

THE

CLIQUE

This article is dedicated to the Student Council who have your interests at the heart of all their decisions. No danger of any radicalism, liberalism, socialism when we are in their hands. The proof of their concern can be tasted in their Oct. 23, 1968 meeting.

Their agenda consisted for the most part in the passing of budgets and the allocation of various student union moneys. Their efficiency in this realm has been uniquely ruthless.

Then the student council decided, despite one council members objection, to enter into a committee of the whole to hear that radical unstable and disrupter of the true, the good and the beautiful, Mr. Terence A. McGarragle.

He made a number of suggestions: an invitation to the council to send two observers (not including himself) to the Student Christian Movement (S.C.M.) conference in Fredericton, N.B. the weekend of Oct. 25-27. He also felt that the council should bring in some speakers on different subjects relating to student and university interests. To this end he suggested bringing in Andy Wernick, a Cambridge M.A. Graduate in Economics and Sociology and presently on a Commonwealth scholarship at the U. of T. to speak on Student Power. Alas, the motion was tabled pending investigation of the said individual. After all, they have to safeguard the delicate minds of the students.

The third suggestion, a resolution concerned the International Day of Protest Oct. 26, 1968. It condemned, among many things, the American involvement in Vietnam, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the genocide in Biafra on such tenuous grounds as national self-determination and human rights (as outlined in the U.N. Charter). It spoke of christian concern for mankind and asserted that when such violations happen, we leave open to question by those oppressed, the legitimate, humanitarian, and freedom-loving qualities we tend to associate with democratic government.

Mr. Sauvé, Treasurer, could be heard first, decisively interrupting the speech, demanding to know how much of the Council's money was in-

involved. "None" was the answer. Mr. Sauvé slinked back sadly disillusioned. Despite the interruption the S.C.M. invitation was accepted by council. They permitted two members to attend the conference with all costs paid by the council. But the car that was supposed to take them wasn't available. Did they try any alternative means of transportation? Heavens no? It surely can't be too important.

The protest resolution met a fatal accident at that meeting. One member of the council felt that it wasn't feasible (despite the fact that they had two and a half days to organize it, whereas the class boycott last year had only a few hours). Another member claimed it might be misinterpreted. Alas, such reasoning would never lead anyone to offer informed opinions or expound foreign policies. Even Mr. Griffith's question (who incidentally appears to have his foot in all student administrative bodies) as to what the proposal hoped to achieve, revealed a lack of awareness of insight into the purpose of a protest. Did he expect a quantitative or qualitative result? Did he believe that we could change the foreign policy of Canada by our protest march? Or, was he interested in the community of awareness of such problems?

The council of course, was not to be shown up for their indifferent stand. They jumped on the bandwagon when Dave MacDonald, Conservative MP for Egmont Riding, stuck his neck out and challenged the present government stand on the issue of Biafra. Now, they committed themselves to help the Biafrans in the charity drive on Nov. 13. Nevertheless, they didn't consider the resolution worthy of further comment, let alone the organization of a protest march. They apparently didn't feel that it was the role of the educated to inform those not fortunate enough to have access to the details of such issues. They did not want to climb down from their ivory tower and stand in judgment on such moral issues. Such was the neutral position of the Apostles of Mediocrity.

Again Mr. Sauvé climbed on his high horse. This time, however, his rational side prevailed. He suggested we amortize the annual payments

of principal on the Coffee Shoppe. This would have left about eight or nine thousand dollars available to the Student Union funds. However, council explicitly stated that the money was to go to the students (for the benefits of all the students), not to the societies' budgets. Since when have the societies not existed for all the students.

Such reasoning appears to be, at best, illogical and prejudiced. For the budgets were sliced drastically because of lack of funds. Now that the funds could be forthcoming, it would seem appropriate to re-assess their budgets. In any case money was certainly plentiful when the council gave the executive a 100% increase in salaries. It appears they exercise only a one-sided type of generosity.

The Red and White, for example, is a society deprived of adequate funds. By cutting the budget in half, council has exerted pressure which amounts to a subtle form of censorship. Now, the R & W will be the only newspaper in the Canadian University Press association to publish less than five issues per term. So, the S.D.U.S.C. has effectively stunted the only vehicle capable of legitimately criticizing the council's decisions or its dictatorial demands. One owes much to such shrewd, guileful tactics as those employed by the Student Council.

What can be said to epitomize the position or state of the council? Have the class or society representatives on council attempted to get a cross-section of opinion of their respective groups before voting on issues before council? Has council sought to inform students concerning the talks of the College Planning Committee, the joint S.D.U. - P.W.C. student council meeting results, or the minutes of the senate on which we have a representative. Their lack of communication of such information lends a suspicious air to council's proceedings. Moreover, their role has become one of a financing nature — allocating funds rather sparingly to all others but themselves. Thus the council, with its authoritarian behaviour, intoxicated by the power it exercises, has become, in essence, a smug minority.

But how could this clique become relevant to the students if they should so desire.

Firstly, council members must involve themselves in the theory and practice of university education. Societies, for example help further student education in their respective fields. Consequently, council should make every effort to allot a sufficient amount of money to insure that the societies operate effectively. This has not been done in many cases up to now. Also council must go beyond such action and propose positive involvement in education. The Student Council should be sponsoring questionnaires and projects (alloting a certain sum of money to researchers - students - as the government does when sponsoring a Royal Commission) for interested students and committing themselves to accepting the recommendations of such investigations. It should even be bringing in various speakers with viewpoints different from its own, to give the students new perspectives on problems associated with functions in a university.

The members should be continually re-examining the structure of the student council, decentralizing its influence and power in the student community. They should be creating a climate of questioning and openness by making known various results of conferences and meetings etc. and by relinquishing some of council's power through the opening of student council meetings to allow students attending the meetings to speak on subjects on the agenda. Furthermore by giving the students in attendance some measure of voting power, council might attract a large number of students and create an interest in student council meetings never before displayed. Then it might become relevant. Then, a new light in the history of student affairs will shine revealing a more democratically based student council.



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