



The fires of dissent burning at Northern Michigan University.

## Post Script

# Education Tides Changing

*Guest Editorial from the Michigan State University "State News", November 7, 1967 "Academic Freedom - NMU."*

This message, trailing from one of the now traditional airplanes over Spartan Stadium Saturday, symbolized and brought home to many who were present the support and strong feeling behind the movement on the Northern campus.

The controversy revolves around the firing of assistant professor Dr. Robert F. McClellan by the president last summer. The administration cited several reasons for his dismissal. Included were his critical comments about required courses, aid to students in making complaints concerning unfinished dormitories; and giving advice and encouragement to citizen groups in Marquette who opposed expansion plans of the university.

IT IS THIS LATTER CHARGE which faculty leaders and McClellan claim was the primary cause of his dismissal. McClellan, an ordained Episcopalian minister, went further, saying that the administration had reacted to a "whispering

campaign" about him, accusing him of offering prayers in church for the Viet Cong.

Several significant points in the Northern case should not go unnoticed.

The strong action, and excellent support from faculty and community members, illustrates the rising potency of students in university problems. Money was collected, a boycott of classes was precipitated and the ACLU has promised to bring suits in behalf of McClellan if the Board of Control does not reconsider the case.

In this case, the particular complaint points up the problem of untenured faculty, reminiscent of the ATL controversy here last year. This area should be the concern of the faculty, not the administration. No longer can the administration take arbitrary action. And there is no reason in the future to expect students and faculty members to accept any action which cannot or will not be explained. When an admittedly conservative and apathetic student body such as NMU's raises the commotion which it did, the rising concern of students is graph-

ically illustrated.

A FRIGHTENING POSSIBILITY in the area of campus action has also arisen. The State Legislature asked that the university close until the protest ends. Although no concrete action has been taken beyond the suggestion, the thought that the legislature would use its financial control to interfere in such a case is thoroughly repugnant to the realm of academic freedom, and the autonomy which state universities possess under the state constitution.

Whatever the final outcome of the NMU situation, it has pointed out problem areas which cry for attention. It has devised new and imaginative methods of dealing with problems on campuses. And most importantly it has demonstrated to administrators that actions in dismissing personnel and changing rules will not be accepted without a full and frank explanation.

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR NOW at NMU, as it was here last year, that there is a need for all universities to develop procedures for dealing with untenured faculty. Until this problem is met realistically, periodic crises will continue to occur at schools throughout the country.



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