

Power Tripping

The 1960s saw a radical shift in the nature of student life on campuses across Canada. *The Chevron*, the student newspaper at the University of Waterloo, is a testament to this change. Flipping through its yellowed, musty pages the reader sees a transformation of the average student at the University of Waterloo. The complacent career-minded engineer concerned primarily with grades, the lack of girls on campus and boat-racing (a relay-like beer drinking contest) dominates the early 1960s. Gradually however, the engineer is replaced by the student activist; typically an Arts student, this young man¹ questions the very nature of the education system, protests against international issues such as the Vietnam War and smokes joints in the campus centre. In just a few short years the University of Waterloo's image is transformed from that of a small engineering university, struggling to establish its reputation as a viable co-operative system, to the "Red University" where arts and engineering students attended in ever increasing numbers and protested against the establishment. These two images, however, are merely stereotypes. Student life on campus was multi-faceted and complex; there was no "average student" in the wave of rapid social change that gripped Canada in the 60s.

The Radical Student Movement came to dominate student politics and the student newspaper in the late 1960s, giving rise to the sentiment that the University of Waterloo was the hotbed of student radicalism in English-speaking Canada. The organization and operation of the RSM however, contradicts the very equality and openness that its members preached; instead the RSM had an attitude of superiority, was anti-democratic and conformist. Very quickly, the actions of the Radical Student Movement grew more confrontational and as a result the RSM became increasingly isolated from the students that it claimed to represent. The increasing radicalization of student politics throughout the late 1960s was matched by increasing anti-radical sentiment on the part of the student body. Thus, the increasingly leftist views of UW's student council and newspaper were not representative of Waterloo's students. This paper will examine the seizure of power by student activists, the organization and operation of the Radical Student Movement, and finally the anti-radical sentiment expressed by a cross-section of those students who forced the Radical Student Movement out of power.

In 1966, Waterloo students voted for their first activist president, who ran on a platform of educational reform and student power. Waterloo was not alone in its turn towards leftist student politics, but rather part of a larger student radical movement on university campuses across Canada, the United States and Europe. Student activists of the 60s generation were a product of the social and economic conditions of the 1950s. Economic affluence, the baby boom, the growing middle class and subsequent growth in the numbers of students entering post-secondary education produced a new generation of

¹ UW was a male-dominated campus in its administration, faculty and students. In 1967 for example, women made up 22% of the student population; over half of these women were in Arts; there were only 2 women engineering students out of a class of 794. As late as 1973, only 69 of 699 faculty members were female (5.3%), of those only three were professors, the other 19 were assistants. Thus, most articles in the student newspaper throughout the 1960s refer to the student as "he," "him" etc., University of Waterloo, Distribution of Total Enrollment of Undergraduate Students 1967, p. 1-4 University of Waterloo, "Report on the President's Advisory Committee on Equal Rights for Women," Supplement to the *University of Waterloo Gazette*, 21 November 1973, p. 4.

students, more populous than ever before, who took the values that their society preached literally and gained a strong sense of self-importance about their place in the world. Social activism in the Civil Rights and ban-the-bomb movements of the 1950s laid the foundation for student activism that would explode across campuses in Canada and the United States in the 1960s.²

In the 1950s many Canadian families rode the tide of economic affluence in the post World War II period. The sheer size of the growing middle class had resulted in sprawling suburbs outside of major cities; it was here that student activism was bred. The adult generation of the 1950s were born in the midst of the Great Depression, fought in World War II and were finally rewarded with a booming economy as Canadian industries came out of the war stronger than ever. Parents wanted to give their children what they never had. Children became the centre of attention in family life. Women found friendships among mothers of their children's playmates and fathers simply tagged along.³ Youth were encouraged to be creative and independent, characteristics that were viewed as essential in order to "make it" in the changing economy.

The sheer number of children born in the 1950s meant that they could no longer be ignored. The baby boom of post-war Canada created an enormous youth population, the number of births in Canada increased steadily from 228, 730 in 1945 to 405,527 in 1952.⁴ The burgeoning population and relative wealth of a new generation of youth demanded that they be recognized as a group with different tastes, ideas and social activities than the adult population.

The 1950s witnessed the first set of teenagers to have enough spending money to demand their own style of clothing, their own rock and roll music, and an entire marketing and advertising sector dedicated to promoting products strictly for them. Youth gained their own identity and with it came independence. Middle-class Canadian families allowed their sons to borrow the car so they could take their dates to the drive-in movie theatre or the A&W. These social activities bred a sense of shared identity into youth as they separated themselves from their parents. The generation gap in which the youth of the 1960s warned one another "not to trust anyone over 30" grew out of the 1950s notion of "adolescence" as separate from adulthood.⁵ This notion of adolescence came into being in part because of the peaceful, affluent nation that Canada had become in the 1950s.

Analyzing the development of student activism in Canada, a *Globe and Mail* article in 1970 proclaimed that:

This is the first generation in history which wasn't needed. These kids aren't needed for war; not in Canada, at any rate. They aren't needed for work on the farm or in the store or in the factory. Nobody can think of anything for them to do except consume (food, clothes, records, cars, drugs) and to sit around in a university or community college.⁶

². Cyril Levitt, *Children of Privilege*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON: 1984, p. 16.

³. Levitt, 16.

⁴. Levitt, 26.

⁵. Stevenson, Hugh. *The Best of Times / The Worst of Times: Contemporary Issues in Canadian Education*, Hugh A. Stevenson, Robert Stamp & Donald Wilson, eds. Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada: Toronto, 1972, p. 314.

⁶. Richard Needham, "The Unwanted Generation," *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, ON: 12 February 1970.

The 60s generation was unlike any other generation in Canada before it. Neither the government nor the economy demanded that children grow up quickly and shed their adolescence. Children were no longer required to leave school at the age of 16 in order to work on the farm, bring home factory wages for the family, or march off to war. The affluence of the Canadian economy along with the changing nature of the labour force meant that this generation of youth would be the first who were allowed to bask in the glory of being young and irresponsible.

While the young generation was spoiled, they also listened to their parents speak of the hard work that was needed to make it in the cruel, cold world. The youth of this generation largely ignored the messages that parents tagged on to the end of dinner conversations, as they simply couldn't relate to their parents' warnings. As Cyril Levitt, a prominent member of the Radical Student Movement at the University of Waterloo in the 60s reflects, activists were "children of privilege," who took for granted the world that they were born into.⁷

These children did not, however, forget the promises that were made to them by their parents, promises that if they worked hard and graduated from university the world would be their oyster. As Peter Warrian, one of the leaders of the Radical Student Movement on Waterloo campus reflected, "One of the things that we all sat through, no matter what level of cynicism we'd apply to our high school guidance teachers or sometimes our parents... was that we really counted and our ideas really counted... we were going to affect the society."⁸ Traditional and conservative notions of elitism and power stemming from an affluent childhood instilled a sense of confidence and bravado into the youth of the 1960s. Students sensed that the world would demand their services and listen to their voices, giving radical student leaders a cocky sense of self-assurance that would drive them to get their message "out there" by any means.

The promise of success was being made by hundreds of thousands of parents who raised the generation that, by the mid 1960s, would cause university populations to explode across the nation. The same technological advances that produced the A-bomb at the end of World War II were revolutionizing the Canadian economy. The demand for white-collar workers increased substantially with the growth of service industries, while the need for blue-collar workers decreased rapidly as the dependence on primary industries fell. Economists warned the Canadian government that highly educated workers would be needed to "organize, run, maintain, and supervise the processes of production."⁹ A strong message was sent to the high school students of the growing middle class that a university education was no longer a privilege but a necessity in order to be successful in the world.¹⁰

An increasing portion of middle class students began attending universities in the early 1960s. By 1961, just over 100,000 students were enrolled in undergraduate programs in Canadian universities, by 1971 that figure had quintupled. Government

⁷ Levitt, 21.

⁸ Peter Warrian, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 January 2001.

⁹ Levitt, 20.

¹⁰ Norman Sheffe, *Student Unrest*, McGraw Hill, Toronto: ON 1970.

spending on education increased from \$1.5 billion in 1961 to \$7.5 billion in 1971.¹¹ The University of Waterloo was no exception to this growth, its student population increased from 1,032 students in 1961 to 11,815 by 1970. Increasing student applications created a demand for new faculties such as Science (1959), Arts (1960), Physical Education and Recreation (1964), Environmental Studies (1969) and Integrated Studies (1969). In 1969 Arts students outnumbered engineering students on campus and this gap would continue to widen throughout the 1970s.

The increasing number of students outside of Waterloo's foundational engineering faculty provided the major source of support for the radical students on campus and injected a new sense of social-consciousness into campus life. As well, the majority of the membership in the Radical Student Movement was Arts students. It should be noted, however, that while many Arts students supported leftist politics, they did so in varying degrees and a minority were not leftist at all. Nor can all engineers on campus be categorized as conservative, as can be evidenced by radical student leaders who came from the engineering faculty. Were it not for the expansion of the campus into areas outside of engineering and mathematics, however, radical student politics would not have had the leaders, support or ideologies that rocked the University of Waterloo in the late 1960s.

