

# Gillis - Our guitar strumming autocrat

by Ron Thompson (CUP)

Is Bruce Gillis fulfilling his functions as Student Council President? Is he representing the interests of the students of Dalhousie University?

These are two questions which have been asked, repeatedly, not just in the past few weeks, but ever since he was elected to the presidency.

There is no doubt that Mr. Gillis is talented. I have enjoyed on many occasions his excellent singing and guitar playing. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for his other talents. His forte, is in his ability to use technicalities for his own purposes. He has often done things against the wishes of the Council and the interests of students, but due to legal or procedural technicalities, which he unearthed before taking action, he was able to escape the wrath of Council and the student body at large.

Mr. Gillis has another talent which should benefit him greatly in his future law career — his eloquence. Of course, in his position (always on the defensive) this is actually a necessity. It has been suggested that he has his sights on becoming Canada's answer to William F. Buckley Jr.

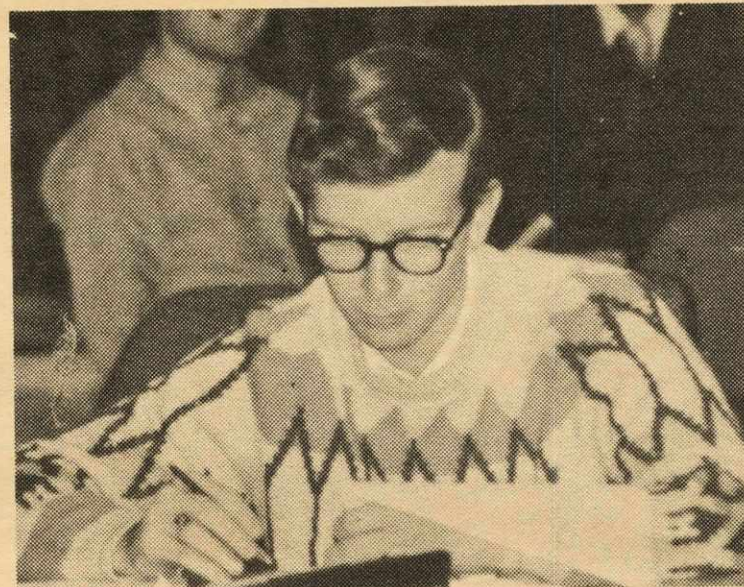
One of the best examples of Mr. Gillis' undying devotion to the fight for student rights can be seen in his action at the last senate meeting. Despite Council's seemingly unanimous condemnation of the George report and Mr. Gillis' apparent compliance to their views he voted for every recommendation in the report. Could it be that our president subscribes to the same principal as another "student" senator (Alan Ruffman) that just because he is elected by the students he does not have to answer to them for his actions.

In talking with various Council members, I discovered that there are many who are seriously concerned with doing their jobs. One

such council member is Kirk MacCulloch who presented a motion in Council condemning the George Report and warning the administration of the possible threat of active dissent and even violence on our campus if provision is not soon made for student participation. All the Council members I talked with were upset by Gillis' unilateral action and felt that he had betrayed them in his actions not only in Senate but in many other instances in the past.

It is interesting to note that in a paper distributed by Mr. Gillis on the day of the CUS referendum, he accused the Canadian Union of Students as being unrepresentative. This seems ironic when he has acted throughout his term in a very unrepresentative manner. He has made no attempt to establish communication between himself (and Council) and the student body of this university.

On numerous occasions (parti-



cularly in the case of the George Report) he has gone completely against the wishes of Council.

One attempt has already been made to dethrone our omnipotent,

guitar strumming autocrat. Perhaps it's time the students began to assert their power and demand decisive and immediate action in this direction.

## A Liberal Tongue-lashing, and its Backlash

by Trevor Parsons

In October, 1968, Graham Spry, former ambassador to Saskatchewan House in London and a respected name in Canadian communications theory, was granted an honorary doctorate by the fall convocation of the University of Saskatchewan, Regina campus.

In his address to the convocates and audience, he expressed his fears at the striking similarities he perceived between modern North American student radicals and Nazi youth of the thirties.

Minutes later, a student at that convocation refused his degree, asking to speak in rebuttal to Spry's remarks. The chancellor refused to allow it.

"Oh, my God", said a woman in the faculty wives' section after the student had removed his robe and left, "I was afraid he was going to set fire to his robes".

There were no such illusions among the administrators on the stage.

Their only worry was that they would probably have to call in the police to remove the student.

It was the beginning on an ideological debate that was only slowly to become concretized.

Nine months later, in Saturday Night magazine, George Woodcock, author of a number of books on anarchism, authored an article which raised again many of Spry's fears.

Documenting several examples of similar critiques by many western leftists, Woodcock wrote, "In Canada we are not far behind the rest of the world in a type of activism which pretends to be libertarian but is in action authoritarian and in prospect totalitarian.

"Like academic freedom, fair play is unrecognized by authoritarian activists".

He defined fascism for the purpose of his argument. "Fascism is not conservatism... nor is a police state necessarily a fascist state... Fascism is in fact a radical movement aimed at social transformation".

Two months later the debate continued in the letters column of Saturday Night...

Woodcock says in a letter to the magazine, "I am not implying anyone can at present be termed a fascist; I am talking about tendencies and threats".

And perhaps there is enough hedging in the remarks of men like Woodcock to satisfy their own requirements about objectivity.

But in the meantime, the past year has seen an extension of that debate from the arena of liberal dialogue to the points of real confrontation on the campus. The extension was gradual.

Virtually every article or program in the mass media has raised the spectre of "extremism" in coverage of the problem of "student unrest".

Since the fire in the Sir George Williams computer, even Newsweek has seen fit to consider "Canadian students... among the most militant in the world", — a merely parenthetical comment in a report on student unrest in the U.S.

But almost every university and college administrator in the country is by now on record as "in favor of change" so long as it is achieved through "the proper channels" — that they like students to be "concerned with change, so long as they aren't extremists".

In this context, all the terms are applicable anywhere, because they remain undefined.

For instance, the chancellor of Carleton University, Lester Pearson, talks of the need for change and the dangers of extremism; although extremism is hardly descriptive of the situation at Carleton.

At Carleton, "radicalism" is at the stage of a student attempt to get a petition to ask the senate to set up a committee to look into overcrowding in the university.

Yet Pearson sees fit to warn against extremists, and Davidson Duntun, the administration president, has already been established as the sole person who can give the directive to the police to come onto the campus.

Perhaps the function served has been to move everyone's political definitions to the right. Where there is no real confrontation taking place, it may have become easier for people to define the students who were farthest to the left as extremists.

At any rate, this past year has seen the creation of a new label in student "politics" — the moderates.

1968-69 also saw two incidents that were firsts for Canadian campuses — at Simon Fraser University on the west coast and the University of New Brunswick on the east, the RCMP were called on campus to remove and arrest protesting students.

Perhaps that is the function of the "liberal philosopher" in this society — a symbiotic relationship that allows him to retain a position on the fence, edging away from taking a stance,

while the society feeds off his rhetoric to create a climate for repression.

The rhetoric of "anti-democratic disruption" creeps into the press statements of the "liberal" administrator.

And when confrontation occurs, the issues are shoved under the table.

When a charge of racism is raised at Sir George Williams University, and over the year escalates to an occupation and a destroyed computer, the problem is seen merely as one of control. A new discipline code is introduced which outlaws all dissent.

In Ontario, the presidents of the province's 14 universities caucus and come out with a working paper, "Order on Campus", in a virtual vacuum of any kind of confrontation. But then a spokesman for the group did say the release of the paper had been "premature".



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