

MacNutt tells SDS members "You cannot manage a large institution on democratic principles"



Brunswickan Photo by Henry Straker

Professor of physics Norman Strax addresses students prior to issuance of controversial circular announcing campaign against plasticized identification cards. SDS's initial attack against unauthorized use of student cards took place at the Harriet Irving Library.

The library action: Here's what happened.

by Lynda McDougall and Frank Goldspink Brunswickan staff

On Saturday afternoon, several members of the S.D.S. Mobilization Committee went to the Harriet Irving Library to protest the necessity of showing an ID card in order to borrow a book.

The members distributed articles explaining the early closing of the library on Friday night and emphasized their stand on the issue of carrying ID cards.

Then each of the members selected one or two books which they wanted to borrow. They then approached the librarian at the check-out desk. The gist of each conversation ran thus:

Student: May I please take out this book?

Librarian: Do you have an ID card?

Student: Yes, I do.

Librarian: May I see it please?

Student: No, I'm sorry, but I

don't believe I should have to show an ID card to borrow a book.

Librarian: Then I'm sorry, I cannot let you have the book.

Student: I see, thank you.

The student would then leave the book with the librarian and return to the stacks to obtain another book that he wanted. The process was repeated, again quietly and orderly, until Dean McNutt arrived in the lobby of the library and confronted Mr. David Hallam, a fourth year Philosophy student.

McNutt asked Hallam to explain his actions. Hallam told the Dean that he was trying to sign out some books and that he could not in good conscience show his ID card. McNutt charged him with creating a public disturbance and breaking a law of the university. Hallam refuted that he was conducting

himself in an orderly manner and was breaking no law since he had not actually taken a book out of the library, but had left it with the librarian.

McNutt then ordered Hallam to remove himself from the premises immediately. Hallam replied that there was no justification for this command and asked what the alternative was. McNutt said he would inform the president of the university of Hallam's actions and the "full disciplinary power of the university and the civil law would be exercised" against him. Hallam then stated that he had no choice but to remain and face the consequences.

Throughout the conversation Hallam addressed McNutt as "sir" and both voices were carefully modulated.

Hallam then continued trying to borrow books while McNutt began arguing with Dr.

Norman Strax of the Physics Department.

A fourth year English student, Clayton Burns, selected a book on phonetics, and after being refused permission to borrow it because he would not show his ID card, ran past the Exit Control Officer (who refused to disclose his name) and out of the building.

The Exit Control Officer shouted "I'll get him!" and pursued Burns. When Burns realized that the E.C.O. could not apprehend him, he returned to the steps of the library voluntarily. Burns reported, "Then he grabbed me and tried to take the book from me. Then Dean McNutt intervened and told the E.C.O. that he was creating a disturbance. He let go of me."

By this time a crowd, including Dr. Strax, Dean McNutt, Professor Weiner, the Head of the Circulation Department, Mrs. Weiner, and Mr. Burns had gathered on the steps. An argument ensued in which Prof. Weiner commented "Why don't you go home where you belong, Strax? You're quite insane."

When McNutt commented that the situation was becoming a "public spectacle", Strax said "Yes, and you're causing it."

Finally Burns walked back into the library, carrying the book.

Peter Graham approached the E.C.O. with an unstamped book, which the man refused to let out. Graham then asked the E.C.O. "Do you have an ID card?"

E.C.O.: "No, I don't need one. I check books."

Graham: "How do I know that you are? You don't have an ID card to prove it."

E.C.O.: "I'm wearing the uniform of an E.C.O."

Graham: "I have the uniform of an honest man."

At which point, Graham left the book and walked out of the library.

In the meantime, Strax and a librarian were having another discussion. The librarian stated that everyone has to abide by the law. Strax asked if this applied even when the laws were wrong. "What about Hitler? Do you think everyone in Nazi Germany should have obeyed his Fascist laws?" Librarian: "If you lived there, you'd have to."

Strax and McNutt became involved in discussing the power of certain of the administration. Strax asked why the head of the department had virtually complete power over the department. He wanted to know why things weren't decided by a vote of the faculty. McNutt replied that in a large department it was necessary for one man to have almost complete responsibility. "You cannot manage a large institution on democratic principles."

McNutt then told Hallam that he and his kind were a very minute minority. Hallam refuted that this was natural since most students were "afraid of the power of the administration." He said the

majority of the students would be intimidated by a threat such as McNutt had made to him.

Strax asked McNutt why he was singling out Hallam as an example. McNutt replied "I have nothing against Mr. Hallam. He is disobeying a university regulation—creating a public nuisance in the library."

"Just as you are" commented Strax. Are you planning to press charges against the commissioner and yourself?"

"I certainly am not," replied McNutt.

Strax asked why he couldn't remove a book when the library staff obviously knew who he was and that he was not stealing the book.

McNutt replied "We are all subject to the law — it follows the tradition of English law — equality and justice for all." He accused Strax of using "fascistic, high-handed undemocratic tactics."

Strax disagreed with this and asked if they had broken any law.

"You attempted to" stated McNutt.

When Dan Weston, a third year Arts student became involved in the conversation, Weiner accused "You must feel very important." Weston answered "No, not at all. I feel very small, because I can't do what I feel is morally right."

Strax asked why the library would not accept a driver's license as proof of identity. Weiner wanted to know the difference between showing an ID card and a driver's license. Strax retorted that people other than university-community members could obtain one but only that non-university types couldn't take books from the university library.

At 5:08 Mrs. Weiner announced in a loud, clear voice, "Dean McNutt, the library will be starting to close in two minutes. Everyone must be out of the building by 5:30."

Shortly after this, Clayton Burns selected another book, this time a French play, which he wanted to borrow. He again ran past the E.C.O. who shouted "Get him!" to one of two security officers who had been summoned. The officer chased Burns but could not catch him.

This reporter was told, upon asking why the security cop was running out the door, that the incident did not concern her. When asked if the students were not to be informed of what was happening on the campus, the man in the blue uniform replied "They are not to be informed of what is going on in here now."

Hallam was again conversing with McNutt, who had by now diluted his threat. He said that he would report Hallam's actions to the president, but would think very seriously about using full disciplinary measures. "I like you. I think you're hopelessly misguided." He then invited Hallam to come talk to him in his office. They arranged an appointment for Monday afternoon. Hallam then left the library. At 5:30 the rest of the people began leaving.

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