While dramatic growth of the student population was mostly limited to the middle class, there was a variance in the degree of wealth in the middle class itself. In Canada between 1957 and 1968, 26.2% of all university students had fathers classified as "workers."¹² These blue-collar workers composed the lower echelons of the middle class and their children would be the first in their families to attend university. This was especially true among students at the University of Waterloo.

By 1965, the University of Waterloo was two years short of a decade since its inception and still struggling to prove to Canada's more established universities that its controversial co-operative education system was indeed a success. Students who chose the University of Waterloo, especially programs outside of engineering, knew they were also taking a risk. Arts faculty themselves were aware of the risk they were taking as they walked around the campus that looked more like a construction site. "Got to cash my pay cheque, before it bounces," was not an uncommon joke among new faculty members.¹³ However, students at the "instant" University of Waterloo did not have to live up to entrenched family traditions and did not follow in their father's footsteps as many did at older, more established universities such as the University of Toronto. Peter Warrian who would emerge as one of the strongest radical student leaders on campus described the differences between Waterloo students and those of older universities:

I was the first person in my family ever to go to university – that was quite a typical story at Waterloo. I'd say that two thirds or three quarters of the student body at Waterloo came from families that never had anybody go to university before. I think at the

¹¹. Anthony Burton, *The Horn and the Beanstalk: Problems and Possibilities in Canadian Education*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd: Toronto, 1992, p. 24.

¹². Philip Altbach, Lipset Seymour eds. *Students in Revolt*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1969, p. 102.

¹³. Chris Redmond, *Water Under the Bridge: An Unofficial History of the University of Waterloo*, University of Waterloo, 1988, p. 24

University of Toronto you'd find the reverse statistic. Going to university was a big deal, including in naïve ways, how important you were to society.¹⁴

Students headed to university with high ideals and a confidence that they could effect change. The democratic values that shaped the Western World were looked at as fundamental truths by youth of the 1960s, as Cyril Levitt explains:

As members of this relatively privileged group, students accepted the values of justice and civil equality as easily and as obviously as they accepted and expected the material comforts of life. Unlike the depression and war generations, which understood the formal character of liberal, democratic values, the new student generation believed in the substantiality of these values, not least because these values had a kind of self-evident sustainability for middle class youth.¹⁵

When students looked out into the world that they were to inherit they saw a clash between the values of equality and justice as articulated by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the ban-the-bomb movement in Canada. This hypocrisy forced the many students to call into question the promises of their parents and the leadership of their nation.¹⁶ Growing numbers of youth began to think that they had “finally caught on” to society’s manipulation of its citizens.¹⁷ Thus, while the Vietnam War and the alienation and powerlessness that students felt in the growing sea of universities spurred the student movement in Canada, and at the University of Waterloo in particular, the foundations of activism had been set in the 1950s.

Some of those who would emerge as strong leaders in the Radical Student Movement at the University of Waterloo gained their activist tendencies and liberal beliefs from participation in social movements of the 1950s. After high school Peter Warrian went to a Roman Catholic seminary in Baltimore to train for the priesthood where he worked with impoverished black Americans. “Work on a religious level led eventually to involvement with recreational, family, housing and sanitation problems. After the initial religious involvement, the problems that arose out of the project were social and political.” Warrian left the seminary after three years as he became concerned with social justice issues. After moving back to Canada, he enrolled in sociology at the University of Waterloo in part because he had a bit of a “save-the-world complex.”¹⁸

Cyril Levitt was a member of his high school’s chapter of the Canadian Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND) from 1960 to 1963.¹⁹ The CUCND evolved out of the rising concern with the nuclear weapons race between the Soviet Union and the United States during the height of the Cold War. CUCND was not only in opposition to the “Cold War military and political policies of both nuclear blocs,”

¹⁴. Peter Warrian *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 January 2001.

¹⁵. Levitt, 18.

¹⁶. Levitt, 12.

¹⁷. Harvey Simmons, “Roots of Revolt,” *The Globe Magazine*, Toronto, ON: 1 June 1968, p. 18.

¹⁸. Terry Wright. “Beardless protestor, almost priest, Pete fights for causes.” *The Chevron*, Waterloo, ON; 10 February 1967 (7:25) 7.

¹⁹. Levitt, 201.

but also wished to “eliminate war as a method of settling international disputes.” This group of students felt that the “university community should take the lead in the mobilization of social forces internationally in the achievement of world peace.”²⁰

Thus, both Levitt and Warrian developed their beliefs in social activism at a young age as a result of the peace campaigns, the social justice and Civil Rights movements of the 1950s. As well, they both believed that youth could make a real difference in changing society. Levitt learned this from the CUCND’s focus on youth as the leaders, and the university as the center, of the peace movement; Warrian learned that young people could effect change through encounters with other Canadian and American university students who were on the “front lines” of the Civil Rights Movement.

Once on campus these young men would continue to pursue ideological questions about the nature of society and attempt to educate their fellow students about social and political causes through campus clubs, student council and writing for *The Chevron*. Both were good speakers, dedicated to their causes, idealistic and willing to work hard to get their message across. Levitt and Warrian, along with most radical students, believed in the fundamental moral “rightness” of their values; this gave them the impetus to use radical action in order to achieve their goals.²¹ Many students who became involved in the Radical Student Movement most likely held leftist sympathies before coming to Waterloo but their views were radicalized and reinforced when they met like-minded students on campus and began to talk about issues such as the Vietnam War, education and civil rights.

The Radical Student Movement was formed at the University of Waterloo in the summer of 1968 from a core group of student activists who emerged in the mid 1960s and began to get elected to positions on student council and write for the student newspaper. Student government gave the activists the authority to take action on behalf of Waterloo students and *The Chevron* provided a strong platform in which to disseminate their ideas throughout campus. The initial success and power that student activists enjoyed encouraged them to form the Radical Student Movement and convinced many that the support of the majority of the student body was behind them. However, student activists did not come to power because the majority of the students supported their beliefs. Instead, student activists gained positions on student council because of the effective mobilization of support of incoming Arts students, a complacent, apathetic student body, and the social activist but not yet radical stance of the candidates themselves. This view is reinforced by the apathetic and negative reactions of the student body to attempts at radical reforms after student activists had secured office.

The Arts faculty was established at the University of Waterloo in 1960 as an attempt to broaden the university’s scope. Arts students did exactly that. In 1960, 54 Arts students came to UW with “a sense of adventure” as Keith Thomas, acting Dean once said.²² These students must certainly have had a sense of recklessness attached to them because the University of Waterloo, known as the “instant university” had a very thin course book for Arts in its first few years.²³ From the outset, the presence of Arts students cannot be ignored. The feeling of domination by the brute-like engineers who drink too

²⁰ Levitt, 159.

²¹ Peter Warrian, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, 22 January 2001.

²² Redmond, p. 24.

²³ Redmond, p. 24.

much and think too little (at least about anything outside of their classes) is evident from the moment that Arts students set foot on campus. In an Arts and Science editorial in *The Coryphaeus* (the original name for the student newspaper before it was changed to *The Chevron* on 4 November 1966²⁴) written in 1960, George Welsh complains that there are “only two arts men on staff... the whole show is being run by engineers.” Welsh states that he wished to write about “the monetary policy of the Canadian government, but I thought it might send the vast majority of engineers running for a dictionary.”²⁵

Arts students struggled for respect and recognition in a sea of engineering and science students and as a result they injected a new sense of life into the university. Arts students, and increasingly those with activist tendencies, began to dominate *The Coryphaeus*, in an effort to get their voices heard. The early foundations of student activism on Waterloo campus were laid by a small minority of Arts students, who wrote articles complaining of student complacency, chronicled international and social justice issues, and became involved in campus pacifist and leftist groups.

Thus when activist leaders from the small Arts faculty ran for positions on student council, Arts students were happy to vote for their peers. In fact, the activist students had an easy time mobilizing support among a section of the student population that was struggling to establish their own voice on campus. As well, those students who cared about wider issues of social justice, and the nature of education, would also be the type who would care enough to go to the polls and cast their votes. Activist students mobilized most of their support from like-minded students who wished to be recognized on campus.

While a minority of Arts students questioned the very nature of university life and agitated for an end to student apathy on world issues, the campus itself was relatively apathetic. From 1960 to about 1965, UW students, for the most part, were complacent. An article in *The Coryphaeus* written by a first year Arts student in 1960, titled *University of Waterloo Students Are Smug, Complacent, Self-Centered Snobs*, complains that students are “only concerned with little issues affecting the university and Waterloo – not with world issues such as civil rights in America.”²⁶ Another article titled, *Conform or Reform*, complains that there are “no angry young men on campus.” While feelings of “frustration and hostility” exist, there is no “well thought-out policy towards Canadian and world politics or even a crisis on campus.”²⁷

²⁴ The name of the student newspaper was changed by Jim Nagel, editor-in-chief, without consulting UW students. Nagel felt that the *Coryphaeus* was frequently mispronounced, misspelled, and misunderstood by the majority of students at UW and other student newspapers across Canada. The *Chevron* was “lifted from the university coat of arms,” and is “pleasant-sounding, easy to pronounce and spell.” Some students were not pleased with this name change and put out an independent *Coryphaeus* issue urging students to lobby Nagel and the council to have the name changed back as it was part of UW’s tradition. Andy Anstett, who would later found the Students for Responsible Government, was also a leader in the *Coryphaeus* restoration issue.

