

By Peter Boothroyd

## There are lessons to be learned

After Monday's four-and-a-half hour meeting of sociology graduate students and faculty, I spent the evening wandering around the campus trying to figure out the sociology department. On stairways and in corridors I met other graduate students doing the same.

As I write this, I am still trying to understand what is happening. It's like writing a term paper after having done a lot of research—so much research that the woods are obscured by all the trees. But it's more than that too, because when you're in the sociology department the trees are real people.

It's distasteful to see all the dirty linen of the faculty being exposed, but it seems too easy to dismiss the faculty as being childish, petty, or impertinent. These are the kinds of difficulties real people have—the more so when conditions are in a state of flux or growth and when the people are vying for the power to make important decisions. As Seth Fisher said at the Tuesday meeting in the SUB theatre, these problems are not unique to the sociology department. It happened three years ago in the philosophy department, more quietly a month ago in the political science department.

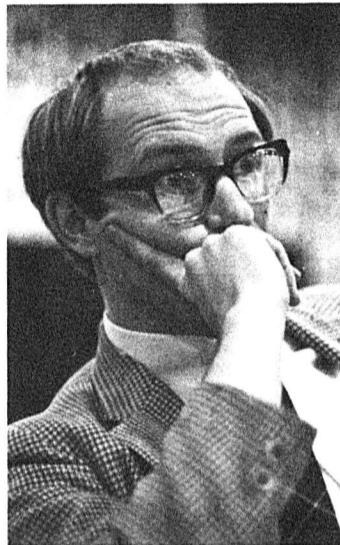
Most people seem to feel

that the sociology department faculty should have kept things quiet—but why? These personal conflicts, conspiracies, anxieties, and misunderstandings are very much a part of the decision-making processes which we students want to participate in. It is understandable that we should have an idealized vision of the faculty as super-humans above engaging in the pettiness of us mortals; that's the impression we've been given since we first became students. But now that the cat's out of the bag, now that we see that sociology professors are really not able to be any more "objective" in their analysis of social events than anybody else, we should be mature enough to learn from this revelation rather than fleeing from it.

If nothing else, the situation in the sociology department does give the lie to any argument that students are not mature enough to run the university.

There are other lessons to be learned from the sociology affair, but before discussing these I should make clear my own stands on the issue, for I cannot claim to be any more objective than anyone else.

I agree with the six staff who walked out of the Nov. 18 meeting of the faculty that the procedure employed by the



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majority of the staff was legally correct but morally wrong.

Suppose the 90 per cent of Americans who are white were to disenfranchise the American Negroes by majority vote. Leaving constitutional questions aside, there is no constitution in the sociology department—it would not be morally right for the American majority to take away the Negro vote no matter how legally correct such an action was.

I agree with what appears to be a majority of the gradu-

ate students in the sociology department that the faculty acted in bad faith by not telling us at the Nov. 16 meeting about the plans—no matter how tentative—for dissolving the structure we were proposing to join. Hence, I joined with the majority of graduate students in voting against our accepting two seats on the new "executive committee".

Given this perspective, I have learned the following from the events.

1. In this kind of situation the faculty lose the most and the undergraduates gain the most—at least in the short term. The faculty suffer by humiliating themselves as a collectivity, the undergraduates gain by finding out, as one girl in Tuesday's meeting eloquently testified, that the staff do not know it all. The undergraduates have also gained by having found a focus for their (until now) haphazard attempts at organization on the departmental level.

2. The radicals should be more careful about taking up causes on behalf of people who don't want their help. To the extent that the Friday march was in support of the sociology graduate students, it was a mistake not to confront us as a group. I am in complete sympathy with the graduates who are indignant about this

march insofar as they were its purpose.

3. The previous point notwithstanding, I have to conclude that radical action did serve to ensure that the issue was not buried as a "fait accompli". The Friday march and Tuesday's meeting did mark the beginning of undergraduate involvement in what most faculty, and now many graduate students, would like to call "an internal matter".

4. Many people—especially faculty—see radical student movements as grand conspiracies in which a "hard-core" few manipulate other students. This was apparently the feeling in the political science department last month and has been said often in the sociology department in the last few weeks.

Such a view, in my opinion, indicates a basic lack of respect for students as a whole. Obviously there are student leaders, but these people are only leaders to the extent that they articulate the feelings of the majority—George Homans, a revered sociologist, said that; so do all the introductory textbooks in sociology.

5. To be involved in issues like this is not fun for anybody. It is emotionally draining, and it becomes tempting to walk away from it all. I hope I avoid this temptation.

## All about something called "Eff dot dot dot"

The Editor,

Sir, as the (self-elected) president of NASA (the Non-Association for Student Apathy), I feel it is my duty to take you to task over the general tone exhibited by your publication during the last two weeks. Do you realize that during this period of time, you have allowed no less than THREE articles which could almost be defined as controversial, slip through your scrutiny and into publication?

