousie Gazette

CANADA'S OLDEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER



Published by the Dalhousie Students' Union
Halifax, Nova Scotia, 429-1144. Printed by
The Dartmouth Free Press, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Authorized as Second Class Mail by the Post Office
Dept. Ottawa, and for payment of postage in Cash.

Volume 100, No. 14
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Anybody for President?

For the past number of years the outcome of the Presidential election at Dalhousie has been a foregone conclusion; the whole process has been a farce. The Faculty of Law, in its own unique ways, has made a Presidential choice, and that nominee has walked over all opposition in the election. This can be attributed, in large part, to the fact that the 'Establishment' candidate has the benefit of a political machine which can be quite effective within the confines of the campus.

The opposition is usually token, and a result of a campaign by the Student Government to find a second team. This is necessitated by the provision of the Student Union constitution which requires that there be at least two Vice-Presidential and two Presidential candidates.

On a campus of thousands of students, this process is unacceptable. It, in itself, relates more clearly than any issue the inadequacy and irrelevancy of student government in the eyes of the whole community. This alone should signify that a change is drastically needed.

That there is dissatisfaction with the 'Establishment' is evident. On a minor level, the administration has been adequate. But a philosophy of student government has not been an issue here, nor has it been apparent as a major factor in past elections. While some claim that the leadership of the Student Union is for the administration of student activities, etc., others feel that its purpose is to guide the University towards the establishment of an academic community. The latter the Gazette strongly supports.

One can quite reasonably doubt that the Law School nominee is selected on the basis of a particular philosophy.

If a choice is to be made on the basis of how a candidate stands on the issues, however, he must be able to present these well to the student body; in other words he must have the backing of a machine of some sort. Therefore the campaign must start now. Any last-minute nominee the council manages to suck in doesn't stand a chance. He has no time to build support; to make his views widely known. So if there are, somewhere in this university, a couple of people who believe that they offer something new, who will confront the student body with a need for change, or a new philosophy of why there is a Dalhousie, their obligation is to start the change now.

STAFF

KIM CAMERON

KEN CLARE	ALEX McCLEAVE
Associate Editor	Business Manager
LINDA GILLINGWATER	JIM KING
Managing Editor	Advertising Manager
MAUREEN PHINNEY	LINDA AITCHINSON
News Editor	Office Manager
GUY MASLAND	STEPHEN ARCHIBALD
Sports Editor	Photography
PETER CRAWFORD	JOHN STILL, COLETTE
Student Council Editor	Gazette Reviewers

Gazette Reporters: Bruce Gillis, Linda Bayers, Dave Wilson, Ivan Blake, Chris Lobban, Nick Pittas, Sharon Cook, John Bruce, Hugh Fraser, Ron Hicken, Kathi Boyle, Bill Kerr, Donna Whitman.

McGill editors reprimanded

MONTREAL (CUP) — Critical words and little remorse were issued Thursday in the wake of the McGill senate discipline Committee's "reprimand" of the Daily editors.

Supplement editor Pierre Fournier labelled the decision "an attempt to balance pressure from students and faculty on the one hand and business and the mass media on the other -- it was a political decision."