Jim Nagel, “Cory-whatever-the-hell-it-is: What did you say it was?” *The Chevron*, Waterloo, ON: 4 November 1966 (7:14) 14.

Andy Anstett, “Students Oppose Chevron,” *The Coryphaeus*, Waterloo, ON: 7 November 1966 (7:14) 1.

²⁵ George Walsh, “Reflections,” *The Coryphaeus*, 16 November 1960, (1:2) 2.

²⁶ Hunter, Stuart C., “University of Waterloo Students are Smug, Complacent, Self-Centered Snobs,” *The Coryphaeus*, Friday January 13, 1960 (1:7), p. 2.

²⁷ ...--, “Conform or Reform?” *The Coryphaeus*, Friday April 28, 1961 (1: 17) 15.

While seeds of social activism were quietly being sown on campus, most students were too busy studying or socializing to notice. Church colleges presented the major source of pacifist sentiments and tried unsuccessfully to mobilize wider support. In 1961 the “University of Waterloo Discussion Group” was started by a group of Unitarians with a goal to “jolt people out of their complacency by bringing in controversial speakers” but not to preach evangelical messages. The first speaker was David Gauthier an “angry, young Canadian” and “crusading reformer” on the CUCND.²⁸ In 1961 UW joined the National Federation of Canadian University Students (NFCUS), which would later become the radical CUS and provide a national voice for student activism. The NFCUS’s fall congress voted to concern itself “with situations where human rights, academic freedom or material well-being of students were involved.”²⁹ Thus, while some university students were concerned with broad social and justice issues, most of the Waterloo population, dominated by engineers, was not.

Instead, University of Waterloo students concentrated on organizing dances, hops, beer festivals and pep rallies.³⁰ The overwhelming male population at the university meant that many of the engineering students organized social events as a way to meet local women. In the early 1960s, students at the University of Waterloo had a strong sense that they were building a tradition. After all, the university was only three years old and as a result of its controversial co-operative education model, highly self-conscious. The men who had decided to import the co-operative model of education into Canada for the first time were anxious to prove that they had in fact made the right decision, just as engineering students were out to prove that they had made the right choice in a university.³¹ There was a growing pride attached to being an engineer at the University of Waterloo as the co-operative system was unique and provided “a modern education to meet the needs of the future.”³²

The most controversial issues of this period were the “pranks” pulled by engineering students on Waterloo Lutheran and in the community (they painted the word “BEER” on the water tower), and the inebriated state of some University of Waterloo students at Warrior football games.³³ Student Council (also known as the Federation of Students) was formed in November 1960, and the constitution was “accepted with only a slight murmur.”³⁴ At its sixth general meeting in November 1961, council discussed the issues of university jackets, common room tidiness and the appointment of a publicity director.³⁵ In the early 1960s, the majority of Waterloo students were unconcerned with international and social justice issues, focusing instead on their all-important social life, and studying hard to get good grades.

²⁸ ...--, “University of Waterloo Discussion Group,” 21 July 1961 (1:21) 3.

²⁹ ...--, “University joins National Federation of Canadian University Students,” *The Coryphaeus*, 23 November 1962 (2:8) 1.

³⁰ ...--, “The Weekend Extravaganza,” *The Coryphaeus*, 17 February 1961 (1:8) 1.

³¹ Crystal Luxmore and Yarascavitch, Joni, *The History of the Co-operative Education System at the University of Waterloo*, Unpublished Work Report, Waterloo, ON: December, 1998.

³² ...--, Untitled Article, *The Coryphaeus*, 11 May 1961 (1:19) 2.

³³ ...--, Untitled Article, *The Coryphaeus*, 3 August 1961 (1:22) 1.

³⁴ ...--, “Conform or Reform?” *The Coryphaeus*, 28 April 1961 (1: 17) 4.

³⁵ ...--, Untitled Article, *The Coryphaeus*, 30 November 1961 (2: 9) 2.

This complacency remained among many University of Waterloo students until the late 1960s. However by 1965, social activists began to dominate Waterloo's student government and newspaper. If students were so complacent and unconcerned about social justice and world issues, how did they elect a student government that felt the opposite? Activist students, by the very nature of their beliefs were one of the only organized groups of students on campus to have the urge, energy, and skills needed to get elected to student government. These left-wing students fundamentally believed that positive change could be achieved through activism. The natural first step was to run for positions on student council and apply for positions on the student newspaper in order to facilitate change. Gaining powerful positions on student government and on the student newspaper was relatively easy given the passive nature of the UW campus in the mid 1960s.

As well, during this early period of "massification" of the universities, the nature, purpose and structure of post-secondary education became a growing concern among Canadian government, scholars, students and faculty. While most University of Waterloo students were concerned primarily with passing their courses and getting into a career, others wanted more representation and recognition within the university body. In the campaign for Federation of Students president for 1966-67, Mike Sheppard was the first candidate at the University of Waterloo to be concerned with the acquisition of student power and broader social-justice issues such as the nature of education and the Vietnam War. However, Sheppard did not make all of his views present in the election campaign. Most students did not view him as a "radical" but instead as a strong leader concerned about the university. Students, at least the 40% who voted,³⁶ were happy to hear that their presidential candidate was concerned about issues of student education and student involvement in the university government. However, once Sheppard got into power his attempts at instituting reforms outside of the immediate concerns of students regarding their lifestyle at the University of Waterloo, were met with a mix of apathy and hostility. The negative reaction of the student body to Sheppard's attempts at reform demonstrates that large numbers of the students did not support his ideals.

In one of his first actions as student council president, Sheppard proposed that the "Declaration of the Canadian Student," adopted from the Canadian Union of Students (CUS) be a "standing policy resolution of the University of Waterloo Council." This declaration is made up of five points that promote the students': responsibility to contribute to society's well being; right to establish democratic student governments; right to have their views represented on administrative and academic bodies in the university; right to pressure for the achievement of goals that will benefit "his" society; and the responsibility to promote human rights and mutual understanding.³⁷ This declaration promoted the idea of the student as a student of the world, armed with the knowledge and therefore the responsibility to cure the world's problems and help his dis-privileged brother. However, when the motion was introduced only half of the 25 council members spoke and over half decided to abstain from voting. These students were

³⁶ ...--, "Bravo to Non-Voters," *The Coryphaeus*, 18 March 1966, (16: 24) 1.

³⁷ Canadian Union of Students, "The Declaration of the Canadian Student," *The Chevron*, 23 September 23, 1966 (7:8) 3.

skeptical of the motion, dubbing it a typical CUS “motherhood” motion to be passed and then ignored.³⁸

This show of apathy outraged Sheppard and his counterparts so much that after the motion was passed, Sheppard called for a reconsideration of the motion, hoping to stir up some debate. The ensuing “debate” was entirely one-sided as Sheppard’s supporters “berated” those who chose to abstain and those who abstained remained silent. Sheppard also expressed a “new activist trend” and announced that the Declaration would form the “philosophical basis on which to mount a program.” Bob Cavanaugh, an engineering rep and one of the future members of the RSM, stated, “This is a challenge – a challenge we must make students accept.”³⁹ The radical students on council felt that they were fundamentally and morally right, and that by “making” students accept their views, they were doing them a favour. This fundamental belief in the goodness of their actions allowed the activists to view apathetic students as those in need of change through action and education. This superior attitude, while not recognized among the radicals themselves, was what turned many against them.

Active members of the student council received positive feedback from students when they agitated against an issue that affected UW students directly – high prices and the \$67,000 revenue of the not-for-profit university bookstore in 1965. A Bookstore Committee made up of Tom Patterson, Stewart Saxe and Steve Ireland was set up at the student council meeting on 14 November 1966. The committee met with University Vice President Al Adlington who got off to a bad start by saying that he was sure “this meeting will be unsatisfactory.”⁴⁰ As a result, that Friday *The Chevron’s* headline read, “Bookstore Strike Today.” The activist student leaders took quick action and were highly organized in the first strike ever to hit Waterloo campus. Patterson even wrote a special supplement on the front page of the paper, titled “The bookstore sit-in: how we can succeed.” This supplement explained that the objective of the sit-in was to “bring the operation to a stand still” and instructed students to be “orderly” and to arrive on time. Student demands were a 15 percent reduction in bookstore prices and student membership on the administration committee studying ancillary services – the bookstore, food services, print shop and athletics.⁴¹

Thanks to the promotion of the sit-in by *The Chevron* staff and the organization of the bookstore committee, the sit-in was a success. The student response was quite positive; almost 300 students attended the sit-in out of a student body of about 5,500. President Gerald Hagey stated that he would meet with students in his office but not in the bookstore. After a peaceful sit-in including “singing freedom songs, playing cards, and hissing at anyone who tried to make a purchase,” the students marched to Hagey’s office to have their demands heard. Hagey assured the students a response to their demands by the end of the week.⁴² By Friday, University of Waterloo students were guaranteed two seats on the Ancillary committee and soon after bookstore prices were

³⁸. ...--., Halfhearted yes to big issues sparks fiery Council debate, *The Chevron*, 23 September 1966 (7:8)

³⁹. ...--., Halfhearted yes to big issues sparks fiery Council debate, *The Chevron*, 23 September 1966 (7:8)

⁴⁰. ...--., “Bookstore Strike Today,” *The Chevron*, 18 November 1966, (7:16) 1.

