

The cavalry gets recalled

by Michael McCarthy

Don't let the ridiculous overhype media campaign scare you away from this movie. It is not a vehicle for personal stardom, and Paul Newman will not receive an Academy Award nomination, but *Fort Apache* is a solid film which combines action/suspense with good acting, and entertainment with eye-opening social comment.

The title is the nickname given to the police precinct in the highest crime rate area of New York. The police find it practically impossible to cope with the maintaining law and order, and the residents find it almost impossible to cope with police. It is a mini-war, which becomes complicated for one of the patrolmen when two things make him wonder which side is right. First, a complete asshole takes command of the precinct and proceeds to do just about everything he can to start an anti-police riot among the citizens. Two, in the ensuing riot, an innocent boy is thrown to his death off a roof for no reason, by a policeman.

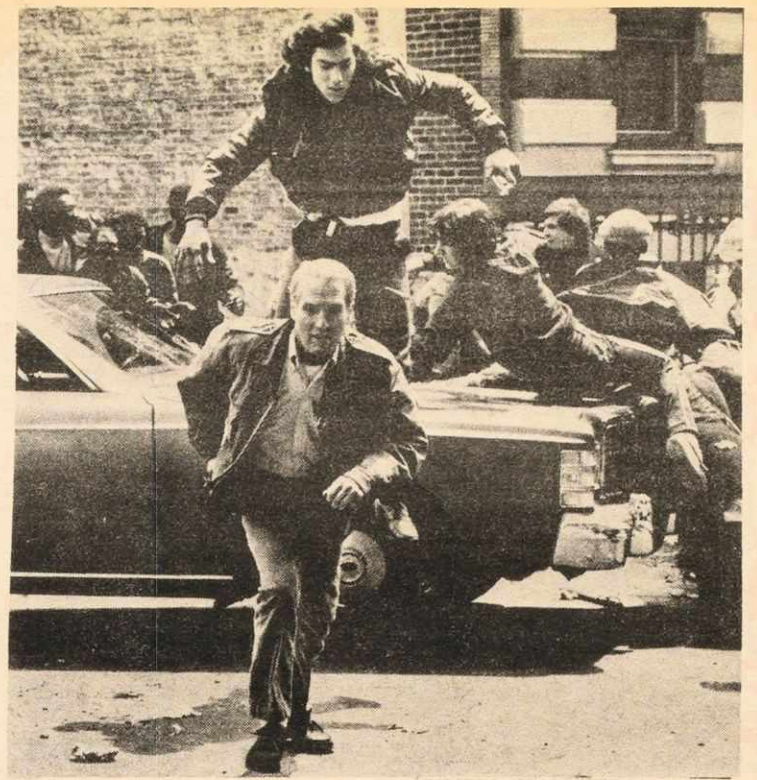
Paul Newman plays Murphy,

the policeman who must choose between following orders and standing by his fellow officers, like the unofficial code of "honour" demands, or doing what he thinks is right. This entails turning in the guilty cop, effectively ending his career, and refusing to follow assinine orders, with the same result. He eventually accomplishes the first, and reaches a compromise on the second.

Along the way, a good deal of insight is provided into the situation of a policeman like Murphy, including a number of episodes in off-duty life which shows a human side which is not really evident on the job. Newman is competent, as he always is, although this type of loner-who-bucks-the-system role is becoming a bit old hat to him, and this shows in some instances which are merely echoes of acting done in earlier movies, and are a bit more shallow than one would like. On the other hand, he has a scene in which he refuses to accept the death of his girlfriend, trying to revive her despite her obvious state, which

is very moving and likely to inspire tears in the audience to accompany the ones wrenched from Newman. Another scene, in which he calms a lunatic by outlooneying him, shows an adeptness for humour which has become more and more evident since his teamups with Redford.

Rachel Ticotin is pleasing in her role as Murphy's junkie girlfriend, and Ken Wahl is satisfactory as Murphy's young partner, although all the acting roles are somewhat secondary compared to the theme of the movie; namely, that as long as sprawling ghettos are allowed to eat up the core sections of urban centres, there will be a steady decline in the quality of life which cannot be blamed either on inadequate law enforcement or the residents of the slums, who are by-and-large victims of the style in which they are forced to live. There are several depressingly realistic examples of tenement living, and the way crime, spearheaded by drugs and prostitution, becomes naturally entrenched as a way of life



PAUL NEWMAN, followed by his partner KEN WAHL, pursues a suspect through the streets of the South Bronx in a powerful account of an embattled police precinct.

for people jammed 12 to an apartment, with no prospect for employment, proper nutrition, etc. The point of the film is well taken; we must make our move, and now. Unfortunately, no moves are proposed, other than the somewhat vague example of "doing what we think is right."

Nova Scotian Daniel Petrie directed this film, and he handles the heavy workload of

chase scenes, riots, etc., involving complicated action, potentially confusing and easily lost control of, quite well. He gets competent work from all the actors, except Ed Asner, who is a total failure as he recreates his one role, which he is apparently incapable of abandoning (I refer to Lou Grant), but who does manage to win Rat Bastard of the Week Award.

Poet examines Russian culture

by Cym Gomery

An entertaining and informative lecture and reading of selected poems took place on February 12 at Dalhousie. The subject was "Poets and Society in Soviet Russia", and the guest speaker was Dr. Vera Dunham.

Dunham has an awe-inspiring number of commendations behind her, as a brief introduction indicated. She is a scholar dedicated to the study of Russian literature and poetry, and a Russian by birth, although she has been an American citizen since 1940.