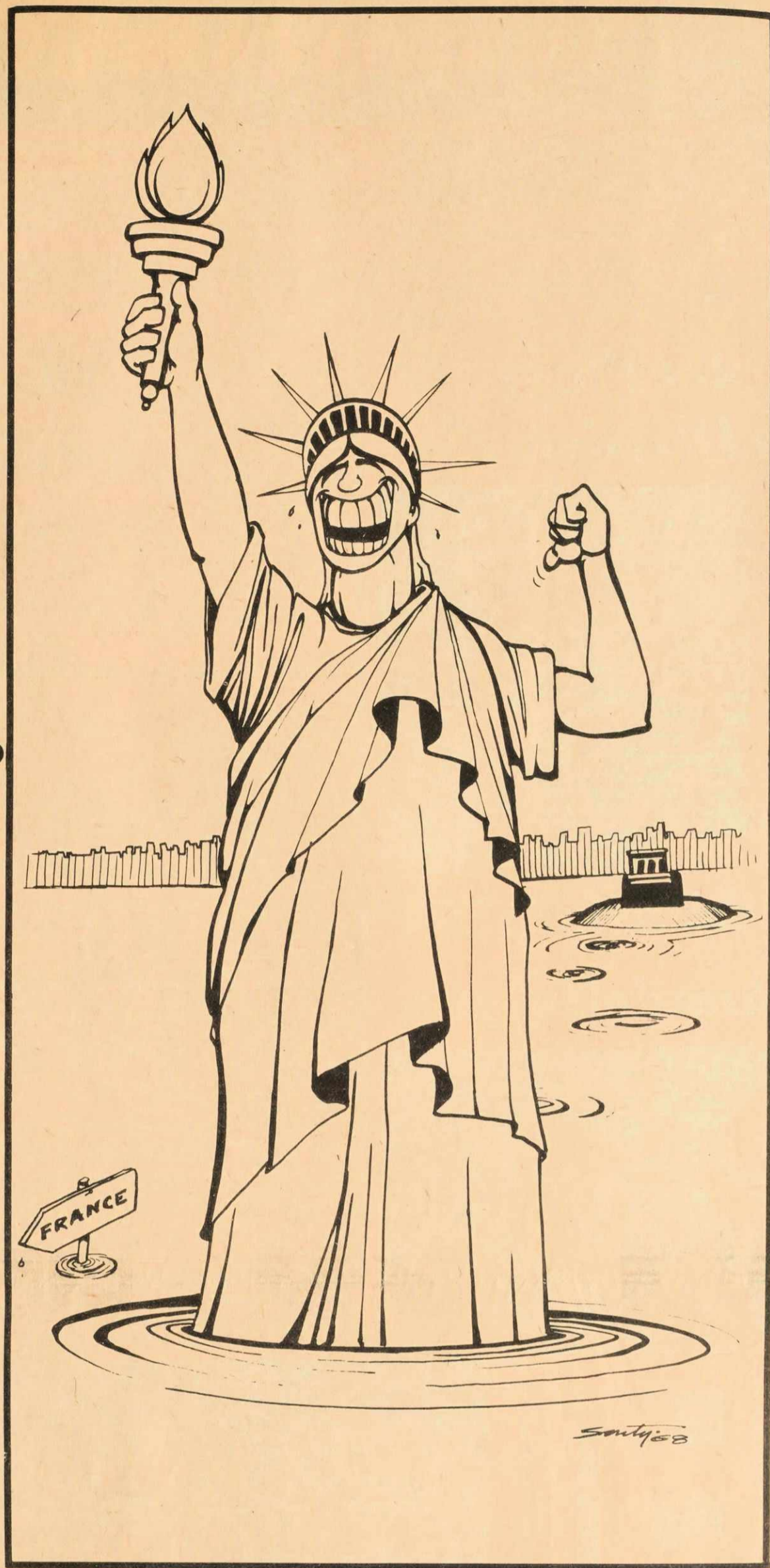
He found it "appalling and dishonest" that they did not define the standard of decency which formed the basis of their judgement.

"The committee had no choice in finding us guilty or not guilty," he said. "If they had found us not guilty it would have been a vote of non-confidence in principal H. Rocke Robertson and would have destroyed the solidarity of the university."

Daily editor Peter Allnut said the senate committee echoed the decision of the student committee.

NOTICE

Applications for the Chairman of the 1968 Orientation (Initiation) Committee must be made at the Council Office (Arts Annex) before noon, 9 February.



Democracy as Pastel Fascism

By WILL OFFLEY

Democracy and freedom are commonly held to be analogous, not in so much as they are corequisite for any just society, but in that they are synonymous. The two words can be used interchangeably in almost any speech or conversation to convey positive values: "the Great Nations of the western hemisphere are lands of democratic government and individual liberty (sic)."

Oscar Wilde once defined democracy as "a bludgeoning of the people by the people and for the people." A close scrutiny of any democratic state will conclude that democracy, like any other established political system, is based ultimately on coercion. The intent of this article is to show that democracy is in essence a muted and less malevolent form of fascism. The two are distinguishable in degree; where fascism is a composite of black and white, democracy is a blend in pastel. But, with the war in Vietnam and internal dissension, as catalysts, the aspects of democracy which link it with fascism are emerging from a fog of myth and traditional acceptance.

All fascist governments have been characterized by a blend of militarism, racism, deification of the Fatherland, conformity, repression of dissent, and a willing subjection of the individual to the National Destiny. To a greater or lesser degree these have all been woven into the fabric of western society, with the names changed to protect the innocent. It is thus that we find a hawk like Clifford McAdams Clark being given the euphemistic title of Secretary of Defense. When the United States or Canada proclaim themselves to be hostile to any form of tyranny over the mind and spirit of man, they are playing a label game. War is no longer war, but national defense. Death is reduced to the level of a casualty list, while life is valued even less.