⁴¹. Tom Patterson, “The bookstore sit-in: how we can succeed,” *The Chevron*, 18 November 1966 (7:16) 1.

⁴². ...--., Bookstore protestors storm Hagey’s office, *The Chevron*, 25 November 1966 (7:17) 1.

drastically reduced.⁴³ This sit-in was the first major protest action taken by the student body at the University of Waterloo, and it was a glorious success! Student radicals learned that through organization, media attention and pressure tactics, changes could occur with ease and speed. This sit-in provided a new sense of confidence and drive to student activists who hoped that UW students would learn that they could effect change on campus. The ever-supportive *Chevron* urged students to learn from the bookstore sit-in:

How about staying over on our side? How about turning the University of Waterloo into the hottest campus in Canada? You sat in at the bookstore. How about turning your energies to other problems on campus?... What about Vietnam, the student role in society, the position of the Canadian Indian? All it takes is a few more vitally interested students.⁴⁴

While *The Chevron* editors and student council leaders hoped that the bookstore strike was only the beginning, they failed to consider why students supported them in this action but remained inactive on other issues; Students were supportive of the bookstore strike because it put money back in their pockets, it stopped the administration from profiting once more from their student loans, and it brought students on the university campus more power. Broader issues such as the Vietnam War or the “Red Power” movement were of little concern to most students at UW during this time. Instead, in the eyes of the students, Sheppard was finally doing what he was elected to do - give something back to the students.

Sheppard and his supporters however, refused to see this distinction and continued to push for social change. In February 1967, domestic affairs commissioner Peter Warrian proposed a motion to student council that the University of Waterloo officially support draft dodgers. The original statement had to be amended in order to “satisfy the moderates but still have teeth.” Student council agreed in a vote of 13 to 2 to “support in principle the draft resistance program in Canada and authorizes its official representatives to give what support they can to that program.” Council underwent a two hour debate before passing the motion. Sheppard charged the engineers “with deciding a moral principle on the basis of the almighty dollar” as they were “worried what industry will think.”⁴⁵

Despite the majority vote to support draft resisters, Andy Moore, a third year engineering student, believed that council should not pass a motion “on an important, individual moral decision without allowing all students to state their opinions.” As a result, the Engineering Society circulated a petition forcing the student council to call a referendum on the issue.⁴⁶ A few weeks later a tiny headline on the *Chevron*’s front page read, “No longer the ‘Red University’ 1,676-586 vote proves.” This brief article explains that 2,270 students turned out for the referendum, the largest for any vote that year.⁴⁷

⁴³ ...--., “Two student members of admin bookstore probe,” *The Chevron*, 25 November 1966 (7:17) 1.

⁴⁴ The *Chevron* editorial, “Stay up off our behinds,” *The Chevron*, 25 November 1966 (7:17) 15.

⁴⁵ ...--., “‘Moral’ dodgers welcome,” *The Chevron*, 3 February 1967 (7:24) 1.

⁴⁶ ...--., “Draft-dodger vote soon,” *The Chevron*, 17 February 1967 (7:26) 1.

⁴⁷ ...--., “No longer the ‘Red university’, 1,676-586 vote proves,” *The Chevron*, 17 March 1967 (7:29) 1.

Student council's push for support of draft dodgers coming to Canada was overthrown when the student body was consulted. It should be noted that some students were concerned that the use of "any" support in the referendum would give the council a "blank cheque" to support draft dodgers and thus voted no.⁴⁸ However, the overwhelming majority voted against the motion, demonstrating that the radical students on campus did not echo the sentiments of the student body that they were elected to represent. The University of Waterloo was the first university in Canada to propose such a motion.⁴⁹ Issuing official support for draft dodgers was a radical stance to take, especially because the tide of anti-Vietnam protest was just beginning. The fact that most students on campus were not ready or willing to support such a radical motion is not surprising given their complacent nature and unwillingness to take a stand on issues outside the university campus.

The elections for the student council (also known as the Federation of Students) for 1967-68 demonstrate that despite the leftist students attempts to increase student involvement in social and educational issues, the complacent and apathetic nature of the student body changed little from previous years. Stephen Ireland was acclaimed president of the Federation of Students for 1967-68. In an informal survey by *The Chevron* staff, "over half the students who were polled claimed they were not even aware of the nominations in spite of front page notices in the last two issues of the paper. Others seemed entirely indifferent and only two or three expressed any real interest in the results."⁵⁰ As Rick Soulis, an engineering student at UW at the time expressed, "I think the Federation was a non-issue for most people and I think they (radical students) just took it over without anyone even noticing."⁵¹

Activist students came to power not because the majority of students supported their views, or even held leftist sentiments, but simply because of student apathy. Driven and vocal activists viewed student government as a means of making positive change and gained positions of power with relative ease. If the means were there, these students had the know-how, the dedication and the moral impetus to use them in order to achieve ends that they truly believed were for the good of the student body. However this paternalistic attitude would be part of the reason that the Radical Student Movement would be pushed out of student politics.

While the activist leaders did not manage to gain support for more radical issues, they did manage to stay in power. The 1966 elections brought many activist students into government, this experience allowed them to work together in order to fight for social change. A core group developed as activist students found others who held the same radical stance and fundamental moral beliefs. By 1967, a loose organization came to power in student council. This was a period where activist views were streamlined and consolidated, and an informal core group of students began to dominate student politics and *The Chevron*. The irony is that while the student activists believed in equality, as can be evidenced by their stance that every person should have access to education, and representation of all views as can be evidenced through the belief in the student's right to

⁴⁸ Peter Warrian, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 January 2001.

⁴⁹ ...--, "Twin Cities May Provide Haven for Draft Dodgers, *The Record*, Kitchener, ON: 6 December 1966, 3.

⁵⁰ The Chevron editorial, "Unanimity or indifference?" *The Chevron*, 13 January 1967, 15.

⁵¹ Rick Soulis, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Waterloo, ON: 24 February 2001.

participate in the administrative bodies of the university, their organizational structure and style of government did not reflect these practices.⁵² Instead the core group of activist students on campus operated in a superior, anti-democratic and conformist manner.

It is clear that the radical students thought of themselves as separate and somewhat better than the average student on the university campus. In Mike Sheppard's state-of-the-union address, he defines the university student:

... the best definition of a student is a person searching for truth. And the search for truth is by nature a radical activity... This search is a challenging of the status quo, and thus the true student is a radical. Student government, by the very fact that it represents students, should also be radical.⁵³

This circular argument claims that the only "true student" is the radical student, and provides the legitimization for a radical governing body. By claiming that radical students are the only true students, Sheppard implies the superiority of himself and his colleagues over the apathetic and complacent student body that they govern. The Radical Student Movement not only believed in the messages they were preaching, they believed in themselves, as Peter Warrian explains:

... We had a confidence level that we mattered... we were a big deal. So therefore when we decided on something like the Vietnam War, it was a BIG deal to us, then it was important for all society. And that gave us a kind of cockiness and confidence in protesting... We expected to have a major impact, and we did!⁵⁴

The sentiment that the "radical student knows best," is expressed by Steve Ireland in his first *Chevron* interview after being acclaimed to Federation President in 1967, "...the average student is not aware of the creative possibilities of a university education, or that he could possibly do anything to create a situation where he would be able to take advantage of these possibilities."⁵⁵ Ireland's statement is paternalistic. He implies that radical students are more aware of the opportunities and alternatives in education than their peers. The average student is apathetic simply because he is unaware of the broader issues, and once the radical student educates and informs him, he too will finally "see the light." In fact, the education of youth is a theme that runs throughout the Radical Student Movement. Ireland and his student council planned to overhaul the frosh orientation in order to make the "untapped vital force" of frosh students "develop an active interest in education."⁵⁶ Encouraging student interest in their education is a respectable goal. However the activist students spoke to frosh about one viewpoint only -- their own. Herein lies the undemocratic nature of the Radical Student Movement.

⁵² Radical Student Movement, et al., "RSM Statement of Principles and...", *leaflet*, Waterloo, ON: November 1968.

⁵³ Mike Sheppard, "The University is only a producer of technicians," *The Chevron*, Friday, 20 January 1967 (7:22) 2.

