

Brunswickan



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Organized Labor At The Crossroads

The organized labor movement is at the crossroads.

No one seriously doubts that unions have done much to improve the living standards of people throughout the Western community. But this is fundamentally an accomplishment of past days.

Today the West has sufficient wealth to maintain its relatively luxurious way of life, and more and more people are questioning the validity of the great and virtually unrestrained influence unions exert on the community at large.

Some claim that unions seek wage increases for their members regardless of the harm the resulting inflation may do to those outside the fold.

Others charge that unions are attempting to restrict employment opportunities to their own members, and to exert social pressures against legitimate personal ambitions.

Another serious claim is that unions demand that their members receive pay even when technological advances eliminate their work. This practice, known as feather-bedding, is said to restrain artificially the rate of economic growth by discouraging business from introducing labor-saving machines.

Again, many people see unions at fault for attempting to maintain high tariffs to protect the jobs of their members at the expense of the country at large. For example, the United Auto Workers want to restrict imports of foreign automobiles so that people can work making a higher-cost product in Ontario.

Worse, many people charge that the control of unions is falling into the hands of unscrupulous power-seekers who put their own interests ahead of both the rank-and-file and the general public. The outcry against people like Dave Beck and James Hoffa is a case in point.

As a result of these and other factors, many people wish to place legal restraints on the power of the unions. They want to limit the power to strike and they want to purge some unions of "the gangsters now in control."

Thus, unions have reached a point where they must reassess their role in society.

They must learn to accept the responsibility which is the requirement of power, and to forego short-run selfish gains for the long-run benefit of all.

In short, the unions must realize—and acknowledge—that they have a duty toward the people outside their own ranks. If they don't, they can have no complaint if the state moves to force them to act in keeping with the broader interest.

About 'Lolita' and Homosexuality Hypocrisy is the Real Danger

By STEVE FAY

The recent controversy raging in the United Kingdom over the prospective publication of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and my recent reading of the novel have prompted some thoughts on the nature of society's reactions to obscenity, pornography and other sexually related topics.

Lolita tells the sad story of a European scholar, Humbert Humbert, satiating his passion for nymphets (young girls between the ages of nine and thirteen). Twelve-year-old Lolita is his passion; America, his playground. He marries Lolita's mother to be close to his nymphet. After the death of his new found wife Humbert takes his new found nymphet on a coital tour of the country. After two years of consummation Lolita runs away with another man, who is eventually murdered by the jilted lover. The book is Humbert's defence delivered to the court trying him for murder.

The plot is obviously amoral, but not oppressively so. Nowhere in the book are one's sensibilities shattered by blatant sensuousness or jarring Anglo-Saxon expostulations (as they are in many of Henry Miller's works). Nabokov creates whimsical characters who, if they are not believable, are imaginable.

Work of Art

According to the precedent set by a United States court's decision on the publication of *Ulysses*, *Lolita*, as a work of art in which any scenes which are pornographic are an essential part of a complete plot, can in no sense be regarded as obscene. Any person who has the mental curiosity and ability to finish the book (which is more than some publishers did) is no more likely to be corrupted by it as by *The Arabian Nights* or the *Song of Solomon*. Yet some of the British publishers and public have raised hysterical shouts about "the pornographic filth" in *Lolita*, (it is greatly to the credit of the American reading public that they have accepted *Lolita* for what it is—a beautifully written work of art.

Now the British are not normally particularly sensitive or corruptible, yet one publisher proudly announced that he tore up the manuscript (before or after finishing it?) and one of the prospective publishers, Nigel Nicholson, was reviled during his recent attempt to retrieve the

nomination for the parliamentary constituency of Bournemouth, as a propagator of filth. What sort of society introduces such virulent intensity into the social norms? Surely it must be hypocritical to create such unattractive taboos. The environment seems to demand blind condemnation of supposedly obscene literature, just as it so nonchalantly condemns the homosexual.