But I digress. Democratic fascism is most apparent in two facets of contemporary life: drugs and the draft. It will be profitable to study the meaning of conscription even though Canada does not have a draft at the present, since Canadian society and American society are so similar as to overlap occasionally.

Conscription and freedom are mutually exclusive. It is completely ludicrous to maintain that both can co-exist within any given system: conscription requires that all physically fit and morally healthy young men participate in that glorious bulwark of the homeland, the army. If a man is to be free, joining the army must be truly by choice, not chance. Nonetheless, conscription is present in almost all democratic countries (to be fair, it exists in non-democratic lands as well), and is worse in some countries than in the U.S. Switzerland and Israel have no provisions whatever for exemption from military service on the grounds of conscientious objection (Israel does exempt divinity students, but women are subject to the draft). Conscientious objection is permitted in the United States, but to have any realistic chance of success in achieving C.O. status the applicant must belong to an established church or sect, such as the Quakers or Mennonites. That an individual may have personal ethical, political, or religious scruples against a particular war or killing in general has little bearing in his relations with his draft board. Essentially, conscientious objection serves to filter out those individuals who may be incapable of contributing to the military effort, but only so long as they are a tiny minority.

With resistance to the draft rising significantly among American youth (22% of the students who answered a Harvard Crimson poll last month replied that under no circumstances would they enter the army) the authorities are developing a new art form, to be known as Clinkmanship, or the Land of Liberty ploy. The reasoning of this device is "this is a free land; you are free to go into the army, and if you prefer to decline this choice, you are free to go to jail."

The intensification of the Vietnam war and rising dissension at home can have only one result. American authoritarianism will become more repressive and more effective. Up until now, opposition to the government was tolerated, partially because it was largely ineffectual, and partially because America had to maintain its image -- I mean, we are the land of the free, aren't we? But as soon as any political opposition passes the stage of symbolic confrontation

and enters the realm of actual confrontation, the reaction of American government and society changes from one of paternalistic tolerance to more ominous and threatening viciousness. When Dr. Spock confined himself to signing petitions and the like, he was regarded as somewhat irresponsible, but when he counseled young men to refuse military service he was arrested.

The syndrome of racism, militarism, super-patriotism, and conformity which we find characterizing the third Reich is present in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Canada as well. Unlike Germany, the idea of racial superiority is not national policy in the U.S. or Canada, but the concept permeates our society. When you think of Black Power or the RIN, you feel emotional hostility, don't you? These upstart Nigras and Frogs, subverting our precious heritage of freedom etc. The concept of the Yellow Peril, like the ideology of anti-communism, is a convenient method of harnessing a society's fears to forge unity and consensus.

To put the blame for this syndrome on an international fascist conspiracy or the like would be not only absurd but erroneous. This is but a particular manifestation of man's estrangement from himself and the universe. Nevertheless, if man is going to continue as a human being, he must evolve into a thinking being. This is where democracy is damaging, for it places a premium on not thinking, on conforming, on staying in the mainstream. To function, democracy must have the tacit support of an overwhelming majority without entailing the risk of a civil war. The strength of democracy is that it can evoke a deeper loyalty from one of its subjects by its own mystique and myth than it could hope to accomplish by force. In this case, as in most cases, myth is more affective than punitive action. The thousands of troops sent to the slaughter for the most part feel sense of duty in fighting to make the world safe for democracy. Their devotion is genuine, and this is the tragedy.

The effect of myth and tradition in shaping contemporary society will be analyzed in a later article. This article is concerned with the use of force as one of these shaping agents. The growth of the hippies and the drug movement illustrates quite clearly the reliance on force used by our liberal democracy. The fact that most "psychedelic" drugs, especially marijuana, hashish, and related hemp products, are by and large harmless has no influence against the laws banning their distribution, possession, and use. To most people the word "drug" is as emotionally charged as "communist." It conveys a picture of opiated withdrawal from the real world, physical addiction, mental deterioration and collapse, and so on. The legislation to ban marijuana and LSD (the latter of which is still not illegal in Canada; this lamentable situation will soon be remedied) was an irrational, emotive reaction to concepts, value systems, and life styles that the average middle class voter could neither understand nor tolerate.

