Downright stupid...

Grandpas Tom and George must have rolled over in their graves when about thirty radical conservatives waved American flags as they attempted to occupy the Radical Student Union office last week. How dare these dogmatic preachers hold American flags while undertaking such immature, anti-American actions? Not only was the attempt inconsistent with what these individuals preach, it was downright stupid.

Pedro M. Pereira

The conservatives have been condemning the radicals from the first time the latter began protesting CIA recruitment at the University of Massachusetts, because taking over buildings and offices is unethical and disrupts normal operations.

By no means do I condone occupying buildings, and that is why I think trying to occupy the RSU office was stupid. The conservatives did it in a "let's give them a taste of their own medicine" style, unlike the radicals, who occupy buildings for principles in which they believe (which still does not justify it).

I happened to be roaming around the fourth floor of the Student Union when the conservatives stormed into the RSU office claiming they were "non-violent protesters." But as they said that, they pushed people to get in and a couple of them pounded on the walls (why anyone would want to pound on walls when protesting is beyond me). Posters reading, "Kick commie ass," which the conservatives pasted all over campus last week, are yet another example of the violent nature of their protest.

The irrationality of these individuals became even more evident when they shouted vulgarities such as "Bring Amy [Carter] out, we'll show her a good time." Crudeness is uncalled for.

I can understand why the radical would want to protest the protesters. After all, most students at this point apparently feel the radicals have gone too far. However, are vulgarities and inciting violence necessary? Moreover, the conservatives claim they represent the majority of the students. From what I have observed, most students do not agree with this statement and have never entitled the conservatives to represent them, never mind acting immaturely and stupidly on their behalf!

Both radical groups have unfortunately turned the CIA issue into a joke. CIA recruitment on campus is a serious concern and it nauseates me to see people on opposite sides of the spectrum undermining it by declaring a war of personalities on each other, labelling each other "commies" or "fascists."

Indeed, this has gone too far. It is time for the average student to *take over*.

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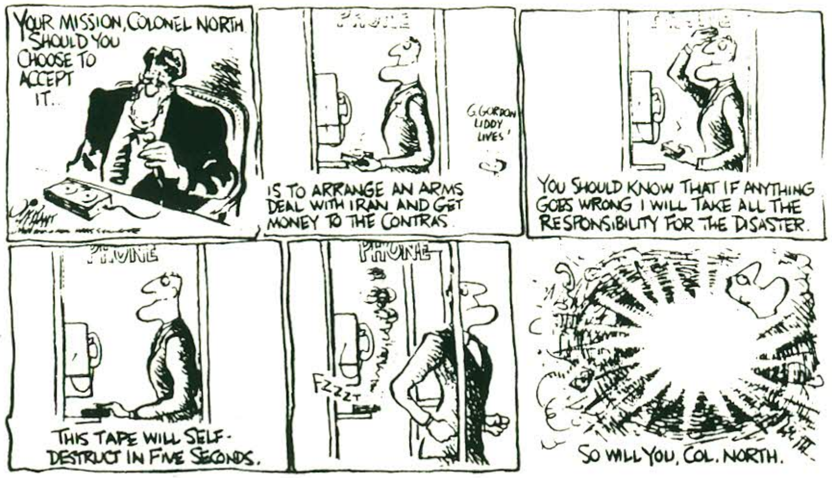

"There will be a complete and thorough investigation by the Congress. Could it eventually be a Watergate? I don't see it at this time, but you have to wait and see what uncovers along the line. Everybody will be smoked out, even if they try to hide behind the Fifth."

—Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr.

"My impression is that when a case like this comes up, everybody rushes to the shredder or the burn pile or something."

—Senator David Durenberger

Of conforming with non-conformists

There are several troubling aspects of the ongoing protests here at our humble institution. The first is why do the protesters, who are supposed to be protesting the University of Massachusetts bureaucracy and their laws in respect to the UMass student population, welcome [or invite] hordes of other people to help out? If the overwhelming majority of students on this campus were in total agreement with the protest, then I don't think that outsiders would be needed.

Stuart Gottlieb

The second aspect is how, or why, did the protest turn into a racism awareness crusade? I struggled my way through hundreds of bodies to make it outside the Student Union Building to hear an anti-CIA rally, and what did I hear? I heard what sounded like Malcolm X emotionally yelling at an audience of 1000 people, most of whom came to "learn" about the CIA, about how he couldn't walk down a street in the US without being thought of as "black" [and therefore in fear for his life].

That was a direct show of playing up to a large, indifferent audience. It downplayed all of the valid intentions of the original protest. It showed that there are people on this campus who are just out to complain about something; anything. I'm not saying that racism is nothing, I'm saying that every issue has its time and place for critical thought. Every injustice is different. When they are clumped up, and put under one label, the credibility of each issue is lowered several notches on the injustice scale.

The third, and most enjoyable, aspect of analyzing the protests is analyzing the protesters. Who are they? Are they representing the views of the university populace, therefore legitimizing the obstruction of other people's personal business? Do they know what they are doing?

Some of the radicals on campus are rational, thinking individuals. Most of them are not. Most of them are following a cause. They are trying to belong. They are trying to conform with the non-conformists.

When radicals occupied Munson Hall two weeks ago I was walking around, observing. One young female radical came up to me [after someone pointed me, the conservative enemy guy, out to her] and said, 'we hate all injustice'. She told me she was a freshman, and was willing to get arrested due to the CIA's "illegal activities against legitimate governments of Central America".

I asked her how she felt about the FMLN, and what they're out to do. She said, innocently, 'who?".

She knew that her cause what legitimate enough to get arrested for, yet she didn't even know one of the most basic facts about the Central American controversy.

Last Thursday I was debating with a protestor outside of Whitmore. We had a crowd of about 30 people watching us go at it pretty intensely. Right after the bell sounded to start round three, a friend of his made his way through the crowd and shouted to him "open mouth...closed mind". He was talking about me. I walked away from my argument to confront him about that remark. I asked him if he knew who I was, or how I felt about a host of different issues. He said that he didn't know who I was, except that I was "a typical ignorant, closed minded reactionary".

This guy, it turns out, is one of the leaders of the UMass radical left wing. He didn't know who I was, or how I felt. But he did know that I was close-minded. I guess that makes him open minded.

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