

# Curtain Call

## Theatre Freedom and Academic Rights in Conflict

The "Third Stream Theatre" played its entire run last weekend before small audiences of carefully screened patrons while the writers and producers declared they had been censored. Howard Richardson, the faculty member who ordered the production cancellation just ten hours before it was scheduled to open, admits that his action was partially censorship but declares that the deciding factor in his decision was the quality, not content, of production. Even if Mr. Richardson's act in cancelling the plays can be justified, a hazy problem at best, he deserves some criticism for waiting until virtually the last minute to voice his dissatisfaction with the production.

The "Third Stream Theater" was one of the student productions offered as a classroom project in a course of play production. The plays produced were selected by class participants from scripts written by students and placed on reserve in the library during winter term by Mr. Richardson. Both Mr. Richardson and students participating in the seminar had been aware of the content of the plays for some time and the plays had been in production since the beginning of spring term. Cancelling the show on the performance and without previous warning that the quality of rehearsals was not coming up to expectations is unfair to all those connected

with the production.

Mr. Richardson seems to have had trouble deciding whether the seminar was to be run like a class or on a professional theatrical basis. He observed the professional custom of not attending rehearsals unless invited by the producer or author and yet exercised his authority as a professor in cancelling the performance. He expected professional production quality and yet exercised his academic right as a professor when this quality was not forthcoming. The plays were not pornographic as some rumors circulating last week stated. One play, perhaps the most questionable of the three, had been produced in Portland earlier in the year and so was not unquestionably in bad taste.

While Mr. Richardson's decision is not indefensible, his timing in deciding to stop the productions was inconsiderate of the students involved and not above reproach within the tradition of the free theater. We cannot condemn the professor nor support the student complaint without reservations. The theater seminar is an experiment this year. If it is continued, a definite procedure for faculty evaluation of production standards and for the faculty's role in censoring the plays should be established with the consent of both students and professors before work on the plays begins.

# The Lemmings

The extensive apartment house construction currently under way around the campus is indicative of a trend in student life which has become more prevalent, off-campus quarters. Students have apparently become dissatisfied with group living units or can no longer afford them and are seeking other abodes.

Vernon Barkhurst, director of admissions, reports total admission activity for fall term next year is up 13.7 per cent from last year at the same time. The number of applications for dormitories, however, had shown a 25 per cent decrease as of May 18 during the same period. The decrease in the number of women applying for dormitory rooms is particularly notable, about 33 per cent as compared to 16 per cent for men.

While the percentage of students living in University on-campus housing has decreased in recent years, the off-campus sector has grown. During fall term 1963, 3,085 students lived in either private units or at home. Married students accounted for another 2,018, bringing the total off-campus students to well over half the student population.

Several reasons are behind this emigration from the dormitories, co-ops, and Greek houses. One is the decision made last year to eliminate the apartment rule,

and to allow all women students except freshmen to live off-campus. Administrative postponement of more liberal women's closing hours was also no encouragement for some students to remain in the regulated living units.

The dormitories are not the only living groups discovering empty rooms. The percentage of Greeks living in houses has declined, and one fraternity house on campus with a capacity of 50 men is presently housing fewer than 10.

With an anticipated enrollment of 10,525 for fall term, the University should have little difficulty filling the dormitories. But, while the application figures are still only incomplete, barometers of the final results, the decreases do indicate that fewer students are interested in dormitory living. This is most true in the upperclass dorms, the residents of which are not required to live in on-campus housing.

Students are notorious for their dislike of compulsory meetings and social functions and for their antipathy toward regulations of any type. The less control the better they cry with anarchist tones. Maybe the move from the dorms is an escape from the rules, the courts, the counselors and, partly, from the University. But whatever the reason, the off-campus students are becoming an increasingly larger sector of the campus population.

# Letters to the Editor

### Theatrical Performance

**Emerald Editor:**  
As if enough damage had not been done to *Thirdstream Theatre*, the production of three one-act plays closed to the public by Dr. Howard Richardson, Dr. Richardson descended *deus ex machina* into the middle of *Thirdstream's* performance before an invited audience Saturday evening to deliver an explanation of his censorial action. Richardson reiterated his claim that the plays were infer-

ior productions and did not merit public viewing.

