

OBSERVATION POINT

DISSENT

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By John McDonald
Livonia

'Confrontation': A Look At Language

By Philip H. Power

The bar was old and quiet, but the conversation was heated.

"I just don't know what to think about those people. Why, next thing you know they'll tear everything to pieces."

The speaker was a businessman, a thoughtful person and not at all an extremist. He was talking about demonstrators and the tactics of "confrontation," as it's called.

"First they lay down a list of 'non-negotiable' demands. Then they say if the authorities don't go along, they'll hold the place apart. Then they hold a big demonstration. And then, maybe, they negotiate with the authorities."

"We haven't seen it much out here in the suburbs," he added with a worried expression. "But I'll bet we'll see it here pretty soon."

HE MIGHT WELL be right.

Last year, students at Schoolcraft College in Livonia said some pretty strong things in connection with their protests against the war in Viet Nam, and North Farmington High School was the scene of a student strike against dress regulations.

The war is still going on; high schools still have dress regulations; and there are a score of other issues relevant to people in the suburbs which could erupt during this year.

It isn't that people are troubled by groups which oppose the war or dress regulations. Rather, they seem to be shocked and appalled at the ferocity of language used by the protesters.

The problem reminds me of a letter sent by the Warden and Fellows of Wadham College, Oxford University, England, to a group of students who had presented a list of non-negotiable demands. It read:

"Dear Gentlemen: We note your threat to take what you call 'direct action' unless your demands are immediately met. We feel that it is only sporting to let you know that our governing body includes three experts in chemical warfare, two ex-commandos skilled with dynamite and torturing prisoners, four qualified marksmen in both small arms and rifles, two ex-artillerymen, one holder of the Victoria Cross, four karate experts, and a chaplain."

"The governing body has authorized me to tell you that we look forward with confidence to what you call a 'confrontation,' and I may say even with anticipation."

My guess is that few institutions in America have quite the raw material for such a strategy to deal with confrontation.

MY GUESS ALSO is that most of us overlook two main points when we recoil from violent language of protest:

1) Confrontation is just another name for classical strategy in negotiating. You up the ante so high that the other side thinks it's lucky to get off alive, when all along you were quite prepared to live with much less than you demanded in the first place.

(We'll be seeing this particular game played by experts during the talks between the UAW and the auto companies later this year.)

2) In some cases, the feelings of the protesters are so strong that they quite literally feel their demands are non-negotiable.

Black groups protesting against slum landlords, for example, are faced with a situation in which their housing is quite literally uninhabitable: rats, no heat, broken stairs, smashed windows, no garbage cans, and so on.

In demanding on a non-negotiable basis an end to these conditions, such groups are merely stating what we in the suburbs consider to be fundamental conditions for housing, regardless of price.

In such situations, I can understand a non-negotiable demand. For living like a hu-

man being is not a matter for negotiation; either you do or you don't.

That's why, as we look at fe-

rocious language, non-negotiable demands, and strategies of confrontation, we might well think just for a second about exactly

what's at stake. We may be repelled by the language used, but in some cases it's only appropriate.

SUCCESS IS HARD TO MEASURE



R.T. Thompson writes

'71 Brings 4 More Monday Holidays

There are even brighter days ahead for those employees of federal, city and state offices, bank- ing institutions and the like who have a long holiday weekend ahead as offices close for Washington's birthday which falls on Sunday the 22nd this year.

The last time Washington's birthday created a Monday holiday was five years ago. Starting in 1971 and each year thereafter, the first President's birthday and three other holidays, in addition to Labor Day, will always be observed on Mondays.

The Monday Holiday Law setting four new annual mini-vacations into the calendar was a long time coming. It first was brought to the attention of Congress 19 years ago and finally received an affirmative vote in 1969.

Representatives Robert McCloy (Ill.) and Samuel Stratton (NY) sponsored the bill which was passed in 1969 to go into effect in 1971.

WITH THE BILL now law, from next year on all federal employees, members of the armed forces and people in the 40 states which have passed laws paralleling the federal statute will observe Washington's birthday the third Monday of each February, Memorial Day the last Monday in May, Columbus Day the second

Monday in October and Veterans' Day the fourth Monday in October.

Just imagine, two long holiday weekends in the same month and only two weeks apart. Among the states which have approved the Monday holidays is Michigan.

The 10 states which have not adopted Monday holidays are Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Those who worked for years to have the Monday Holiday Law passed believe most of the states will pass bills this year.

THEY POINT OUT "If they don't their families with one parent on a federal payroll are going

to be very angry with their lawmakers. The chance to get away on four holiday weekends will be shot because the kids in school will be on a different vacation schedule."