⁵⁴ Peter Warrian, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, 22 January 2001.

⁵⁵ Dale Martin, "President-elect states his policies: We're not just passive recipients of facts," *The Chevron*, 27 January 1967, (7:23) 5.

⁵⁶ ...--, "Frosh will get concerts, dances and teach-in," *The Chevron*, 11 September 1967 (9:14) 3.

Student activists fundamentally believed that their goals and morals were the right ones. After all, their parents and society had introduced them to the values of equality, liberty and social justice, and when these values were trodden upon, the students saw it as their moral duty to fight back. While this is a noble sentiment, it also blindsided some radical students on Waterloo campus into believing that their message was the only message worth discussing. Student council was seen as an effective vehicle to achieve social change and educational reforms, and activist students were willing to act undemocratically to protect their power. Steve Ireland could not control the will of the electorate to determine the members who would make up his executive board, so he must have been disappointed when it turned out that four right wing and only three left-wing students were elected. However, Ireland created two new “executive memberships” to accommodate Tom Patterson and Peter Warrian, original members of the student activist group at UW. A surprisingly critical editorial in *The Chevron* cites Ireland’s cabinet as balanced but goes on to ask if:

Ireland plans to stifle the opposition by bringing it into the ‘cabinet’ and then enlarging the body by adding two persons to give him a permanent majority. In other words, the exec board has been stacked... When all is said and done, there is no need to think on the composition of the executive. The real decisions will not be made there anyway. They will be made in little group sessions behind closed doors.⁵⁷

Activist students worked in a clique of like-minded people and most key ideas and decisions were made behind closed doors. This pattern of decision-making was not unique to Ireland’s government; it was common throughout the life of the Radical Student Movement at the University of Waterloo.

Mike Sheppard’s presidency was “being questioned actively... because he’s too sure of himself.” It seems that Sheppard geared “all his behind-the-scenes activity...around a personal philosophy of centralization and control of authority in himself.”⁵⁸ This editorial criticizes Sheppard’s autocratic leadership style, however it also points to the fact that Sheppard and “his flunkies” were meeting behind the scenes and making decisions for all Waterloo students. Brian Iler, an engineering student radical, succeeded Ireland as President for the 1968-69 term. A report chronicling the lives of student radicals at UW 15 years later, recalls that “behind the scenes all the activism was being orchestrated by a small cell including Iler, tongue-in-cheek calling themselves the Committee for Intellectual Mobility. They met every Thursday midnight.” As Iler reports at these late-night meetings, “We’d hatch issues to raise shit on.”⁵⁹

The organization of the radical student movement was highly anti-democratic. While the intention was to make people aware of “the issues” and mobilize some of them to take action, this is not the job of a student council, but a political party. Radical students ensured that the Federation of Students executive was made up of like-minded members, and in Ireland’s case they sat one radical in between each “moderate” or “right-winger.”⁶⁰ It seems that while the student council was made up of different types of students, the radicals ensured a majority and used their power to get their agenda pushed

57. ...--., ‘A cabinet of all talents,’ *The Chevron*, 3 March 1967 (7: 27) 19.

58. ...--., “An Activist yes, an egoist no,” *The Coryphaeus*, 7 October 1966 (7:10) 11.

59. Jim Nagel, “Special to the Record,” *The Record*, Booklet, Kitchener, ON: March 1980, p. 7.

60. Chevron editorial, “A cabinet of all talents, *The Chevron*, 3 March 1967 (7:27) 19.

forward, ignoring signs of discontent from the opposition and a large portion of the student body.

Thus the organization of the Radical Student Movement was hierarchical, anti-democratic and conformist. The number of people involved in the RSM is difficult to calculate as there were no membership lists, and the actual organization itself did not begin until the summer of 1968. However activist students identified themselves as part of an elite group of students on campus as early 1966. In Ireland's interview with *The Chevron* after his acclamation, he is asked if he "acted in collusion with a group of students to procure your acclamation." Ireland responds that it is true that the "so-called activist group on campus" agreed that only one person from their group should run in order to prevent a split vote.⁶¹ By the time of Ireland's election campaign in the winter of 1966, activist students on campus identified themselves as a part of a group; these same students would form the Radical Student Movement. The names of students involved in the leadership of the Radical Student Movement appear over and over again in *The Chevron* throughout the late 1960s. This core group numbered no more than two dozen, and that's being generous, there were probably only half a dozen who formed the ringleaders of the activist group throughout the years.⁶²

Female students such as Betty Bircher and Mary Bull were actively involved in the RSM and *The Chevron*. However, the role of women in the RSM paralleled the role of women in student movements across Canada and the United States before the second wave of feminism in the early 1970s. In the mid 1960s the role of women as coffee-makers and secretaries for male speakers and thinkers was generally a non-issue for most RSM members. By the late 1960s, the issue of sexism began popping up in RSM debates, as Peter Warrian explains:

Our understanding of the issue itself kept changing. It's not just whether or not the "girls" were turning the crank on the Xerox machine or the mimeo machine - it was much more profound. You can come up with a way to say, "Okay everybody can take their turn cranking the mimeo machine not just them." But the issues, personal life and more broadly, culture, were a whole lot deeper and broader than solving small problems. So part of the challenge was and some of the arguments - you'd have raging arguments - where you'd solve one aspect but then another issue would pop up because the underlying issue wasn't accurately understood or articulated.⁶³

Women themselves were just beginning to understand the ramifications and meanings behind the feminist movement. It was difficult for an issue this complex to be immediately resolved in the RSM. Other complex issues, such as racism, the Vietnam War, and environmentalism were quickly incorporated into the RSM, however, testifying to the fact that feminism was not just another issue. The aggressive stance of feminists in taking their rightful role in the movement presented a threat to at least some male

⁶¹. Dale Martin, "We're not just passive recipients of facts: President-elect states his policies," *The Chevron*, 27 January 1967 (7: 23) 5.

⁶². This estimate was arrived at after interviews with RSM member Peter Warrian, SRG member Rick Soulis, and K-W Record Reporter Henning Tegelberg, as well as the author's own estimate after examining *The Chevron* and *K-W Record* reports from 1965 – 1969.

⁶³. Peter Warrian, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 January 2001.

members of the RSM. Female RSM members were never featured in *The Chevron's* articles nor was the issue of sexism explored in any speeches or policy statements by RSM leaders.

Sexism was an issue that went ignored until the early 1970s when the Waterloo Women's Club was formed and began to lobby for day-care centres and birth control.⁶⁴ Feminism at UW evolved separately from the RSM as women began their own groups to agitate for equality. The failure to include women as equal members of the RSM does not fall under the undemocratic nature of the group, but is more a sign of the times. The University of Waterloo administration did not explore the issue of equality until 1973 when it released *The Report of the President's Advisory Committee on Equal Rights for Men and Women*. The report found that women made up 5.3% of total faculty, 23.8% of full-time Honours undergraduate students, and were under-represented in all decision-making bodies at UW.⁶⁵ However, women on Waterloo campus in the mid to late 1960s would quietly break into male-dominated professions of engineering, mathematicians, and professors. These women were treated with respect by their male counterparts at UW⁶⁶ and would break ground for the generation of feminists who came a few years later. This quiet struggle went unnoticed for most RSM members.

Closed-door meetings not only demonstrate the anti-democratic structure of the RSM ruling elite, but also the conformity required to enter it. If you did not hold the same ideas, values and beliefs as the radical students on the council, you could be sure that you would not be invited to the exclusive, late-night meetings. As these students met over coffees, they must have felt somewhat like a secret society. The group would bounce ideas off one another, confirming and strengthening their views. This process of internal radicalization occurred among student activists at the University of Waterloo without many of them realizing it. Certainly activist students in this tightly knit clique must have shared a certain excitement about the fact that they were making radical changes in the university. This group felt that they were acting as part of a wider international student movement that had finally "woken up" to society's ills and was attempting to cure them. The issues that were being debated behind closed doors would appear on controversial headlines in *The Chevron* the following week, and would be read by about 90 percent of the student body.

The Student Council used *The Chevron* to get their messages heard. By 1966, the *Chevron* staff was made up of students with radical or at least leftist beliefs. This is evident in all *Chevron* editorials, in the types of issues they choose to cover, and even in news articles about university events. *The Chevron* frequently reprinted articles from the CUS newswire about protests, sit-ins, and the student power movement across Canada, the United States and Europe. Of course, all of these articles were sympathetic to the student demonstrators and radical sentiments.

As the 1960s wore on editorials and articles became more radical, critical and cynical toward American imperialism, anti-Communism and the Vietnam War. A typical example of the radical messages in the paper is the back page of *The Chevron* in May 1969. The reader sees an unsmiling man, arms raised above his head, sporting a shirt that

⁶⁴. ...--., "U of W Club Needs \$20,000 for Day Nursery, *The Record*, Kitchener, ON: 2 April 1970, p. 44.

⁶⁵. University of Waterloo, "Report of the President's Advisory Committee on Equal Rights for Men and Women, *The Gazette*, supplement, 21 November 1973.

