

# Protestors right, but still guilty

**MONTREAL (CUP)**— Six protestors arrested in a sit-in last October are guilty of public mischief though their cause, supporting the prison hunger strike of Vancouver Five member Doug Stewart, was just, a municipal court judge has ruled.

The six, arrested in the solicitor-general's Montreal office, conducted their own defence, saying that if they had not protested, Stewart would have died in Archambault prison, north of Montreal.

Stewart had refused to eat in protest of being transferred without warning from a B.C. jail to Archambault, where he was unable to communicate because

he cannot speak French.

"There was no way we were going to let Doug die," said Patricia Moore, one of the defendants. As evidence she cited medical reports that Stewart was in "grave danger of suffering irreversible damage to his health—even death" if he did not end his hunger strike.

Windi Earthworm, a West coast singer called as a witness, said since demonstrations in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and London, England in support of Stewart had not resulted in any arrests, there was no reason to proceed with charges brought by the "avocados of the crown" in Montreal. (Lawyer is "avocat" in French).

Judge Leger ruled that he was able to consider only the facts in cases before him, not motives, and that the sit-in by definition was an act of public mischief.

Still, Leger said, "I am convinced by your arguments here today that your motives were sincere and honourable. Even, I would say, just."

He fined each of the six \$50, with three months to pay.

Stewart was transferred to Kent penitentiary in B.C. at the end of November after solicitor-general Elmer McKay acknowledged that "all the precise, required steps" were not followed when the prisoner was moved to Montreal.



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# Universities face aging professors

**MONTREAL (CUP)**—By the year 2005, the average university professor will be well into his or her sixties and rounding out a 30 to 40 year teaching career.

There is no compulsory retirement age for university teachers in Quebec or Manitoba, and on April 17, when Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms comes into force, professors in all provinces might not be obliged to retire.

"It's a law that's pertinent to universities because university professors tend to want to go on whereas others leap at the opportunity of going on retirement," said John Hill, president of Concordia University's faculty association.

In New Brunswick, a case involving a University of New Brunswick professor over whether the provincial human rights code prohibits mandatory retirement is now before the courts. The professor is arguing that a clause in the code forbidding age discrimination outlaws the practice of removing elderly professors.

The Charter's effect on compulsory retirement will also be decided by court cases launched after April 17. But according to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the results may not be known for up to a year.

In the late 60s and early 70s, nearly every university and college in North America hired a huge glut of professors. To meet the educational demands of the baby boomers, a whole generation of post-graduate students were lifted from the library or lab and installed in the ivory towers. Here they stay, happily ensconced and cosily tenured for the remainder of the century.

Universities are now worried that hiring freezes caused by the declining population and funding cutbacks will keep new talent out of universities and cause intellectual stagnation.

"You are effectively throwing out huge piles of talent," said McGill sociology professor Richard Mailton. "It either goes to the private sector or it's just wasted."

Hamilton said students will inevitably begin to steer away from graduate and post-graduate work unless it is directly job-related.

"All universities are worried about the stagnation that might set in as professors grow older," said Sheila Sheldon-Collyer, McGill University secretary of senate.

McGill recently allotted money to the physics department to hire two additional professors, to add some fresh blood to a department which had not hired a professor in 15 years.

Hamilton said the best policy would be "continuous small quantity of hiring every single year." But there is little new

hiring, insignificant turnover and no money to encourage either of these.

As it stands, come the early 21st century, the professors will retire en masse and the whole cycle will begin once again. A massive wave of hiring will be followed by a hiring freeze, and eventually mass retirement again.

At McGill, some attractive early retirement packages have been worked out to cut down on elderly scholars, but their effect has been minimal.

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