The group which guided the Holiday Bill through federal passage and acceptance by 40 states will be telling families in the remaining states they will be short changed on long holiday weekends if their legislatures fail to act.

With pressure of this type, the other 10 states are expected to fall in line quickly.

However, several of the states label the Monday Holidays as an attempt to "tamper with traditions." They may be hard to crack.

One state which considered

but rejected the bill last year put the coup de grace across with barbed humor. Opponents proposed that Halloween be moved from October 31 to a date between August 15 and 22. Sponsors said it was warmer then and a time spread would prevent a rain-out of tricking and treating.

And in that same state, an anonymous amendment to the Monday holiday bill proposed that April Fools Day be changed from April 1 to the Governor's birthday.

Be that as it may, there will be a great many workers who will enjoy four additional weekend long holidays starting next year. Check, you may be one of the lucky ones. The bill will not give additional holidays to every worker -- only a lucky few.

by AILEEN GUY
Livonia

To add to the article which appeared in the Observer regarding throwing snowballs at school buses, I would like to say that something should be done about throwing snowballs at any moving vehicles.

It seems as if the children who do this have parents who do not care that their children throw these snowballs. The windshield, the side windows, the rear window, and the body of my car has been struck with snowballs (and some of these snowballs contained rocks inside of them) ever so many times.

Many times I have stopped my car and have talked to some of these children, but most of the time, they disappear. Many times I have ducked while driving my car when a snowball came smashing on the windshield, and almost lost control of my car. If I should hit one of these children, I would feel just terrible about it, or if I should do some other damage to someone else's property.

A couple of weeks ago while driving down my own street, a boy who lives on our street—a policeman's son at that—was throwing snowballs at cars and he threw one at my car.

I stopped my car and said to him, "Do you know that just this past week a 12-year-old Livonia boy was killed by a car when he was throwing snowballs like you are?" He said that he didn't mean to hit the car.

I don't care about this, but the fact that his older brother made some rotten remark to my son about my having stopped my car and having the nerve to say anything about his younger brother's snowball throwing.

This boy was throwing snowballs right in front of his own house—and his parents didn't try to stop him. This happens over and over again in front of his own house, and in front of the other children's homes.

The parents see this, and see nothing wrong in it. What sort of adults will these youngsters grow up into?

I know that I am not the only motor vehicle operator who is burned up with this situation. What can be done to stop this sort of thing?

Tim Richard writes

Few Suburbanites Count Their Detroit Blessings

I was born and raised in Detroit, moved to the outstate area, and finally settled here in the suburbs, and you couldn't pay me enough to get me to go back to Detroit to live.

On the other hand, let us be fair to Detroit, even though it is politically fashionable these days for suburbanites to rant and rave against the big city.

"We," says the typical suburbanite, "built our homes out here. Detroit didn't help us. Detroit doesn't do anything for us. Why should we help Detroit?"

Now, one is entitled to hate Detroit all he wants, but it's quite another matter to argue that De-

troit doesn't do anything for anyone else. And it's a rare suburbanite who hasn't taken advantage of some Detroit service or another.

EVER HEARD OF a place called the zoo, out there on Woodward and 10 Mile? You pay to park, if you use the zoo's lot, but admission to the zoo is still free. It's operated out of Detroit's general fund.

Ever see those DSR buses coming into the edges of the suburbs? Well, the farebox revenues don't quite pay the full cost of operating them. A new Detroit city charter amendment will allow the general fund to make up the deficit.

Looking for an art institute that has paintings by Rembrandt, Winslow Homer, Van Gogh? There's one at Woodward and Kirby; admission is free, though they may charge two bits to check your coat. Operator: The City of Detroit.

Need to do some extremely deep research? The main library across the street from the art institute has all sorts of material that our suburban libraries lack. It gets a contribution from the Detroit general fund.

If you're a Michigan history buff, you will have visited the Detroit Historical Museum, the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle, and the Fort Wayne museum. You guessed it -- they're all operated out of Detroit's general fund.

YOU PROBABLY paid an admission to attend an event at Cobo Hall, the Ford Auditorium, or the Veterans Building down on the riverfront, all operated by Detroit's Civic Center Commission. But if you check the budget, you'll notice that revenues don't cover expenses.

And did you ever check the suburban license plates on Belle Isle or in Rouge Park?

It's strange to hear a suburbanite who works in Detroit complain about paying taxes there. His car uses Detroit's streets and makes demands on Detroit's planning and police departments, he throws his cigarette butts and gum wrappers on Detroit's sidewalks, he rides an elevator inspected by the city, his place of employment is protected by Detroit's fire department, he flushes his droppings in Detroit's sewers, and then moans:

"Why should I pay taxes to Detroit; it doesn't help me."

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