

SECOND WIND

by David Marples

According to observers, the Republican platform for the 1984 presidential election is the most conservative in years. Ronald Reagan's Conservatism (let us give it a capital C) has been very much taken for granted. In brief, critics of the president have remarked on his rigidity, his intrusions in Central America, his lack of knowledge about international affairs. There seems to be a body of opinion in Canada that considers him the stereotype of right-wing politics, a symbol of a vocal minority that encompasses everyone from the Moral Majority to Barry Goldwater.

I also used to adhere to this view. I also read reports about the president beginning work at 10 a.m. and retiring at 4 p.m., whereas it is well known that Jimmy Carter would often put in 15-hour days to complete his workload. But therein lies the key to the Reagan presidency. Carter was a sincere man, who did his best to conduct a fair international and domestic policy. Reagan may or may not be sincere; but he is a highly visible president, and, moreover, one who does not try to cover every aspect of his job.

Reagan is a symbolic president, and in an age dominated by TV screens, this is highly important. This is not to say that he has no real authority — indeed it will be argued below that he has too much — but rather that in the 1980's it is less important that the nation's leader is involved with every detail of current policy. Instead, Americans have a father figure and Reagan's advanced age can actually work to his advantage. He can distance himself from the ribald confrontations that characterized the Mondale Hart nomination battle, and appear before the cameras as a benign well-meaning man, friendly and approachable.

Does Reagan, then have any clearly formulated policies of his own? What about his anti-Soviet pronouncements, for example? Do these not represent the true thoughts of this man? Clearly, Reagan has his own thoughts about the USSR, and they are steeped in 1950's rhetoric. But again we have an example of a Symbolic leader. By denouncing Soviet policies, the leader is ostensibly reflecting the opinions of the people at large, or rather a very vocal minority that believes the U.S. needs a strong stance against Soviet incursions. When he speaks about the Soviet-Cuban military build-up in Nicaragua, Reagan is not making an objective statement after a careful study of documents. Instead, he is generalizing about an issue beyond his ken.

Indeed, if one wanted to make a profound analysis of Reagan's beliefs, it is unlikely the result would be very satisfactory. Simply put, his intellectual capacity is limited and he is not a statesman. But on the other

hand, he has never professed to be something that he is not. If one can accept the leader of the most powerful nation on the earth is confining himself to a very limited role in policy-making, then one should say outright that Reagan is a fine president. Never before has a president appeared so endearing to a populace. Listening to Reagan at a press conference, one almost wants to like him.

There is of course one major problem with Reagan's style of presidency, i.e. he really does have considerable authority. It is perfectly easy for him to make decisions that could change the fate of the earth. Supposing, for example, a disaster occurred along the lines of the hostage-taking of U.S. diplomats by the Khomeini regime of Iran? And we have already seen an invasion of Grenada which, in retrospect, seems to have been an overreaction to events. And what about the question that intrigues most of us: the deterioration U.S. — Soviet relations? Is it not dangerous to have a man in office who is not really equipped to deal with the situation?

And as for the Soviet Union, there is little doubt that a policy which became more secretive and introspective under Andropov has developed into a nervous paranoia under the less able Chernenko, a dull man with no wits and few new ideas. There are good grounds for believing that the Soviets have become more aggressive of late; the anti-American hysteria in Soviet newspapers is reminiscent of the anti-Israel hysteria on those same pages in the 1970's.

Do not be misled. This column is not an apology for right-wing policies or the narrow bigoted views of the Moral Majority; nor for those of the Fundamentalists who think the U.S. president is the man to bring "religion" back into American schools. Reagan may have been superficially connected with above — he may even embrace Fundamentalist religious views, such as they are — but as a president he is acceptable because he is at a distance from events. Perhaps he is more of a monarch than a president. As such, he is less a Conservative and more of an apolitical figurehead.

All one can say for certain is that while there may be dangers inherent in a system that can support a symbolic president, there are considerable more in those where a leader has unlimited powers. Imagine Libya possessed with the nuclear weaponry of the United States. It is far better a leader is well aware that he is being carried on the shoulders of his advisers (the acumen of those advisers, of course, is quite another question).

Of course, the same could be said of Japan's emperor Hirohito in 1941

ATTENTION GATEWAY STAFF:

There is a staff meeting in room 282 SUB at 4:00 pm Thursday, September 6. If you're not there — boy, are you in trouble!

Bear Country

THRILL TO
THE EXCITING
ANSWER TO
LAST YEAR'S
BAFFLING
QUESTION...
... WHO SHOT
THE BEAR!?
... AS ...



BEAR COUNTRY
RETURNS SEPT. 11

by Shane Berg

Incredible Edibles
limited

9110-112 Street, HUB MALL T6G 2C5
PHONE: 432-7793

HOURS:

Monday - Friday • 7 am - 8 pm

Saturday - noon - 6

Sunday Brunch

SPECIALTIES:

Freshly squeezed
vegetable & fruit juices

Distilled water

Homemade yoghurt and lassies

Granolas and muesli

Hot grain breakfast cereals

Whole grain breads and toast

Marinated riblets and chicken

Open face Danwiches

Quiches

Stuffed avocados

Vegetarian Casseroles • Salads

• Soups and chowders •

• Healthy homemade cheesecake & pastries •



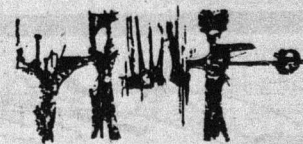
GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 12

7:00 p.m.

Room 270A

Student's Union Building



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

The following graduate courses are being offered this term.

- EDFDN 501, Lec A2 Tuesday 0830-1120 Half Course
Selected Themes in Education: A Multi-disciplinary Approach
- EDFDN 512, Lec X1 Thursday 1830-2120 Full Course
Anthropological Theory and Education
- EDFDN 521, Lec X1 Monday 1830-2120 Half Course
Studies of Educational Change in Developed Societies
- EDFDN 522, Lec X1 Wednesday 1830-2120 Half Course
Functions of Education in the Development of Emerging Nations
- EDFDN 530, Lec X1 Tuesday 1830-2120 Half Course
History of Education in Canada
- EDFDN 540, Lec X1 Thursday 1830-2120 Half Course
History of Modern Education
- EDFDN 543, Lec X1 Monday 0930-1220 Half Course
History of Education: Method and Structure
- EDFDN 551, Lec X1 Monday 1830-2120 Half Course
Philosophy of Education I
- EDFDN 555, Lec X1 Tuesday 1830-2120 Half Course
Moral Concepts in Education
- EDFDN 561, Lec X1 Wednesday 1830-2120 Half Course
Community Education: A Sociological Perspective
- EDFDN 563, Lec A1 Monday 1530-1820 Half Course
Research Methods in Sociology of Education
- EDFDN 564, Lec X1 Tuesday 1830-2120 Half Course
Education and Social Change
- EDFDN 577, Lec A1 Wednesday 1530-1820 Half Course
Adult Education as a Field of Study

Interested graduate students, both inside and outside the Faculty of Education, are invited to contact the Department Chairman, Dr. R.J. Carney at 432-3726, Rm 5-109, Ed. Bldg. North, with regard to these courses.