

# Bridges' Opportunism

A sit-in of the type which occurred on the campus of Northern Michigan University prior to the Christmas holidays is a tragic event—especially when it is caused, as this one evidently was, by a breakdown in the channels of communication.

What makes the situation doubly tragic, though, is the blatant and inexcusable opportunism shown by some politicians and would-be politicians. Sitting back in their easy chairs, they preach a sermon of “law and order” and brand any attempt at moderation on the part of University officials as “conciliation of the mob.”

When things get tough, however, the windbags are noticeably silent.

Last year, following disruptions at nearly every major University in Michigan, the political opportunists in Lansing said they wanted state college presidents to follow a “get tough” policy. Well, the president of Ferris State, Victor Spathelf, DID get tough—and almost lost his job doing it.

And who wanted Spathelf fired? A faction within the state legislature. Did the windbags back Spathelf up? Not on your life!

It was hardly surprising, then, when we opened the *Marquette Mining Journal* last week to see a letter regarding the NMU sit-in from E. Nickolas Bridges, a Negaunee attorney who would like to get the state house of representatives' seat now occupied by Dominic Jacobetti.

In his letter, Bridges decided that the Blacks involved in the sit-in had “kidnapped” Dr. Allan Niemi (because they made him stay in his office for about half an hour during the sit-in's final minutes). Bridges further charged that Marquette County law enforcement officials are standing “idly by investigating parking meters” instead of trying to prosecute the dissident Blacks.

If Bridges would have taken only a few minutes to check the facts surrounding the sit-in before composing his letter, he would have realized that the University is indeed pressing charges against members of the Black Student Association. These charges are being pressed, furthermore, on both the civil and University levels.

If Bridges would have taken only a few minutes to THINK before composing his letter, he would have further realized that police officers and University officials must conduct a thorough investigation to determine both the nature of charges pressed and who will be charged. As a lawyer, one would think Bridges would understand the value of having an “airtight” case before initiating prosecution.

Furthermore, we would seriously question conclusions—like those made by Bridges—based on third-hand information obtained from the mass media.

The overtly-political nature of the statements made by Bridges is obvious to one who is acquainted with the facts of the situation. But, unfortunately, there are far too many people who are not familiar with those facts and who will accept what people of Bridges' ilk have to say on face value.

President John X. Jamrich has followed an admirable course of action in the current confrontation. He certainly DOES NOT need the badgering of a “beat-'em—on—the—head” political opportunist like Bridges.

## Something To Hide?

Northern Michigan University's second sit-in in as many years has ended. But the primary cause of the demonstration—the trial of Charles Griffis—is still a hotly debated topic in both Black and white circles.

The debate will continue until a transcript of the initial trial by the All-University Student Judiciary—either taped or written—is released to the public. Charles Griffis claims he has requested such a release, but that his request has been denied. This newspaper has been denied access to the taped transcription of the first hearing.

The issues raised by the ad-hoc committee of the Human Relations Commission (see the front page of today's Northern News) as to the integrity and competence of the AUSJ will not be swept under the carpet by mere denials from the Deans' Office. Students DO have a right to know if their judiciary is functioning properly.

We can see no reason why a student should not be able to ask that the exact transcript of his hearing be released to the public. We can see no reason why the University would refuse to release such a transcript—unless there is something to hide.

If secrecy is going to become the name of the game under the University's new judicial structure, little improvement has been realized over the old system of “dean supremacy.”