⁶⁶. Rick Soulis, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Waterloo, ON: 24 February 2001.

looks like the American flag. In large red letters are the words “FUCK COMMUNISM!,” a small caption running at the bottom of the add reads: “Additional copies available from the mothers of the American Revolution, Washington D.C.”⁶⁷ This cynicism matched the growing frustration of student radicals on campus in getting their goals achieved.

The Chevron staff shared the beliefs and aims of the radical members on the student council. RSM members, including former student council presidents, became editors of the student newspaper in the late 1960s. From 1968 to 1969 for example, RSM members occupied the top positions on *The Chevron*. Stewart Saxe was the editor-in-chief, Bob Verdun was the managing editor and Steve Ireland was the editorial associate. *The Chevron* became a vehicle to promote student radicalism and the Radical Student Movement in particular. This student newspaper was far from neutral, most articles prompted an “us” and “you” division, most noticeably from the question posed in an editorial asking students to “join our side.”⁶⁸ From 1966 forward, activist students such as Sheppard, Saxe, Ireland, Warrian and Levitt were covered in university debates more fully than their opponents and the reporter frequently described the radical students as speaking “passionately” and “eloquently.” This favoritism was not extended to any one who did not support the beliefs of the paper and the student leaders. *The Chevron* was a slanted paper that represented a minority, radicalist view even in its news articles. It seemed that Chevron staff could not remain neutral if they tried.

Anti-radical sentiment was expressed chiefly through letters to the editor and a few right-wing columns that appeared on and off throughout the mid to late 1960s. One letter to the editor written jointly by Martha Minaker, math 3 and Sue Leppan, geog 3, complained that, “a power-hungry, irresponsible clique of perennial students (poli-sci types especially) who are afraid to leave the security of our small community and assume an adult role in the big cruel world run this newspaper.”⁶⁹ Other letters echo the same sentiments. Aside from these letters, the reader would be hard pressed to find opposing viewpoints anywhere else in *The Chevron*’s pages. The student newspaper not only shared the same sentiments as members of the RSM, but also the anti-democratic nature of their organization. Student radicals could argue that it was only so due to lack of participation by students holding alternative views, however the conformist nature and tight clique that existed around the Federation of Students and *The Chevron* staff would make any opponent think twice before joining their ranks.

While the ideas and morals of activist students were aimed at creating a better society, the way they went about getting these ideas out to the student population was not in accordance with the principles that they preached. In his major policy speech 1968-69 student council president Brian Iler says that he finds democracy to be a myth because: “our elected representatives (make) decisions... made almost exclusively in the best interests of a small minority, (they are) representatives who provided us with no real alternatives.”⁷⁰ Perhaps if Iler and his cabinet members looked in the mirror they would have found that they too presented their electorate with a one-sided view. While Iler and

⁶⁷. ...--, “Fuck Communism,” *The Chevron*, 11 May 1969, (9:59) 26.

⁶⁸. The Chevron editorial, “Stay up off our behinds,” *The Chevron*, 25 November 1966 (7:17) 15.

⁶⁹. Martha Minaker and Leppan, Sue, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Chevron*, 27 September 1968 (9:17) 11.

⁷⁰. Brian Iler, “State of Iler Address: Struggle of all needed,” *The Chevron*, 11 October 1968, (9:19), 7.

his council made decisions in what they *believed* to be in the best interests of the students, in reality these decisions were made based on the values, goals, and ideals of the small, ruling elite, otherwise known as the Radical Student Movement. Iler further contends that democracy is a myth because “the news media presents only one side, the status quo, and misrepresents any challenges to it.”⁷¹ It has been demonstrated however, that *The Chevron*, which provided the voice for student council, presents only one side, the radical sentiment, and misrepresents any challenges to it. In their positions as elected officers representing UW students, the radical students failed to consider opposing arguments, viewpoints, or act on ideas that were not their own. For the first few years in power, they would get away with this anti-democratic governing style and demanding conformity, but as their actions and *The Chevron* became more radical, they would meet strong opposition from the student body.

Student opposition to the activists on council always existed, but grew in accordance with the growth of radicalism in the movement itself. Opposition centered on the feeling that student council did not represent student views. The Liberal Club was formed in January 1968 in reaction to the activists on campus. Their platform consisted of supporting “responsible activism.” Liberals felt that student council should not make decisions on “important matters such as the Vietnam war without any indication of student sentiments.”⁷² The Liberal Club supported a “moderating influence” rather than control.⁷³ Andy Anstett, a political science major, founded Students for Responsible Government in reaction to the anti-democratic nature of the Federation of Students. By the summer of 1968 Anstett was quietly recruiting supporters, and found many among the engineering students.⁷⁴ The New Right group held its first meeting on campus in October 1968 drawing 40 students. The group’s organizer, Robert Brown stated that “We are not radicals and we are not extremists, but merely moderates who wish to round off some of the corners of the leftist cube.” The group intended to focus only on campus issues and not “broader issues of national student interest.”⁷⁵ The emergence of these three groups signals the beginning of the end of student apathy toward student government. The formation of groups happened because students were growing tired of hearing radical leftist sentiments that they did not agree with from the mouths of their student council representatives.

By 1968 student sarcasm, cynicism and humour was frequently being used in response to the ideas and actions of the RSM. Rosemary Kelly ran against Brian Iler for Student Council President in the 1968 election campaign primarily to mock the seriousness of the student activists. Kelly proclaimed herself as the “Pooh” candidate to illustrate that:

⁷¹. Brian Iler. “State of Iler address: Struggle of all needed,” *The Chevron*, 11 October 1968, (9:19) 7.

⁷². Reuben Cohen. “Feedback: Not anti-active cries campus liberal,” *The Chevron*, 2 February 1968 (8: 29), 17

⁷³. Andy Driver. “Liberal club anti-active,” *The Chevron*, 26 January 1968, (8:28) 3.

⁷⁴. Rick Soulis, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Waterloo, ON: 24 February 2001.

⁷⁵. ...--, “New right opposes violence,” *The Chevron*, 4 October 1968, 3.

...Student politics isn't a matter of life and death. Not that it's trivia – but the campaign is a reaction against the super-activist. We sit around and watch the activist getting serious about Che Guevara. Well we think the opposite is Winnie the Pooh.⁷⁶

Kelly refused to attend candidate debates or participate in most election activities. She did print a statement announcing her campaign, alongside of the other candidates. The statement was deliberately silly, describing Winnie the Pooh and his friends, and stating that “they stand for, well, Good Things, like watercress, sandwiches, balloons, Birthday Parties and adventures. We would remind everybody that a vote for Rosemary is a vote for Pooh. The Good things are in danger of being lost in that enchanted place forever.”⁷⁷

Although Kelly openly stated that her campaign was a joke, she finished third out of four candidates, receiving over 200 votes; Kelly came in only 16 votes behind Cyril Levitt, who ran on a platform of increased activism on Student council.⁷⁸ The “Pooh” campaign illustrates the growing sentiment among some UW students that activist students were taking themselves too seriously and that they were not truly dedicated to their causes.

As the radical students increased their activism, opposition to their actions also increased. It was not the fundamental values of the radical students that changed, but the methods they proposed using in order to achieve them. Student council had been fighting for increased student representation on governing bodies for over two years. While changes were happening slowly, radical student leaders began to grow frustrated with administrative delays and “tokenism” by which one or two students were appointed to administrative bodies.

This feeling of frustration and stalemate in the student power movement was happening on a national and international level. Anti-Vietnam war protest grew increasingly militant at its peak in the late 1960s as students became convinced that the American government would not heed to passive resistance. Violence erupted on university campuses across the United States and throughout Europe. Leaders like Malcolm X and groups like the Black Panthers encouraged the oppressed to defend themselves. In Canada violence was kept to a minimum, isolated incidences occurred on two campuses throughout the 1960s. However, activist student leaders in Canada were influenced by the increase in militancy in “the movement,” and spoke out in favour of using violence in certain circumstances.

Peter Warrian left UW to become the President of the Canadian Union of Students for the 1968-69 school year. In a speech given at the September congress of the CUS, Warrian summed up the changing attitude of the activist student movement, “If we have encountered in our experience an institution which is destructive of human potential, then we may symbolically or physically burn it down or do what seems necessary.”⁷⁹ Headlines across the country quoted Warrian out of context, as telling students to “burn down the universities.” While Warrian felt that violence could be

⁷⁶ ...--., “The Pooh campaign,” *The Chevron*, 19 January 1968, 11.

⁷⁷ Rosemary Kelly, “Your candidate, your choice,” *The Chevron*, 19 January 1968 (8:27) 3.

⁷⁸ ...--., “With 75% Br’lter routs opposition,” *The Chevron*, 26 January 1968 (8:28) 1.

