

SCHIFF GETS LEGAL AID FROM A C L U L O G O S

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WHY CAN'T THE ADMINISTRATION TOLERATE PAUL SCHIFF?

"WE ARE SO GRY TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR READMISSION HAS BEEN DENIED" read the letter to Paul Schiff, editor of LOGOS. According to Vice-President Fuzak: "Schiff acted to disrupt the organization of the University..He urged the violation of University regulations in LOGOS..The decision against readmitting Schiff was not based on any single incident, but upon a pattern of disruptive behavior" (State News, July 1).

THE INDICTMENT: How did Schiff act "to disrupt the organization of the University?" In fact, what does it mean to disrupt the organization of the University? Did Schiff prevent any classes from being held, or stop anyone from using the facilities? Or did he commit the more heinous crime of interfering with "the administration" of the University, (whatever that might mean)? Did he yell "fire" in the auditorium? or lead a sit-in on the basketball court? If administrators at MSU are going to take action against students for "disrupting the organization of the University," just exactly what does this mean?

JUSTICE MSU-STYLE: Students at MSU are deprived of most of the constitutional freedoms they have long been taught to cherish. The Schiff Case is just a good example of this:

TRIAL BY FIAT: Schiff was told of a decision not to readmit him, not advised of charges brought against him. When he requested a hearing before the Faculty Committee on Student Affairs, it was denied by Fuzak. When Schiff made the same request of Professor Titkemeyer, chairman of the committee, he was told that the committee has only "advisory" power, and that such a hearing would be futile.

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS -- THE MAZE CRAZE: What did Schiff actually do "wrong?" Aside from being "disruptive," he allegedly advocated "the violation of University regulations in LOGOS." In conversation with officials of the American

Civil Liberties Union, Fuzak cited the following passage from the April 23rd issue (no.5):

"IN THE INTEREST OF A FREE ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AT MSU, CSR WILL REFUSE TO RESPECT THIS REGULATION (prohibiting door-to-door distribution--ed.), AND APPEALS TO THE FACULTY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS TO RESCIND ITS DECISION BEFORE IT CAN BE IMPLIMENTED."

Does this urge students to violate the regulation, or does it express the position of the Committee for Student Rights?

Schiff has also been accused of violating this regulation, by passing out LOGOS in Case Hall on April 22. Schiff was aware that the Faculty Committee had approved the new rule, but did not interpret this to mean that it had thus become official University policy.

Schiff was not alone in his interpretation. On May 11--more than two weeks after the incident--the State News ran the following news item:

"President Joan A. Hannah approved Monday the new printed material distribution policy in a letter to the chairman of the Faculty Committee on Student Affairs.

"The proposals by the Men's Halls Association and Women's Inter-resident Hall Council can now be considered official University policy, said Charles Titkemeyer, associate professor of anatomy and committee chairman" (emphasis added).

Rather peculiar situation: The State News article makes it clear that Hannah's approval made the rule official. Yet Fuzak insists that Schiff violated the rule before Hannah approved it. Further, even though Titkemeyer regarded Hannah's approval as necessary for the rule to become University policy, Fuzak apparently believes that Schiff should

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have known the rule was official policy before Hannah approved it.

Which all goes to show that the attitude of MSU administrators is that students should intuitively know what the University thinks is right and wrong (no confusion that way). For those that don't trust their intuition, the message is:

"Do what other students do; Don't do things that 'aren't done.' And if you're not sure what 'things' we mean, we have head advisors and R.A.'s around to guide you."

In this connection it is ironic that one of President Hannah's four "fundamental beliefs" is "a recognition that... we are best served when government is by law rather than by men. Written law arrived at by the will of the majority... protects us from the jeopardy of our rights, privileges, and freedoms at the whim of one man or a group of willful men." (Not A Thing Apart: "State of the University address, Jan. 25, 1965)

Until some fundamental values like these are put into practice, the arbitrary will of administrators--not clearly established rules--will continue to govern the lives of MSU students.

We don't feel capable of fully analyzing the role of the faculty at MSU. But the Schiff Case reveals some interesting things, both negative and positive.

ADMINISTRATIVE VETO: Schiff had been admitted to the history department as a graduate student. He had previously been a graduate student in good standing in the economics department (with a minor in history). The Office of Student Affairs then refused him readmission on non-academic grounds without even bothering to notify the history department.

Non-academic criteria obviously take precedence over academic at MSU. Strange situation for the faculty to accept! The fact that the converse is true--that a person's exemplary behavior would not make up for his deficient academic status--is irrelevant. This is still a University in some respects, isn't it? And a University's raison d'etre is still academic, isn't it?

But when an administration is permitted to say that there are more important--non-academic--matters which it alone

has the right to judge, a University is in trouble: it is in conflict with its only reason for existence.

FACULTY AWAKENING: It is encouraging to see that faculty members have not lost sight of their responsibilities to students and to academic freedom on campus, despite the urgings of the administration to remain silent. Two issues of the Academic Freedom Newsletter have been distributed among faculty members. Hopefully it is here to stay and will contribute to getting more faculty to discuss issues which they have ignored too long.

The MSU chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has written a letter to President Hannah requesting that the University reconsider its action in the Schiff Case. The letter cited three reasons for the AAUP's concern: first, the administration acted unilaterally; second, the decision seems to have been predicated on very vague and arbitrary grounds; third, the publicity from this action will be damaging to the academic reputation that the University has been trying to build in the nation.

UNITE! The significance of these faculty actions should be fully understood by all students. The prevailing feeling at MSU (and for good reason) is that once the administration acts--that's it: no one cares, no one will stand up for you if you've been wronged. But when a portion of the faculty comes alive with discussion and action--"the times, they are a'changing"--for the better.

We would also stress that most of the administrative procedures and practices that are being called into question because of the refusal to readmit Schiff are very general-affecting all students, not just the political activists. It is important, now that faculty members are shedding some of their time-dishonored apathy, that more students do likewise. The future status of students at MSU will largely depend on whether students stand up for other students who have been treated unjustly.

STATE NEWS CLAIMS SCHIFF CASE IS
"TOO CONTROVERSIAL"
REFUSES TO PRINT ANY LETTERS
ON THE MATTER