

CUS says radicalism isn't violence

Canadian press coverage of the growing Canadian student movement has been unfortunate at best, dangerous at worst. A climate has been created in which a rational debate of student demands and student tactics becomes impossible.

It is a fact that there is in Canada a growing student movement, committed to university change. It is also a fact that this movement still represents a minority, and that its "representativity" will be determined only as students debate and act on issues this year.

But it is deliberate, cynical propaganda that this movement represents only a conspiratorial elite, dedicated to chaos and violence.

Yet this is the image conveyed by the press. A press which if it sincerely condemns violence should condemn those who create an atmosphere conducive to violence in our society.

CUS would like to make its position on student protest and tactics quite clear. It is ironic that the present press labels — "violent", "anarchist", "saboteur" — should be applied to a movement which has its roots deep in the struggle for peace.

Both in the U.S. and in Canada, the student movement has grown out of a struggle against the institutionalized violence of our society — against segregation and racism, against the war in Vietnam and against the threat of nuclear war.

But the charges of violence against students are as old as the movement itself — they began as soon as protest moved beyond the level of academic debate, as soon as it began to threaten established interests and attempted real change.

The point is not that protest is ineffective, but rather the opposite — that our present rulers are unresponsive to debate.

Radical tactics are not synonymous with violence. The student movement still

depends on pacifist (sit-in) and union (strike) techniques. These techniques do not negate our rational and humanitarian ends, as many would claim, nor do they exclude the possibility of rational debate. Rather they offer us the chance to effect change. It is the beginning of a creative dialogue. An opportunity to meet administrators with our demands, and the power to effect change.

Violence in the student movement has been initiated by the state and the police. Brutal repression of student protest by the police or army has been matched only by the skill with which the mass media has blamed the violence on the students themselves; at Berkeley student protest is now regularly met with clubs, dogs, mace and tear gas — and the students are accused of being "violent"; at Columbia the police were savage not only in beating students, but also deliberate destruction of university property — and the students are accused of being violent and destructive; in France the students used barricades to defend themselves against truncheons, tear gas and tanks; in Chicago this August the same pattern is clear.

This year, in Canada, we may well see theory linked with action, we may see students demanding changes in their university and using their power to see that they occur.

But we need see no violence, unless administrators decide to use police against student action and student demands. This is the danger, that the mood now established by a sensationalist media, and fear on the part of administrators, will legitimize for the public — the use of police repression against students.

Nothing would please some administrators as much as the chance to crush legitimate student leadership, while support is still growing.

Student leaders cannot abandon their commitment to criticism, confrontation and change. They can and should condemn all acts of violence. They can and should be careful that there will be no violence. The existence of violence will be decided by administrators and not students.

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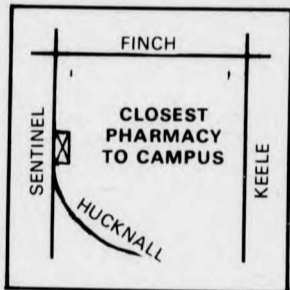
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Common cans for Glendon

The battle of the washroom has been won. Staff washrooms at Glendon have been whisked out of the door as relics of the past. Students of C wing will no longer have to scurry about searching for a place to relieve their burdens.

Reid's recruiting fails

Glendon College is facing a shortage of French faculty, principal Escott Reid told 600 critical students last week.

Reid said he has tried to hire French-Canadian students currently studying in Paris to serve as professors but has received no applicants.

"The French-Canadians said they wanted to go back to their own universities when they finished studying. I told a friend of mine helping me with the recruiting that I was sorry they were making the same mistakes friends of mine at the U of T made when they went back to their own colleges after their studies ended."

Reid was speaking at a mass meeting at Glendon called to discuss proposals by student leaders to abolish formal courses, grades, exams and to give students the right to study whatever course they chose.

The student brief, "A University is for People," also called for a speed-up in bilingualizing Glendon by bringing in more French-speaking students and faculty.

After the two-hour discussion Reid said the student ferment at Glendon was healthy, but he felt it was time for the student council to start discussing the specifics of their proposals.

"We've heard enough about vague generalities of abolishing courses, but now its time for the student council to do some scholarly work."

Reid said the student proposals were under study by committees of Glendon's faculty council.

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