

The Gateway

member of the canadian university press

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STAFF THIS ISSUE—The boys were getting restless tonight, you know, it takes a long time to work from the bottom to the top, so they took the matter into their own hands and got carried away in the process. Lying around meanwhile were Dennis Zomerchoe, Dan Carroll, Judy Griffiths, Elizabeth O'Donoghue, Greg Berry (who makes it all possible), Joe Czajkowski, BSP (little or none) Bayer, Ken (relaxed) Bailey, Gail Evasiuk, and yours truly Harvey G. (for don't know how to get any) Thomgirt.

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On anxiety and the university

By BRIAN CAMPBELL

Polarization sharpens, but at the same time, obscures issues.

Consider the current student demands for an end to exams and accreditation, more students on curriculum committees and a more relevant curriculum, and student power at the faculty and administrative levels. All these demands are aimed at building a better university—one which turns out humane citizens, and not just blocks for the corporate peg-board.

The trouble is that with enough screaming and yelling these become phony issues, in that many of the supporters of these demands think they are voting for an easier, lazier university.

Consider the curriculum and accreditation demands against the background of that ideal university with its aware students. As the noise for these reforms narrows to specific demands, the cause of the problem fades into the background and there is a danger that these reforms will be supported for the wrong reasons. I have heard them talk: "No exams, an easier degree," they say.

Curriculum seems the same in that students are looking for courses which tell them about revolution, marxism, the black problem, how to deal with politicians, reform, how to make bombs (Experimental College at San Francisco State), and so on. They want something where they are.

But what was the original purpose of all this reform? As I understand it, it was to get students involved in their courses and aware of their world. The purpose was to produce the educated man. The university does not produce this. Perhaps the problem is that universities generate more anxiety than students can handle, and thereby increase the time students spend worrying about their hang-ups as compared to the amount of time they spend getting involved.

What are the causes of anxiety? Basically grade hang-ups and sex hang-ups. Universities are inhuman judges. Read, for example, the soul-destroying remarks on some honestly produced, but not quite competent papers. Look at the inflexible stance of the administration toward grades. The grade is the man, the man is

the grade, they say. A student who is trying to get through sometimes gets caught in a worsening grades-increasing anxiety-more worry, less work, treadmill.

And so what about the ideal university? First, I think, we need a humane, human and forgiving environment. Education should not be them against us, but a community experience. Intelligent students who do not help others who are not doing as well—who do not share their knowledge—have no place in an ideal university. Students who hide their "9" papers do not belong here. Knowledge is, and should be communal.

Second, curriculum should be changed. Some new courses students want should be introduced, but basically the subject-matter (and I am speaking of arts courses only) would remain the same. Third, the university should build a strongly interdisciplinary atmosphere, while at the same time encouraging students to learn the structure of knowledge, and not a series of isolated facts.

The sort of student who began learning at the ideal university would, working in a friendly environment, bring to bear knowledge from all areas on a particular problem. Modern courses in revolution and marxism and so on are useless without a wide-ranging background in the humanities (and I use that word in its fullest literal sense). Many students who complain about irrelevancy are so personally hung-up they are unable to see past themselves. Students in the new university would be encouraged to make the connections between Blake and MacBeth and society and politics which are clouded and ignored now.

But in the end, the new student will have covered more material, in more depth, than today's model. The changes will not reduce university curriculum in quantity or quality. If anything, there will be more to cover. Hopefully the new student will be able, through a more human environment, a less threatening world, to involve himself, without anxiety, and think in the new university.

Without a total change in mental framework towards, and within, university, the new university, not easier, as many think now, is not possible.

Peter Warrian and the student movement

By KEVIN PETERSON
Canadian University Press

Peter Warrian doesn't talk about the Canadian Union of Students, he talks about a student movement.

And he sees his main task as putting across certain relationships to students which they may not see now—relationships like what he sees in the movie Rosemary's Baby.

"How about a film review of Rosemary's Baby in terms of liberal consciousness?" he asked Peter Allnutt, editor of CUS' national student magazine, Issue. "The just society is going to be Rosemary's Baby."

Peter Warrian is president of the Canadian Union of Students. The professional media pictures and quotes him as a building-burning revolutionary who intends to knock Canadian universities down to the ground and then move on to level the rest of society in the same way. The media lies.

Warrian on leadership says: "My concept of political leadership is not the leaders and the led. Leadership is describing the situation then presenting alternatives."

"The student movement has always been hung up on leadership, the charismatic leader like Dutschke or Cohn-Bendit . . . encouraged by the media which builds these people."

For the moment, Warrian would much rather stand on a table in some university cafeteria and talk to students than lead howling masses through the streets. He doesn't deny that someday he may be fighting in the streets, but he has no intention of doing it until Canadian students think that's what's required.

When people describe Warrian sympathetically, they say he is the image of the clean-cut, Canadian kid—doesn't smoke or drink, likes football (he still plays it occasionally) and once was a seminarian. In short, he becomes the male version of Playboy magazine's "girl next door".

The union could be in trouble

But even Warrian doesn't believe in complete success. Optimistically, he says, "I think it may be possible that by the end of the year 20 per cent to one-third of the students in Canada may be involved on a continuing day-to-day basis, with an equal number following them in crisis situations."

If something near Warrian's prediction is not reached, the union may be in trouble. For the past three or four years there have been rumblings throughout Canada that "students aren't getting their money's worth from CUS" and talking to people is not going to produce easily defined financial benefits.

CUS lost nine members during its congress, although three others signified their intention to join. Referendums are taking place on numerous campuses about CUS membership this year—no one is quite sure how many—and if more large campuses withdraw, the union could be in serious trouble.

On the other hand, some universities not in CUS, most notably the University of Alberta, are also having membership referendums. If these schools decide to join the union, it would be in a much stronger financial position. But, it would also have a significantly stronger moderate block which opposes the line Warrian is trying to sell.

Warrian is bothered by referendums on member campuses, not because of possible membership losses but because, "Theoretically a referendum is a way to bring issues to the student; in practice it doesn't."

"Referendums may be valuable at the end of the year, but in the fall they become counter-productive, abstract, organizational debates."

"The major task is building a mass base for a student movement, the major

thing is to educate—by making what we have more effective.

If the conditions are there they give rise to the movement—if they remain, the movement will flourish. We don't manufacture the issues and it is impossible to justify CUS on those grounds."

However, whether Warrian likes it or not, there are fall CUS referendums and they do have to be fought. Meanwhile, and between referendums, Warrian will be working for a new sort of university.

"We're sometimes slandered because it is said we want to destroy the university," Warrian says. "In fact we are trying to give it viability and life which can only come from analysis, self-criticism and definition—otherwise we become extinct like some huge grey mushy sort of dinosaur."

"Increasingly there is the feeling we will have an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist university or no university at all."

Warrian talks about the reaction from administrations to student activity calmly and coolly.

"I don't think they're capable of a common approach across the country," he says. Recently, at Brandon University and Memorial University, threats have been made to expel students for demonstrations and other activities which were deemed disruptive to university life.

Warrian commented on the threat of expulsion: "A more serious error by administrations or a more beneficial act for the students as a whole couldn't be dreamed of."

"There are just too many students to whom the threat of expulsion for political action is a cause for glee rather than dismay."

There was a look of glee in Warrian's face when he said that.