

EXTRA

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WATERLOO LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

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CORD ENQUIRY

A professor has been dismissed from our university.

The right of the university to take this action is not being questioned; a much more significant issue lies beyond the incident. Acting President Endress has stated to the press that the professor's dismissal resulted because "he is not in agreement with what we stand for, or what we are doing." (Globe & Mail, January 13, p. 4.) And Dr. Endress has cited the professor's article in our own newspaper (November 24, "Clerks or Intellectuals") as proof. But concurrence with his views should not matter. The issue is whether a university professor can publicly express his opinions without fear of recrimination. Personality must not be involved because freedoms are not granted on subjective judgements. Since Dr. Endress himself accepts the professor's academic competence, there is a serious question of academic freedom to be resolved.

Freedom

What is academic freedom? It seems to be the issue involved, but it has not yet been defined.

It involves students and scholars meeting for free discussion of knowledge and ideas. It requires that this discussion not be constricted or denied.

The essential purpose of a university is the search for and dissemination of knowledge. This search requires academic freedom and its denial denies the purpose of a university.

According to David Fellman, President of the American Association of University Professors:

"Without freedom to explore and criticize existing institutions, to exchange ideas and to advocate solutions to human problems, faculty members and students cannot perform this work, cannot maintain their self-respect."

Most occupations are largely independent of their thought and speech. A professor's work CONSISTS of his thought and speech. As Fellman says, he is "professionally committed to raising questions about accepted ideas and institutions." Restrictions on the freedom to carry out this commitment are incompatible with a professor's role.

David Soberman, of the Faculty of Law at Queens University, feels "if he loses his position for what he writes and says, he will, as a rule, have to leave his profession".

Academic freedom is not something which can be denied a professor at one university and found by him at another. It either exists or it does not.

Yet the issue of academic freedom is still broader. It affects not only the professors involved but the whole university. Soberman says that "the effect on many other professors will be such that their usefulness to their students and to society will be gravely reduced". One professor cannot be denied the right to criticize without all professors being affected. The American Association of University Professors says that "the existence of academic freedom is in our judgment absolutely indispensable in any educational institution which wants to be taken seriously".

Many may feel that such freedom may exist, but that it does not extend beyond the classroom. J.B. Milner, chairman of the CAUT Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure feels differently. "Clearly academic freedom can thrive only where criticism thrives and it is reasonable that criticism should be directed to the university community itself as freely as to the subjects being studied or taught."

Professors, they feel, are not merely employees of an administration, but the most essential part of a university. As such, they have the responsibility to criticize the university and to help maintain it as a credible institution. Self-criticism is a duty owed by the university community to the wider community it serves. As the CAUT points out, "incompatibility" is not a valid reason for dismissal. It restricts the freedom of a professor to criticize and deal with problems. It reflects on the entire academic community. It reflects on the entire university.

"Without academic freedom our colleges and universities would suffocate."

Relevance

What is the relevance of academic freedom to the function of this university? If the essential purpose of the university is to nurture conformity, then perhaps it is acceptable to make academic activity an appendage to administrative machinery. But, if this university is to provide an environment for intellectual pursuits, then the freedom to examine and to criticize existing institutions, cannot be subordinated to administrative expediency.

WHICH DO YOU WANT?



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ACADEMIC FREEDOM, OR..... Responsibility

It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies. That may seem like a truism, but since you are the future leaders of Canada -- less than one-tenth of Canadians gain a university education; and only a fraction of those are involved in the humanities and social sciences -- you must carefully consider your responsibility.

You have been told by your university president that a man was dismissed because he was "unhappy". Can you accept this as the truth? If you can't accept the implied argument that our university hires and fires on the basis of happiness, why, you must ask yourself, was this said? What does it hide? Is it that the professor's views on so-

cialism, Zionism, Marxism, the Arabs or perhaps his "objectionable" personality, lie underneath? The president himself says that he was "a fine teacher". Can you accept this intimidation that will remain until you know

which considerations are strictural?

Are you satisfied that students are ignored in a case such as this, when the direction of university affairs here, and even more so on other campuses in Canada,

has been towards accepting the role of students in decision making and listening to them as citizens?

You have been told that Students' Council, the popularly elected, duly accredited body "doesn't represent the students", by the President of your university, who has accepted their claim to representation until his last decision. Can you accept his arbitrary and incomprehensible statements to the press?

The majority of you will become teachers.

Some of you will have ideas and activities unpopular to the establishment, and some of you will be censured for these. What will you do then? What would you have others do? What is your responsibility?

You are encouraged to attend the public ENQUIRY, Wednesday, January 17, 10:30 a.m. in the foyer of the Arts Building. Parties involved - administration representatives, Dr. Haggar and others - will be challenged on their respective positions. Prepare your questions; listen carefully. You can aid in determining whether there has been a breach of academic freedom.

..... INSTITUTIONAL CONFORMITY



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