Have you the faintest idea of the havoc these could create if this type of material got into the wrong hands? Think of all those innocent blank young minds, the concrete yet only half set, avidly devouring these abominations. How can you possibly justify this to yourself? How can you set yourself above the originator of such a magnificent concept as the Great Apathetic Society with its constituent parts; the Patriotic Soldier, the Company Man, the Rat Race, the Sur-Tax, the General Council and the Examination.

All of these truly great ideas depend for their very existence upon a plentiful supply of the Non-Thinking Man (HOMO CERIBUS STAGNUS). Indeed this institution and other factories like it were set upon this earth with just this purpose in mind—and now you are trying to destroy all this.

Who do you think you are—De Gaulle?

I shall digress for a moment to illustrate the foulness which you are releasing upon the world. On Friday, in answer to the almost

unbelievable rumor that the word "EFF DOT DOT DOT" had appeared in an article in The Gateway, I assigned a trusted underling to investigate. He phoned back almost immediately and in a voice ringing with horror informed me that although misspelled as "EFF DOT DOT DOT DOT", the WORD did indeed appear. I asked him if he felt able to press on to see if the blasphemy was repeated. Little did I realize the inequity with which I was dealing. It was not until much later that I heard the full story. The brave fool had pressed on even after finding a second appearance. He finally collapsed m u m b l i n g something which sounded like "ate". He was rushed to hospital, but upon arrival, was judged beyond redemption and shot forthwith.

Let this stand as a lesson for all!

It is obvious, due to the low fatality rate amongst students, that most are sticking to the straight Apathy Line and not reading The Gateway. However, we must be prepared! Who knows when some Gateway, carried for show, might not be carelessly tossed away, to fall open at this infamous article. There it would lie in ambush, awaiting the approach of the next tender, unawakened mind.

We must protect our undergrads!

Therefore, I appeal to you to check all your copy more carefully before releasing it upon your unsuspecting public.

S. Ransom  
grad studies

## This is page FIVE

One more issue to quitting time.

The incidents and events in the sociology department have been the major topic of conversation on campus this week and part of last week. We hope nothing happens after Wednesday because we won't be able to cover the events. The Gateway, after New Years, will publish just twice weekly—Tuesday and Thursday with the Casserole included in Thursday's paper.

Peter Boothroyd, our reliable weekly columnist is a grad student in sociology. He writes this week about the events within the department and concentrates on their interpretation—not a rehash of the same old stuff.

Letters concern the sociology situation, our dirty little words that appear disguised as EFF DOT DOT DOT and manipulation of sorts.

Watch Friday's paper for an analysis of the Alberta student and his university which was written by a Simon Fraserite who once lived in this province. It's a hilarious piece.

So, bubbye for about five weeks.

—The Editor

## About sociology

The Editor,

It is time somebody recognized the naming of a (five-man) Faculty Executive Committee for the political tactic that it is: an attempt to resist any meaningful participation of students in the decision-making process!

Suppose students have been demanding 35 per cent representation on the decision-making body of a particular department.

Suppose the decision-making structure allows all the staff members to vote.

In many departments, the students' votes—added to the votes of those staff members who support them—will make roughly equal the voting power of the two views of the learning process that I call the faculty-authoritarian view, and the student-participation view.

This is, of course, unacceptable to the authoritarians.

If you are an authoritarian, how do you avert this disaster? By presenting a petition to name

a super-committee composed of four members plus a chairman. Since at present you (the authoritarians) constitute a majority of the body who will elect this committee, you can elect all five members from among those whose views you support.

This five-man committee, composed solely of authoritarians, can then appear most benevolent and invite 35 per cent student participation (two votes). Or it can even appear extremely benevolent and invite 50 per cent representation (four votes).

It can afford thus to be benevolent because even on such a basis, the authoritarians preserve their control of the decision-making apparatus (the chairman casts the deciding vote in the case of a tie). Under the original system they would be in danger of losing control—if the staff who supported student demands were allowed to vote at full departmental meetings.

Doug Mustard

## Students are manipulated

The Editor,

Although I am in favor of the idea of "student power" and that change is needed in the university system, I am certainly opposed to the brand of student power being advocated by the various self-styled radicals (both faculty and student) who inhabit this and other university campuses.

It is obvious students are being manipulated in order to further the ideology of a small group of their professors. It is indeed a power play, and the average

student is being duped in the name of "representation", "democratic procedure", and the like.

I was pleased to see at Thursday's Teach-In a few students who had guts enough to speak out against the hypnotising, eloquent, emotion-charged words of Ken Mills. Unless more of the student body and the administration wake up to what is going on at this university, we shall be faced with the dictatorial chaos infesting Simon Fraser.

Marshall Fisk,  
grad studies