

When a Student Generation Protests

by Don Sellar

Ottawa--The Schwarz Report on student health services across Canada pays more than lip service to student unrest on the Canadian university scene.

Underlying its clinically-delivered observations about the sorry state of student health services in Canada is a four-page warning to university administrators and governments.

CHALLENGE COURSES

Dr. Schwarz' message to them is clear: there is a new generation of students on Canadian campuses which refuses to swallow irrelevant courses dished out by incompetent lecturers.

While their predecessors were content about grumbling among themselves about food services, parking regulations, housing facilities and book store prices, the new breed is challenging 'even formerly sacrosanct higher levels of university government' with demands for student representation in open university decision-making, observes the UBC psychiatrist.

The report calmly admits that if only negative signs are read into the new discontent, more destructive forms of student protest - the Berkeleys - will be generated in Canada. And not only that, 'but one can also fail to recognize the power which students have to contribute to the growth

of universities,' writes Dr. Schwarz.

This student yearning for power is based on the theme that students want to do something positive to improve university conditions.

STUDENT CONCERN

'That student concern for what happens to universities is both legitimate and useful has been borne out by student demonstrations in support of progressive university leaders and policies,' he argues, pointing out that demonstrations are 'more likely to be made within the university to the university leaders but not necessarily against them.'

Finding the cause of student unrest is not as difficult as some administrators and faculty members might think. According to Dr. Schwarz, manifestations of student concern can be attributed to the search by individual students for what he calls 'appropriate consideration' as individuals.

'In part,' explains Dr. Schwarz, 'the student is asking that his physical and mental welfare be respected in order that he may go about his proper business: learning.' The affluent, mass-production society in which he lives is forcing him to think about how he can survive as an individual.

The identity quest is only one aspect of current student complaint.

The other area, related more to dissatisfaction with the educational process itself, can be seen as a demand for greater individual attention in an increasingly-impersonalized university situation.

The knowledge and enrolment explosions are producing this reaction in Canada, the report suggests. Increasing class sizes, greater specialization among faculty members and a withering dialogue between faculty and students are taking their toll.

SMALL UNIVERSITIES

'While in smaller universities students may still find that they can form a learning and maturing relationship with a faculty member, in the larger universities, such contacts are extremely rare. Faculty members in such institutions, although very much concerned about their lack of rapport with students, are fully aware that if they begin to give individual attention to each student their already heavily overloaded schedules will become unbearable.

Dr. Schwarz then issues his grim warning to those who run the university communities in Canada.

'What seems to be needed, and what is being done in many centres, is a new look at the total

university experience in order to find more meaningful ways of encouraging true learning even when large numbers of students have to be involved. But these approaches require even greater attention to the total individual and to the university environment.'

CURE NEUROTICS

Thus, not only is it imperative that remedial treatment be given to students suffering from various forms of personality and behaviour disorders, but a positive program of mental hygiene must be started in educational institutions.

What Dr. Schwarz is advocating is a revolution in student health services in Canada, but the remainder of his report would seem to bear out the need for same.

His descriptions of health facilities on individual campuses are rampant with criticism, even though the psychiatrist is reluctant to condemn or editorialize.

The truth is that nearly one quarter of Canadian post-secondary institutions don't have health services; infirmaries are present on only 38.8 per cent of Canadian campuses and psychiatric services are found at only 44.9 per cent of these schools.

And figures show there is a whole generation of student anxiety waiting for treatment from doctors who understand the university environment.

DEAR EDITOR

Your 'Students Say' article in the Fri. Jan. 13 issue of Excalibur struck me as being grossly one-sided and thus unfair. But at the same time, it pointed out two very interesting facts.

The first is the obvious ignorance of the students you polled for the article. Such statements as 'I go home right after classes. I therefore don't know anything about the councils,' points out at least to me that the source of so-called apathy in this university lies not in the students of residence or the Council, but with certain day students who could not care less even to the point of reading the Council bulletin board, or going into the council office and taking a few minutes to meet any member of council who might be there.

The statement 'I don't even know who I voted for,' leaves me breathless. This is the fault of Council? Should the members of the Council have to take out part of each day to parade through Founders dining hall with a large neon sign and (for those numerous ones either too lazy or too dull to read) a megaphone telling all that they are the elected representatives of this college? I somehow doubt that this is their responsibility.

I have always thought that in a democracy the responsibility lay at least in part with the individual to do his part in the society of which he is a member. From the tone of both the comments and the accompanying column in question, it would appear that the students here want everything handed to them on a silver platter, all the rights and privileges, but none of the responsibilities, such as taking the time to find out for themselves by reading a few notices or posters just what council is doing. Is Excalibur in favour of this sort of insidious apathy? I sincerely hope not.