⁷⁹ ...--., “Looking at Peter Warrian: The speech maker,” *The Chevron*, 4 October 1968 (9:18) 30.

sometimes be justified in order to bring about less repressive situations, he did not feel violence was necessary for students to gain control of their universities.⁸⁰

While the RSM at Waterloo experienced a growing frustration, they never advocated violence. Instead they made increasingly radical statements and stepped up the number of protests on campus. Brian Iler's policy speech reflects the changing methods of the Radical Student Movement, "we have tried the human approach: sitting down, being reasonable, and trying to earn their respect. It hasn't worked – because we don't have the base." Iler goes on to urge the masses of students to become involved so that "liberalization will come... through the struggle of all."⁸¹ Iler and his executive began to take issue with almost every move the administration made. However, despite major coverage of the issues in *The Chevron*, the student body was not behind them.

In the protest against Habitat '69 (present-day Ron Eydt Village) for example, student council charged that the rooms were too small and looked like "jail cells." While construction was going on the Federation of Students set up a mock Habitat room in the campus centre for students to evaluate. The student council proposed a motion to blow up the entire thing and it only failed by one vote.⁸² Instead the Feds decided to organize a protest outside the library, about 100 students showed up in total, with numbers ranging from 20 to 60 throughout the day. The lack of student support disappointed Iler. However most students probably did not see much point in protesting for two reasons: they would never have to live in Habitat '69 as it was a first year residence; and since the plans were finalized and half the building was already built, the protest could not really achieve much. Iler did manage however, to secure a meeting with the administration to work out a better arrangement for planning future residences.⁸³

The culmination of opposition against student council came in the fall of 1968 when some student council representatives circulated a petition forcing council to resign over the issue of "representivity." Letters to the editor denouncing student activism and the "biases" of *The Chevron* begin to appear more frequently at the beginning of the 1968 school term. Letters titled, "Don't bother with the world leave it to great thinkers," "Rightist rejects Iler; competition is the key," "Let students run campus center? Do patients run hospital?," and "Don't yell at the masses, get idealism thru channels," testify to the growing frustration of the student body toward their government.

Students' angry murmurs were quickly turning into organized opposition. Opposition reached its height in September 1968 as Brian Iler began his presidency. Less than a month after Iler began his presidency, Dave Cubberley, an Arts representative, presented a motion to council calling on it to resign because it did not represent student views.⁸⁴ The motion was defeated. On October 17, 1968 Arts rep Kathy Dilts, who helped to draft Cubberley's motion, resigned because she felt that "Council didn't run on a platform that gave them the right to debate and legislate on socio-economic and political issues."⁸⁵ "Representivity" of the student council was becoming a major issue. While Dilts agreed with the general motives of the council she was "not sure how the majority

⁸⁰. Susan Swan. "Warrian tells why violence," *The Chevron*, 20 September 1968,(9:16) 7.

⁸¹. Brian Iler, "State of Iler Address: Struggle of all needed," *The Chevron*, 11 October 1968,(9:19), 7.

⁸². ...--, "Students to picket Habitat '69," *The Chevron*, 11 October 1968 (9:19) 1.

⁸³. ...--, "Habitat pickets pass out donuts," *The Chevron*, 18 October 1968 (9:20) 1.

⁸⁴. ...--, "Council considers quitting," *The Chevron*, 27 September 1968 (9:17) 1.

⁸⁵. ...--, "Arts rep Kathy Dilts resigns," *The Chevron*, 18 October 1968 (9:20) 1.

of the students feel on the issues.”⁸⁶ Almost two weeks later Suzi Lieberman and Jim Belfry, both math reps, tendered their resignations to Brian Iler because they believed council was unrepresentative. “I feel I can no longer remain as a member when council to me is not representative of the majority of the student body,” explained Belfry at a council meeting.⁸⁷

At that same meeting Belfry presented a petition with over 690 student signatures calling for the entire council to resign thereby forcing a general election.⁸⁸ The following day, council held a general meeting in the campus centre asking students to vote on a motion of confidence. Over 1000 students voted, the result was 550 to 450 in favour of council resigning.⁸⁹ A general election was quickly called for November 27th so the new council could take office on December 4 before the end of the term. As Rick Soulis, a former member of Students for Responsible Government explains, “the rest of the campus” had finally “woken up” to the feds anti-democratic and conformist nature of running campus politics.⁹⁰

On November 15, five candidates stood for Federation of Students president. Each candidate’s platform represents differing viewpoints of the student body. Nominated in a meeting by over 100 members of the highly organized Radical Student Movement, Iler remained steadfast to his beliefs, maintaining that most students were well aware of his views. Iler agitated for “freedom in the university and for students to control what happens to them.” He wished to create a community of equality, free of the labels of student and administrator.⁹¹ Along with Iler, the RSM ran a slate of eleven candidates. This group swung into motion on the first day of campaigning. The campaign manager orchestrated a massive publicity blitz including, distribution of 10,000 one-page broadsides of its statement of principles, a door-to-door and poster campaign, radical students speaking before large classes, and a plan to “run taped interviews on the classroom TV’s in the five or ten minutes before the classes begin.”⁹² With only 100 members, this group must have put forth a major effort to mobilize student support. At the same time the RSM maintained that they were “concerned with much more than just the coming council elections.”⁹³ However, after holding power for almost two years, RSM members knew that they had a lot to lose if they were not re-instated.

Larry Burko, a second year Arts student, proclaimed that if elected the Federation would “concentrate on social life.” Burko claimed to represent apathetic students who were tired of politics and wanted council money to be spent on student activities. “This would enable us to sponsor dances and concerts with free admission,” Burko explained. Vern Copeland a third year Arts student ran on a moderate platform; decisions regarding university structure should be made by the administration, not the students, because they

⁸⁶ ...--., “Arts rep Kathy Dilts resigns,” *The Chevron*, 18 October 1968 (9:20) 1.

⁸⁷ ...--., “Two more reps resign,” *The Chevron*, 1 November 1968 (9:24) 1.

⁸⁸ ...--., “Petition asks council to resign,” *The Chevron*, 1 November 1968,(9:24) 1.

⁸⁹ ...--., “Council to resign... election call soon,” *The Chevron*, 1 November 1968 (9:24) 1.

⁹⁰ Rick Soulis, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, 24 February, 2001.

⁹¹ ...--., “Five to run for council president,” *The Chevron*, 15 November 1968 (9:27) 1.

⁹² ...--., “Radicals finalize slate,” *The Chevron*, 15 November 1968,(9:27) 3.

⁹³ ...--., “Radical student movement running election slate,” *The Chevron*, 8 November 1968 (9:26) 3.

lack relevant experience. Copeland opposed the student power movement stating that the left wing should not use “the university as an instrument to change and socialize society.”⁹⁴ The fourth candidate was John Pickles who stated that, “my platform is non-existent.” Pickles was the “joke” candidate, running on the basis of non-involvement in campaigning.⁹⁵

The main threat to the RSM came from the final candidate, John Bergsma, nominated by the Students for Responsible Government (SRG). The SRG wanted to provide a “responsible alternative to Brian Iler and his council.”⁹⁶ While SRG agreed with many of Iler’s aims, they opposed the attitude, ruling structure and methodology of putting their goals into action. Rick Soulis, an engineering student and former SRG member, explained that the SRG was formed in reaction to the RSM because,

...there were some serious anarchists (in the RSM) that really did want to destroy things and they could have had a serious impact on the university and society as a whole. Mainly because they didn’t seem to realize that they themselves were tremendously hierarchical, they were tremendously anti-democratic within their groups, and tremendously conforming and those are very, very terrible things to have envisioned upon a society. So my real intent for helping in a campaign against them was because I just thought they were exerting a control that was entirely unwarranted. They were gravely insensitive to everyone else and what everyone else wanted.

As a reactionary group, Students for Responsible Government lacked the experience, publicity and following of the RSM. However, this group quickly built up support and mounted a successful election campaign, garnering support from every corner of the university.

At the election debates Vern Copeland announced that he was withdrawing from the race and throwing his support to Bergsma because they held many shared views and Bergsma had more experience. Despite *The Chevron’s* slanted coverage of candidate debates and speeches, promotional articles and a full-page editorial dedicated to electing Iler titled, “After serious consideration,” the RSM failed to get their candidate elected. *The Chevron’s* blatant bias in promoting only one candidate, who was a dear friend of many on the staff, probably did more to increase opposition against Iler than mobilize support. On 29 November 1968, *The Chevron’s* headline read, “Bergsma wins vote.” It was a decisive victory with Bergsma bringing in over 50% more votes than Iler. The official count was 2741 for Bergsma and 1835 for Iler, with 54.2% of the student population turning out to the polls, far more than had ever elected a student radical for president.⁹⁷ Thus, for the first time the RSM had lost the leadership of the student council. However, council representatives were split almost equally in support of SRG and RSM. Bergsma hoped that the council would be able to work together, stating that the radicals “are concerned with change just like us. I hope we will be able to work with the radicals.”⁹⁸

94. ...-, “Five to run for council president,” *The Chevron*, 15 November 1968 (9:27) 1.

95. ...-, “Five to run for council president,” *The Chevron*, 15 November 1968 (9:27) 1.

96. ...-, “Responsible action group nominates Bergsma for pres” *The Chevron*, 15 November 1968,(9:27)

1.