Among her many credits are a Ph.D, knowledge of several languages, various books, poems, and studies. In 1974, Dunham served on the board of the AAASS organization, and she has also acted as consultant at four writers' conferences. She has taught at several universities throughout the U.S., and, as the evening proved, is a lively, interesting speaker.

Dunham opened by remarking on the Russians' tremendous interest in poetry; it is extremely popular all over Russia, indicating, as she suggested, that Russians have a special need for poetry.

"Poetry", Dunham stated, "serves as a record of social change." She went on to emphasize that while poetry proves nothing, it does serve to illustrate patterns in Russian history. The poems were chosen for their "typicality" as

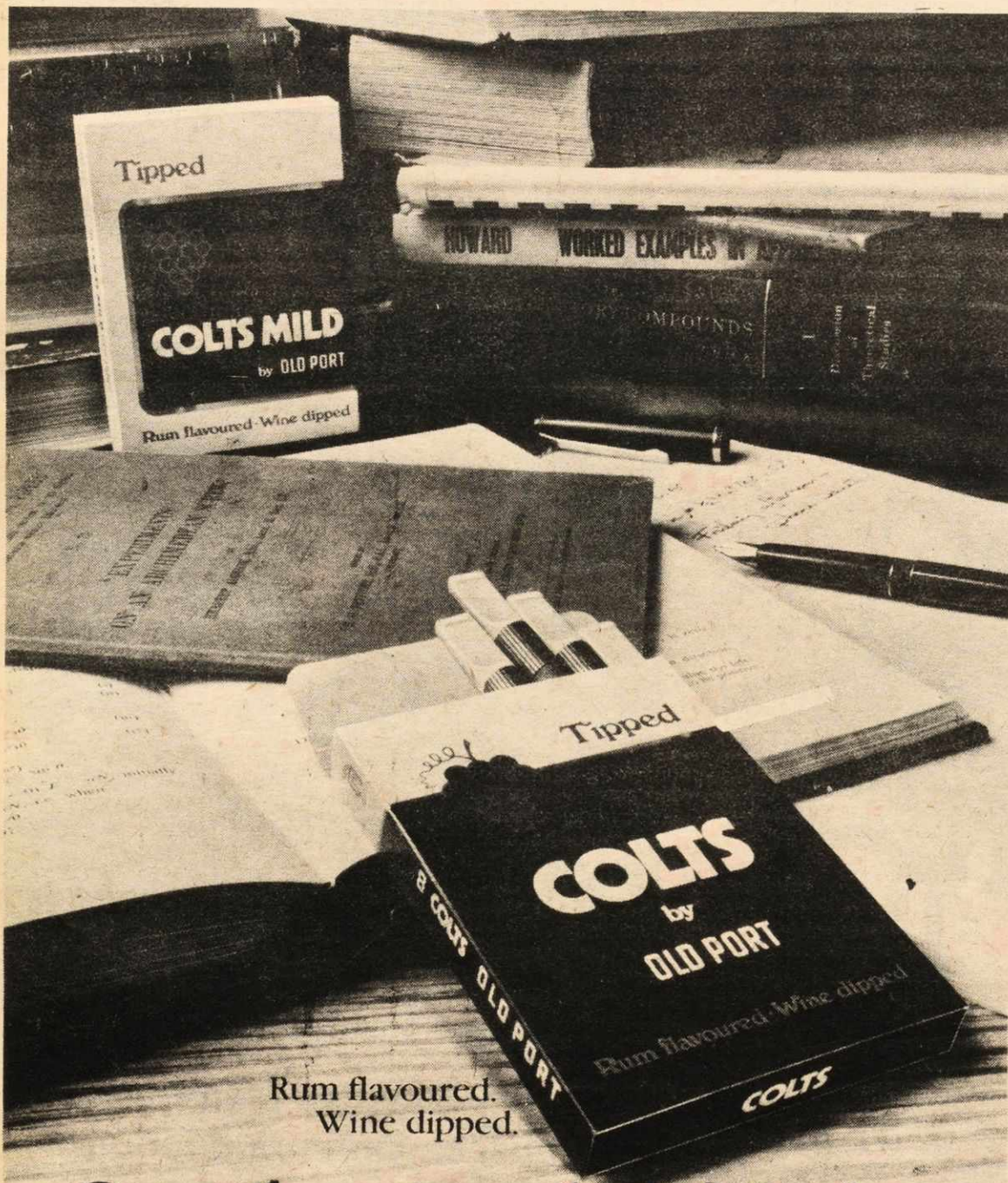
quality", as each was used to represent a given period.

Dunham, before beginning her reading, mentioned an essential underlying theme in the poems: that of "pronouns in transition". This theme was immediately apparent as she read the first poems—(chronologically)—which began with the dominance of the proletariat "We". These poems concentrated on the collective; the use of the first person singular being almost unheard of in that period. It was treated almost as an obscenity, Dunham explained, to make use of the pronoun "I". The hundreds of "We" poems were followed by thousands of "He" poems, during a period in which Stalin was idolized:

*Let us comrades, sing a song
About the greatest General,
The most fearless and strong,
About Stalin let's sing a
song. . . .*

Later poems expressed the guilt of a generation, and had a decidedly anti-Stalin tone. The entrance of the pronouns "you", and "I" signified a celebration of Stalin's death. For example, "There's the word 'I'. And nothing wrong / In my deciding to pronounce it."

Dunham ended the main body of her lecture by stating that an undercurrent of Stalinism still is present in Russian poetry. The last half hour of the lecture was devoted to a question period in many ways as interesting as the body of Dr. Dunham's speech.



Rum flavoured.
Wine dipped.

Crack a pack of Colts along with the books.