Admittedly, the stronger drugs (LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, DMT, STP) need more comprehensive research before it can be claimed that they do not cause physiological mutation or psychological damage. It has not yet been proved that LSD does cause significant chromosome damage or mutations. But, to the best of my knowledge, it is still impossible to obtain LSD legally in the U.S. for research purposes. Within the past two months, the head of the University of Victoria psychology department was denied permission by R.C. Hammond, the chief of the Narcotic Control division of the Food and Drug administration to obtain marijuana for experimental research. It is ridiculous to think that the will of the majority is not being fulfilled in the maintenance and execution of these laws. It seems that hate and fear, when combined with a willingness to use coercion, will defeat compassion, reason, and understanding everytime.

Like fascism, democracy's legacy is not one of life, but of death. Democratic politics are the death of excellence, democratic ideology the death of thought. And, however superior democracy is to totalitarianism, whether you are jailed by the KGB or the FBI, you are confined, and whether you are shot by a blackshirt or a white liberal, you are dead.

(First in a series in contemporary authoritarianism) Will Offley

The Rights and Wrongs of Student Syndicalism

By NICK PITTAS
Gazette Staff Writer

In North America, the campus has often, recently, been the focus of confrontation between radical students who oppose the most blatant, and heinous crimes of capitalist imperialism, and the repressive agents of the bourgeois state (witness the Vietnam, Dow, and police brutality protests). The front line agents of the state on campuses are the university administrators, which in the recent past have had ample opportunity to show their class bias -- much to the dismay of the liberal elements in the universities, who, in the past have often convinced their fellows that real academic freedom exists in the university. Apart from everything else, the actions of the Thatcher government in Saskatchewan and Reagan in California provide ample evidence as to how "free" the bourgeois university is. Obviously therefore, when the corporate state can no longer trust its academic servants to protect their interests from "unruly" elements, it will choose to abdicate its mythical position of non-interference in academic fields of jurisdiction, usually through a tighter control of the university purse. It has therefore become urgent for all honest students of good intent to thoroughly study and analyse all aspects of the educational system, and its apparatus. A correct analysis and assessment of the situation is imperative, otherwise, we, the students, shall be the victims of our own incorrect actions.

Formal education (High Schools, Universities, Schools of Technology, etc.) has two faces.

One face is, that it is a didactic process, involved in the art of learning both for its own sake, developing "whole" men and women; and, most important, for the training of workers (manual and intellectual) as agents in the productive process of the nation. In this its first face, education appears to be internally independent of the state and somehow divorced from the goings-on of society as a whole. This is institutional education.

Formal education's second face is less obvious, yet implicit in the role of education as a training agency. That is, formal education at all levels is an integral servant of the corporate military alliance that dominates the politics and culture of the so called "free-world". In this respect, university students are both privileged and exploited. Privileged in that they will be the higher paid servants of capitalism (most of them come from bourgeois families and are privileged to begin with) -- exploited in that their talents will not be used to improve the life of people in general, but in maximizing the profits of capitalist imperialism.

We can now see that the smooth running of the

capitalist state is dependent on its producing enough educated raw material for its many faceted corporate bosses. Obviously our educational institutions are not independent.

Progressive student elements in the universities of North America, are increasingly refusing to sell themselves, body and soul to designs of the capitalist state. Protests have increased both in quality and quantity. Yet, many faults remain, and should be realized before more serious mistakes are made.

Correct policies, plans of action and principles stem from a correct analysis of political, economic, and social forces at work, and a correct assessment of the forces involved in any given situation where the dialectic applies.

The prime mistake centres around the cry of student syndicalism, of "student power". The thesis rests upon the fallacious doctrine that the evils of the university rest upon the shoulders of university administrators. "Give us representatives on Senates and Boards of Governors" cry the syndicalists. "Allow us to determine those decisions directly affecting our education. Give us these things and everything will be fine; real democracy shall reign on campus." What then is wrong with these seemingly progressive demands?

The prime error is the same as that of the French Syndicalists of the early 20th Century. They argued that if the workers took over the factories, then the evils of capitalism would be removed. However as soon as they put their plans into action, they were crushed by the state. Would the same happen to student syndicalist movement? Not necessarily. True, if students gained effective power which would not work in the interest of the capitalist state, then indubitably the movement would be crushed. Disillusionment among students would then retard any possible revolutionary action at some later more opportune moment.