Dr. Richardson's address represented a gross discourtesy to the members of *Thirdstream's* staff. To take the stage and criticize a production to its audience is not only rude but unfair, since the critic's remarks could easily color audience reaction to the drama. As a professional playwright, Dr. Richardson must have been aware that his speech constituted a breach of theatrical ethics. Yet

he persisted.

Along with other members of the production, my first reaction to Dr. Richardson's address was anger, for had his remarks been successful the production might have been sabotaged. As it turned out, however, should *Thirdstream* have another performance of its evening of absurd theatre I shall urge the producer to book Dr. Richardson for the finale.

**Robert LaRue**  
Instructor, English

# Herblock



## From Another Campus

# Utah Teachers' Dilemma

The following is an editorial reprinted from the *Daily Utah Chronicle* during the recent teachers' strike in that state. Teachers in the Utah public schools walked off their jobs in protest against Utah Governor Clyde who refused to call a special meeting of the state legislature to review education's financial situation. The governor had promised earlier to call the meeting if it were deemed necessary.

The Utah education controversy has raised some interesting concepts and philosophies regarding the nature of the relationship between the State as employer and teachers as employees.

The biggest question — and what seems to be at the crux of the issue — is: how much of a public trust is education, and where do employees take their grievances when they feel they are not working under satisfactory conditions?

The Constitution of course leaves education up to the states. Thus the peoples of those states become the employers of teachers and are the ultimate determiners of salaries, building construction, etc. A strike is then a strike against the peoples of the state for higher wages, better conditions, or whatever, and technically no different than a bus or plane or train strike.

But the problem legally and morally becomes increasingly complex when one looks at the particular problem: these are teachers, not truck drivers nor doctors on strike. The State of Utah is the employer, not Union Pacific or New York newspaper corporations.

Every two years our legislature meets to consider the education appropriation. It is of course never adequate, and probably never will be, but it is a decision made by duly elected legislators — representatives of the people. The conservatives' stand, represented adamantly, but not articulately by Gov. Clyde, is that if teachers want more money, they should take it to the people this summer and next fall and then to the next legislative session in January.

The Utah Education Association, prodded on by the dynamic and quite articulate John Evans, believes that Utah's representatives have not been fulfilling their obligations to the people for better education of the citizenry. Teachers, says the UEA, have been continually put down by the Governor in attempts for a special session of the legislature. The breaking straw came when Clyde refused to follow the suggestions made by a com-

mittee he himself formed.

Thus the very complex question regarding the concept of the State as an employer is raised: should the teachers wait for the next legislature and achieve their gains by lobbying, buttonholing legislators, and other so-called "democratic" methods, or should teachers strike against the legislature — or the people — for another session and better conditions?

The teacher's moral issue has been raised, we are well aware of traditional image of teachers as "true public servants and protectors of the American way of life and instillers of knowledge and citizenship in the nations children."

The "Salt Lake Tribune," for example, has made a great deal out of the teacher's "responsibility to children," and how it is immoral to strike in this "crucial" period during the last two weeks of school. Observations are made by others of the subsequent recklessness of the children when their teachers don't show up for class.

We cannot help but wonder, however, whether this sort of activity is the result of a parental omission or commission, rather than the mere absence of teachers.

If the question is a moral one, one centering around responsibility to the children of our state, then it would seem that the people, the legislature, and possibly the governor are the immoral persons — not the teachers. They did not strike after all merely for higher wages for themselves, but "better educational facilities" for Utah children. The walkout was a protest against a stubborn, conservative governor who has stuck to his "principles" of "lawful" methods of obtaining more money for education not by "threats" to the people of Utah.

The teachers have thus sounded the trumpet, aroused many Utahns from their usual apathy. Perhaps they have threatened the legislature — but then, who doesn't?

Teachers across the nation  
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