'Flippant Foolishness'

The parallel is, I think, an acceptable one in light of a report of a meeting of the SAP Society carried on in *The Brunswickan* of March 10th. One was immediately impressed by the dismissal of homosexuals as "abnormal and harmful in society." Mere numerical strength is not the best defence against such a statement but if, as Kinsey suggested, 60 per cent of North American males have indulged in homosexual relations, one might assume that a quarter of this number are permanently either homo- or at least bi-sexual. To say that 15 per cent (or even less if this figure is not acceptable) of North

American males are abnormal and harmful to society is flippant foolishness. One might ask how much more perverted homosexual relationships are than some heterosexual relationships. Surely perversion is a standard to be applied to all varieties of sexual practice, not only to those between males.

If a standard of harm and abnormality is to be applied, it must apply to a far wider range of relationships than merely the homosexual. The accusations of harm and abnormality are surely as foolish as are the accusations of filth levelled at *Lolita*.

Our Morality

The conclusions to be drawn from the *Lolita* controversy and the local observations on homosexuality are many. But most important, I think, are the pointers towards the cultural values of our environment. Our society has replaced one morality, that of the ancient Greeks for example, with another. My complaint is not against moralities in general, but against ours in particular. The over emphasis placed on sexual habits and values, to the exclusion of other corrupt practices, verges on unnecessary interference with the individual. Society has the right to make laws to provide for the safety and welfare of its citizens. For this reason punishment for statutory rape and homosexual offences against minors is permissible. Legislation against the publication of *Lolita* or against homosexual relations between consenting males over the age of twenty-one is not.

Societies are going to be corrupted by hypocrisy as quickly as some people believe they have been by homosexuality and obscene literature. If a strong virulent society demands restrictions on the individual of this type, then give me decadence!

EDITORS LAMENT

(Continued from page 2)

As we grow old prematurely and sadder if wiser about human nature. However, this fills a few lines easily and as Aesop said 2,600 years ago "Every path has its puddle."

Letters to the Editor

No Moral Principle?

Sir: *The Brunswickan* of Tuesday, March 10, contained a news item to the effect that a group of students in the "social sciences" had differed with the Wolfenden Report, recently tabled in the British Parliament. Whereas the Wolfenden Report had recommended the legalization of homosexuality under certain conditions, and more severe penalties against prostitution, our local group of "social scientists" recommends the complete reverse.

They evinced a policy of "cure or kill" with respect to homosexuality, and one of leniency towards prostitution on the ground that "realistically it plays a role in the structure of western society which is not filled in any other way." What is meant by this last bit of jargon, so typical of "social scientists", is not clear, but presumably it means that the only way of purchasing (or selling) sexual intercourse is by prostitution. This of course we have always known.

In sum, our "social scientists" adopt an illiberal attitude towards an activity which (whatever else might be said about it) has no connection with monetary gain, while taking a liberal position towards another activity which is pursued for mercenary ends. (Whether this is a triumph of materialism I leave the reader to judge).

Not content with this, our "social scientists" propose to repress

(or cure) the one activity which it is arguable cannot be eliminated, while giving their approval to the other activity which is clearly an eradicable economic and social evil.

I have long realized that the present generation of students are conservative, even reactionary; and strongly tinged with anti-intellectualism. I had never expected however, that a group of "social scientists" (who ought to know better) would so distinguish themselves by being at once not merely illiberal and unintelligent, but so lacking in moral principle as well. Heaven help society of it ever passes under the control of our local "social scientists."

LOVELL D. CLARK

Views on 'A View'

Sir: Although I am a senior, I must confess that *A View From the Bridge* marked my first effort to attend a production by the UNB Society. I had always felt that there were more important and entertaining functions taking place both on and off the campus. I am, in a way, sorry that I did not make the effort before because I now realize how much good entertainment I must have missed during the past few years.

My only hope now is to appeal to undergraduates who like to be entertained, and to encourage them to put the Drama Society productions in first place on their "must attend" list of activities for coming years.

JOHN POIRIER

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