The more likely result would be that the administrations would give token and seemingly radical concessions to students. Such a result would be indicative of the fact that the demands of the syndicalists are in fact not revolutionary, and would in no way bring nearer the day of socialist education. Education whose ultimate purpose would be the creation of a new human being, a human being who would be truly social in nature. A human being far removed from the vicious laws of the capitalist jungle. The welfare of humanity demands an end to anarchy in production, waste, economic crises and the wars of plunder that characterize the capitalist system. The growing needs of humanity and the possibility of satisfying them demands economic planning and the rational use of the means of production and natural resources. Socialist education requires the

end of the subordination of the economy and the lives of millions to the dictates of the few who are the owners of the means of production. We, as students, must fight for the end of anachronistic capitalism, only then will our education be liberated.

The second major error of the student syndicalist movement is that it expects to be given power by those who now have authority. This is nothing more than a twentieth century version of the Lassalleian concept of "state aid", that Marx so brilliantly destroyed in his Critique Of The Gotha Programme. Meaningful, liberated education can come about only after the complete destruction of capitalism and the construction of socialism. By "liberated" I do not mean the socially destructive anarchistic liberty envisioned by our mostly bourgeois, hedonistic hippie friends, I mean, rather, an education whose prime purpose, in whatever field of endeavour, will be to foster the creative talents of man, so that they may be used to improve the quality of life for all humanity.

It is useless to expect the policy makers of the western world, to release from their grasp the main source of human raw material. They fear the day when the humanistic idealism of most students becomes a reality that can be transmitted to the organization of the modern industrial state. As formal education exists today the policy makers know there is little "extremists". Our purpose, therefore, must not be to demand "our rights" but to develop our theory, using the method of "struggle-criticism-transformation". That is the only way that students will become truly revolutionary, the allies of other vanguard groups, such as the Black Power movement and militant workers. We must seek not only what we deem to be in our own interests, but realize that our interests can be fully achieved only if we seek a complete social transformation. A transformation whose purpose shall be a society based on moral and social incentives, equalitarianism and brotherhood.

To achieve such a society will obviously require a protracted struggle against humanities mortal enemies. The enemy that we see in the profiteers who rule the capitalist, corporate state. They are the slumlords, arms racketeers, corporate giants and their political servants. Students syndicalism in no way hastens their doom, at best it can only irritate them. Precedent has shown us that students by themselves have never been effective as revolutionaries; only when they have allied themselves with the working class have they been effective.

Also, in all honesty, we have to realize that students are no better qualified to run the universities than the present administrators. Students have neither the time, nor one would suspect the inclination to devote the time necessary for a smooth running university. As policy makers we would show

the limitations, inevitable in people who lack the experience of class struggle and organizational work. Power would once more become the baby of an articulate, bourgeois elite. There is nothing to suggest, for instance, that such students would be any more interested in improving the lot of the badly exploited university employees. The question arises as to the seriousness and depth of the student syndicalist movement. The fact of the matter is that, at best, students in North America are rebels; rebelling against isolated injustices in the university. Witness the strike at Sir George William's opposing the prices and operation of the campus bookstore. Moreover the transient character of the student must prove a great stumbling block in any efforts to mobilize mass student involvement in university affairs. It is a difficult matter to convince ordinary students that campus struggle is necessary, when they know that their presence at the institution involves a stay of only a few years. In the field of organization the necessity of continuity and experience in university affairs would be lacking.

So far I have given the main arguments against student syndicalism. I have omitted other accusations; such as the "opportunistic" leadership of the movement -- in so far as it exists -- which I suspect is being used by some for personal political advancement. Furthermore I have not dealt with the stupidity of some of their demands.

For instance the demands for the elimination of grades, more seminars and smaller classes, in themselves, would only serve the more effective indoctrination of the student in the same harmful course content (imaginary cosy, little seminar groups especially at 100 or 200 level courses -- with Messrs. Beck, Aitchison, Crook et al). This point is revealing because it shows that student syndicalism fails especially at 100 or 200 level syndicalism fails to understand that what is wrong with our educational system is not primarily methodology but, in fact, its underlying philosophy. Improved methodology gains relevance when we have a humane, socialist educational system. Anyway, the present administrators are coming around to the belief that the abolition of grades is desirable. We can rest assured that they will substitute a new way to test our qualifications as the future corporate fodder.

For some time student syndicalists have demanded representation on senates, now that this demand is fast becoming a reality what is the result. Students, still, shall be helpless to determine the destiny of their studies. The inscrutable holders of the purse, the boards of governors, still operate as they like. Who will be our representatives? Doubtless our "radical" lawyer friends can best answer us. Such concessions should make us wary of liberal gestures.

-continued on page 5-