97. ...-, “Bergsma wins vote,” *The Chevron*, 29 November 1968 (9:31) 1.

98. ...-, “Bergsma surprised at result, Iler predicts split,” *The Chevron*, 29 November 1968 (9:31) 3.

The decisive victory of the Students for Responsible Government over the Radical Student Movement leadership demonstrates that the majority of students did not support the methodology of the RSM. The election demanded the largest voter turnout in UW's short history, demonstrating that student government had become an important issue to the majority of UW students. In this case, the major issue was not the platforms of the candidates as Bergsma testified to believe in many of the RSM's goals, but the methods used to achieve this change. Many students, including those who voted for Bergsma, believed in the ideas and aims of the Radical Student Movement, but did not believe that the RSM were working to achieve change in a democratic, rational manner.

The RSM had ample warning of student unrest over the issue of representative government, yet refused to listen to their constituents. RSM leaders were so passionate about educational representation, the Vietnam War and student rights that they needed change achieved quickly, and when it did not happen they resorted to radical methods. The RSM saw themselves as leaders of campus activism in Canada: compromise with the administration would ruin their reputation and go against their beliefs. By choosing their own interests over those of their fellow students, the RSM dug its own grave.

The shift from radicals to moderates in student government at the University of Waterloo was part of a larger wave of anti-radicalism expressed on campuses across the nation.⁹⁹ Universities were withdrawing from the radical Canadian Union of Students like dominos, as they felt their money was being wasted supporting an organization more concerned with international issues than those directly affecting Canadian university students. Radical leaders tried to shift to a platform of moderation, but it was too little too late, as universities continued to drop out. By the fall of 1969, there were only eleven remaining members in CUS (UW was one of them), due to lack of support, the organization folded in October 1969.¹⁰⁰ By the end of the 1960s students on campuses across Canada and the United States were beginning to tire of radical politics, sit-ins, protests and constant conflict. The fatigue did not just lie with the masses of students, but with the radical students themselves. As Peter Warrian explains, the student movement died out because,

It was exhausted. People were just tired, just tired out, they'd had 4 or 5 years of sustained activism and they were just tired out. And student generations rise and die quite quickly. Secondly, for a bunch of people, it's become so oriented to external issues, the war, and the environment, civil rights more generally or whatever it was, that the university campus was more irrelevant in peoples' assessment. The third factor is the confidence level that we had before was getting worn down, if we were such a big deal then why weren't we winning more? So that was a factor. And lastly, we had narrowed and narrowed the issue to some degree one thing – the American presence in Vietnam. It had started out as a much broader concern than the American military presence and just getting them out of there, but once you got them out of there, the core issue in most peoples minds, was finished.

⁹⁹ Keith Kincaid, "Campus Activists Turn to Moderates," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 24 November 1969, Section 2, 19.

¹⁰⁰ Keith Kincaid, "Student Leaders Don't Know Which Path to Follow," *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 27 November 1969, 39.

After their defeat in 1968, the RSM continued in its activities and remained in existence until the mid 1970s, however its momentum, energy and achievements had peaked during Iler's presidency and died quickly with his defeat. While Iler and his counterparts picked up where they left off, the RSM had lost more than just the student council election, they had lost the confidence of the student body and in doing so took a major blow to their own sense of self-righteousness and confidence. By the early 1970s radical politics on Waterloo campus were shifting from one main group to splinter groups each with their own special interest in issues like Marxism, environmentalism and feminism.¹⁰¹ There was also a group of students who became disillusioned with their lack of progress and followed the counter-culture movement to "drop-out" of society, turning to experimental drug usage as an escape.¹⁰² By the end of the 1960s the University of Waterloo campus had undergone much change, most of it due to the persistence, energy and dedication of the Radical Student Movement.

While the RSM was in power they increased student representation throughout the university, asserted student rights in every corner of university life, and paved the way for new campus groups to agitate for change. In 1968, the university released a report on University government as a result of increasing pressures by the radical students beginning in 1966. Throughout the years students were admitted as members to faculty boards, special committees and any facet of the university administration that had an impact on student issues. By 1969, students sat as regular members on both the Senate and the Board of Governors.¹⁰³ While the University of Waterloo was part of a larger nation-wide trend of increased representation of students, the progress would not have been achieved as quickly or effectively without the impetus provided by RSM members.

Aggressive action and awareness of administration politics by the RSM and student council in the late 1960s forced the university administration to consider student reaction before pushing ahead with reforms. In 1971 University of Waterloo President Burt Matthews stated that, "the participation of faculty and students in the development of academic and other policies of the university is important, indeed essential, for the establishment and implementation of acceptable policies."¹⁰⁴ The radical students had ensured that student consultation shifted from a lackadaisical practice to a fact of life for the administration running the University of Waterloo.

As well, the RSM agitated for educational reforms and gained a major victory with the opening of the Integrated Studies program at UW in September 1969. With an initial class of 50 students, this program "was originally intended to draw off the students of 'radical persuasion' into a far-off corner of the university where they could study what they wished, entirely free of course requirements, while still obtaining, if they wished, some kind of degree."¹⁰⁵ Students made their own program, choosing classes from any discipline and making up courses of their own if the topic of desired study was not offered. At the end of their four years of study, students could be granted a degree by

¹⁰¹ Henning Tegelberg, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 February 2001.

¹⁰² Peter Warran, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 January 2001.

¹⁰³ Matthews, Burt, *Report of the President 1969 – 1971*, University of Waterloo, 1971, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Matthews, Burt, *Report of the President 1969 – 1971*, University of Waterloo, 1971, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Malzan, *University of Waterloo: A Critical Perspective*, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON: 1978, 2.

publicly explaining to a selected board of faculty, why they thought they deserved a degree.¹⁰⁶

Just as student radicals of the early 1960s followed the examples of the Civil Rights and peace movements of the 1950s, so were the subsequent leftist groups at the University of Waterloo influenced by the energy and strength of the Radical Student Movement. By the early 1970s the University of Waterloo had a thriving feminist movement and was witnessing the beginnings of the Anti-Imperialist Alliance, a Marxist group in Renison College that would spark major controversy and win over faculty members to its cause as the 70s wore on. As well, leaders of the RSM went on to participate in municipal politics, environmental law, teaching and independent journalism. Although most have “sold out,” some of those in the core group, such as Brian Iler, remain steadfast to their radical beliefs and continue to effect positive change on society. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the RSM was one that went unnoticed at the time. As Henning Tegelberg, a Kitchener-Waterloo Record reporter covering the University of Waterloo in the 1960s, stated,

I think that going through that period, the Radical Student Movement contributed to a change in the way of thinking among the population generally that was more tolerant, more resistant to authority and dictatorship in the sense of top-down authority – that it changed thinking a little bit.¹⁰⁷

One major success the Radical Student Movement accomplished was to jolt traditionally self-centered UW students out of their apathy, at least for a brief period, and force them to consider the nature of student government, international issues like the Vietnam War, racism and student rights. While the RSM may have been hypocritical in its methods of achieving change and unrepresentative of the student body, its long-term impact caused students, the university administration and faculty and the Kitchener-Waterloo community to re-examine their morals and ideals in the face of radical proposals for change.

The Radical Student Movement at the University of Waterloo formed because a group of like-minded students with leftist ideals came to a campus with a clean slate in an atmosphere of generational conflict and student protest. Energetic, driven and optimistic leftist students gained powerful positions on student council and *The Chevron* in an atmosphere of general student apathy and complacency by mobilizing support from Arts students. Initial attempts at reform were highly successful and motivated the further radicalization of the core group of activists as they continually pushed the campus toward their activist ideals. Throughout this period, activist leaders only enjoyed widespread student support on issues that affected them directly, such as bookstore prices, and were disappointed when students did not mobilize behind broader international issues such as support for draft dodgers.

The internal radicalization of the RSM members drove them to lead students in a superior, anti-democratic and conformist manner in order to effect change in a quickly

¹⁰⁶ Henning Tegelberg, “Exams Becoming Unnecessary,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 14 September 1970, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Henning Tegelberg, *Interview by Crystal Luxmore*, Toronto, ON: 22 February 2001.

and effectively. However, this style of leadership backfired. The increasing radicalization of student council and *The Chevron* from 1966-1968 paralleled the growing dissent among the student body. Students opposed the RSM not because of their ideas or aims, but because of the unrepresentative and anti-democratic nature of the radical leaders on student council. Opposition culminated in the forced resignation of student council and its replacement with Students for Responsible Government in the fall of 1968. The height of the Radical Student Movement's power was short-lived because the majority of students at the University of Waterloo refused to be ruled by an elite. The failure of the RSM was their inability to acknowledge the elitist nature of their governing style and this resulted in their downfall. However the RSM, more than any other student group in the history of the University of Waterloo, made a lasting and positive impact on the nature of student life at UW. By the late 1960s, students were assured a voice in campus politics, had the impetus to start movements and organizations to agitate for change, and paid attention, at least for a few years, as to who it was they were voting for.