Mike Snook F1

Editor's note: EXCALIBUR tries to present a cross-section of opinions and no one column necessarily represents the attitude of EXCALIBUR except for the editorial.

DEAR SIR

I'm blowing my cool over Centennial and I'm proud of it! As trite as it is I'm waving my Maple Leaf flag, wearing a centennial Maple Leaf, and I've even bought my Expo passport.

We've a lot to be proud of in Canada. Don't forget the Nation-

Slowly Sinking' by Jim Stoyan, is the president of Founders Council is in favour of personnel changes and nothing more. However the position of Vanier College Council is that the present form of the SRC, while not inherently faulty, is contrary to

Letters

al Film Board, the Rocky Mountains, Harold Town, the CBC, the Great Lakes, Marshall McLuhan, and Canadian Whiskey.

Mr. Margel, establish your foolish country----- you'll probably be lonely. Miss Levine, I have a personal project for you. Study your Canadian history and learn the facts about Sir John A. and your country.

I'm not any prouder of being a Canadian this year than I was last year or will be next year, but I'm going to celebrate a great deal more this year.

Don McKay

DEAR SIR

I wish to compliment you and your staff for what I consider to be a first-rate edition of your paper on Friday, January 20. The paper was interesting, informative, well-balanced. I especially enjoyed your articles on Centennial expressing several varying views on what Canada's hundredth birthday means to differing Canadians.

Should this letter appear in print it will, I think, be the first time anyone has complimented you and your staff. I hope you will not be modest and print this letter. Well done EXCALIBUR!

A Fan (from now on)

DEAR SIR

I feel that some points must be made and some issues clarified with regard to two articles which appeared in your issue of January 13, 1967, namely the articles 'SRC Failure: Why & What Now' by Greg Barnett, and 'Students Say', by Harvey Margel.

Mr. Barnett states that the reason for SRC's failure, according to the college councils, was a clash of personalities. Indeed, the implication in the article 'SRC...

the college system as we see it; that even with 'personnel changes' this structure of government would undermine the college system and make the colleges next to meaningless.

Some may wonder what the college system really means now. The answer is that it doesn't really exist yet in a meaningful way. Ideally the college system should imply a university community in which the focal point of academic, social, and cultural life is the college. But surely this involves much more than the construction of nearly separate and distinct buildings. Until tutorials in general education courses are offered as college tutorials - in the college and for students of the college only - and until each college can develop what may be called successful college activities, successful in a qualitative rather than quantitative sense, the college system will not exist.

Thus Mr. Barnett's advocacy of the 'lion's share' of money and power to an organization that has no connection with the colleges, save through those representatives who use the colleges as their electoral constituencies, and that has no real interest in the college system, at least merely pays lip service to and at most denies the college system entirely. Hence, it is in the interest of preserving this college system that Vanier College Council is proposing the creation of a service committee, manned by appointees of the college councils to fulfill the duties now assigned to the SRC.

Now, turning to the second article, I note that Mr. Margel states, 'not one council at York has a constitution.' I should hope that such a lack of factual information is not typical of the journalism in this newspaper. Glendon College, a fully recog-

nized college of York University, does, in fact, have a constitution. As well, Vanier College has a constitution in draft form which is due to be accepted in a short time. I believe that Founders College is in a similar position, having a constitution that has not been formally passed but in fact provides a guide for the running of the council.

However, a graver error in Mr. Margel's article occurs in his analysis of Vanier College Council. He feels that 'advisors' have no place in a student government. The ideal of a community of scholars has never really been taken seriously by either students or faculty. A major reason for this has often been the existence of a student union that produces an alienation between students and the so-called faculty-administration similar to the alienation which exists between labour and management. The latter alienation may be desirable and expedient to some extent, but is the former? Another reason would be the existence of a faculty which, if it has not encouraged, then certainly has done little to prevent the rift.

Vanier College Council was set up in its present form with the hope that a structural change in college government might facilitate further and more meaningful changes. Thus the faculty on Vanier Council are not advisors, but full members of the college community assuming their rightful role in the governing of that community.

No one doubts that a judgment cannot be made on the success of such an experiment after only five months of existence. However, it certainly is one of the advantages of the college system and of a new university that such experimentation is not only possible but sometimes even encouraged.

John Davidson

*'for I'd rather
be a snowflake
than a
fallen hoar ensnared'
from mcgill daily*