

THIEVES' CARNIVAL

by Jean Anouilh

Performed by York University Players



Production directed by Nicholas Ayre

Costume design: Richard Bannigan

Scenic design: Emil Telzyn

Nov. 24, 25, 26,

at

BURTON

8.30 p.m.

Student Power Or DO NOT Mutilate Fold Or Spindle

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by Don Colborne

STUDENT POWER

Five years ago so-called student activists were crusading south in aid of the civil rights cause.

Two years ago they marched against the war in Vietnam.

Today the fight is closer to home in fact it is home in the offices and lecture rooms of every university. The cry among the "20 per cent...who do most of the writing, talking, agitating, and creative work" (if MacLeans is to be believed) is now for "student power"; a catch-phrase not as frightening as it might sound, but with important implications for the future of Canadian education.

It is not difficult to hypothesize why this change has taken place. The civil rights movement is dead and the message from black leaders is "Clean up your own house baby- or we'll burn it." The Vietnam cause continues, but despite its new respectability it has had no clear result- and students are impatient people. Perhaps the implication of relative failures is that sincere effort against a rotten situation is not enough, and that there is too much underlying rot which must first be got at that has moved the student to "clean up his own house." That is merely a guess- but a popular one.

The fact is that from Memorial to University of Victoria the revolution has come home.

QUIET GENERATION SETTLED

The movement's key, as stated, is "student power." Or more delicately, student representation on the governing boards of universities. This demand is clearly a manifestation of the more aware and more involved spirit which the frightening social and political situations of the sixties has forced upon students. The "quiet generation" of the fifties

are now in comfortable junior management, while the very noisy (but still a minority) bunch of 1967 is demanding more control in society and certainly more control over their own lives.

Involvement in the control (or destruction) of the immediate environment, the university, is the obvious first step.

Student complaints are well known: hundreds of students per lecture, professors heard but never spoken to, and course cards not to be folded, spindled or mutilated. They claim, and in several cases have demonstrated, that a dog can be enrolled, successfully complete courses and graduate, without any trouble whatsoever- just good friends. They denounce the "knowledge factory" dedicated to the processing of technicians and the proliferation of flaccid middle-class propaganda.

Their more profound arguments are that an automated, cybernetic society no longer needs to turn out finely-honed technicians but should create a truly "liberal man" of the sort Newton called for a century ago- a man who can remain a human despite potentially stultifying leisure, the machinations of a computerized corporate society, and cries for help from the "third world."

FREEDOM TO LEARN

They demand lernfreiheit (freedom to determine, at least in part, what they wish to learn) to compliment the "lehrfreiheit" (freedom of professors to teach what and how they please) which has largely been won by faculty. They condemn grading and lock-step advancement as services provided as conveniences to the corporations. They recognize the damage done in the name of "public image" and "fund raising." They tell administrations that their functions are strictly janitorial and secretarial and to kindly keep the hell out of academic matters. They look to Europe, and the healthy communities of scholars which are its universities, for example and inspiration.

The more sophisticated criticisms that curricula are abstract and static, that the dis-

ciplines are inward and academic, and that imagination, creativity and spontaneity are either discouraged or actively destroyed, often come from the junior faculty.

STATUS QUO SAVED

Reaction from supporters of the University status quo (usually composed of some faculty, the administration, the government, the press, and the public) adhere to the view of Clark Kerr (President of Berkeley during its famous rebellion in 1964) that the modern university "is an imperative rather than a reasoned choice among elegant alternatives."

They point to the proliferation of education and claim that it is functionally impossible to achieve much more, and that certain sacrifices must be made to demands put on the university by its "many publics." When pressed they fall back to the pragmatic arguments of Sydney Hook who states, rather paternally, that "academic freedom exists primarily for teachers...students have a right to freedom to learn"; or they assert Flexner's argument which boils down to a glorification of post-graduate and research work at the expense of the undergraduates.

At root the status quo claims that whatever the shortcomings

the university must and does reflect the society which supports it. The students concede that but return with the valid claim that society is rotten and that if anything is to initiate change, it must be the university.

These then are the keys to the problem: students fighting alienation, impersonality, and paternalism, the status quo defending what they claim is merely expedient.

Student awards: that LOAN can be revised for all students

"I come from a family of five children, have worked nine months, but didn't get a cent from the Ontario Student Awards Program. Why? Because according to the government my parents can afford to send me to university. That doesn't mean they will choose to afford it."

That was a bitter York student.

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"The Ontario Student Awards Program has been developed to ensure that every person with the ability and the desire to pursue a program of education beyond the secondary school level will have sufficient funds to meet the costs of such an undertaking."

That was the government brochure on SAP.

Why the discrepancy between theory and practice?

The main problem is independent status. In some cases, parents refuse to support their children at university either for personal reasons or because they feel they cannot afford it.

How do you get independent status in these cases?

D.A. Carson, York's director of student awards, says you can get it with "sufficient justification."

To obtain this, parents and students must go through an intensive investigation requiring interviews with university officials and perhaps an affidavit from the parents stating their refusal of support. But Mr. Carson says complete refusal of support is rare.

Another way of security independent status is to prove you have held a full-time job for 12 months.

Is this rule hard and fast? Mr. Carson smiled. "It's not absolutely rigid - we'll let you by with 363 days."

What about loopholes in the program such as the standard savings requirement from summer work, and the fact that on the application form parents must list only their salary, when their total assets may be swelled by bonds, stocks, and investments.

One student may earn well over \$2,000 during the summer, while another may have earned \$300. Both are expected to have saved \$500.

If a student feels he has not earned the \$500, he can appeal the initial loan received and the Student Awards office can recommend an adjustment.

Mr. Carson says the standard savings figure was scaled on the basis of the student's geographical district, course (arts students are expected to earn less than engineering students), and years of university completed.

"Any scale is worked out for the average student, but there are always exceptions and this is where the problems arise."

As far as people with large assets are concerned, the plan was not aimed at them. The government felt their children would not be applying for assistance.

Mr. Carson feels that students do not plan their calendar year so that they can save and spend properly. Too many, he says, think they can fall back on someone or something if they get into a tight situation.

His solution? "Drink Molson's Canadian while you go to school, Canadian Club when you graduate."