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Dismissal of a President: The Ordeal of Carleton Stanley at Dalhousie University, 1943-1945

“THE ROAD TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM is paved with the courage and periodic martyrdom of non-conformist professors”, historian Paul Axelrod has observed.¹ He might have added “and non-conformist administrators”, with Carleton Stanley, the president of Dalhousie University from 1931 to 1945, as an example. To paraphrase Axelrod, Stanley, who was a freethinking educationist, radical liberal, civil libertarian and social critic, provoked the anger and sometimes the might of university governors and powerful politicians. Hostility to political radicalism exposed Stanley to censorious treatment which culminated in his dismissal in January 1945.²

Described by the *University of Toronto Quarterly* in 1945 as “one of Canada’s leading humanists”, Carleton Stanley (1886-1971) was among those “notable critics of social science” who, according to Axelrod and John Reid, “denounced the erosion of moral philosophy, the decline of the classics [and] the emergence of applied psychology”. Nevertheless – and unlike the others – he did not view “professionalism” as an “incursion”;³ he simply wished to civilize the so-called learned professions with classical humanism.⁴ In 1925 Stanley had become associate

- 1 Paul Axelrod, “The Ironics of Academic Freedom”, in Klaus Petersen and Allan C. Hutchinson, eds., *Interpreting Censorship in Canada* (Toronto, 1999), p. 351. For a discussion of academic freedom, see Michiel Horn, *Academic Freedom in Canada: A History* (Toronto, 1999). See also Sharon E. Kahn and Dennis Pavlich, eds., *Academic Freedom and the Inclusive University* (Vancouver, 2000) which includes an article by Horn on “The Exclusive University and Academic Freedom”, pp. 48-56.
- 2 The definitive account of the “Stanley Affair” is found in P.B. Waite, *The Lives of Dalhousie University, Volume Two, 1925-1980: The Old College Transformed* (Montreal and Kingston, 1998), chapter 5, passim. See also Horn, *Academic Freedom*, pp. 178-81. It is instructive that Horn begins his introduction to *Academic Freedom* with Stanley, who as president of the National Conference of Canadian Universities (NCCU) tried unsuccessfully to organize a session on academic freedom for the 1937 annual meeting: Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 3.
- 3 “Introduction”, in Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, eds., *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education* (Kingston and Montreal, 1989), p. xxii.
- 4 A Hobhousian “new liberal” weaned on the Manchester *Guardian*, Stanley modelled himself on Goldwin Smith. Stanley initially made his name outside academe as a Jeremiah-like critic of Canadian culture. A product of the famous English and History honours course at Toronto who went on to achieve a First in Greats at Oxford, Stanley was the first Canadian graduate to be offered a tutorial fellowship at Hertford College. After three impoverished years as lecturer in English at Victoria College, relieved only by his becoming engaged to the eldest daughter of W.J. Alexander, the university professor of English, Stanley forsook academe for employment as a commercial traveller and sales agent of a textile manufacturer, eventually going into business for himself. For Stanley’s critique of national culture, see “Spiritual Conditions in Canada”, *Hibbert Journal*, 21 (1923), pp. 276-86 and 24 (1924), pp. 360-74. On the impact of this critique, see Sandra Dwja, *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F.R. Scott* (Toronto, 1987), p. 70.

Barry Cahill, “Dismissal of a President: The Ordeal of Carleton Stanley at Dalhousie University, 1943-1945”, *Acadiensis*, XXXI, 1 (Autumn 2001), pp. 76-102.

professor of Greek at McGill University. Serving as school board commissioner and school inspector for the Town of Mount Royal, Stanley made a name for himself as a vigorous champion of the cause of Protestant school education in Quebec. A brief spell as “general staff officer” to McGill’s martial principal, Sir Arthur Currie, gave him the experience of and a taste for university administration – at which he soon proved himself adept. During Currie’s absence from December 1930 to May 1931 Stanley was the de facto principal of the university. At this point, he also learned something of crisis management within the context of academic freedom. When F.R. Scott, whom Stanley had befriended before either of them became McGill professors, was in trouble early in 1931 for writing a letter to the editor of the *Montreal Gazette* in which he criticized the local police for breaking up a socialist meeting, Stanley counselled administrative caution.⁵

In the spring of 1931 Stanley at first rejected out of hand, then very reluctantly accepted, the presidency of Dalhousie University.⁶ Dalhousie’s first non-Nova Scotian president, Stanley aimed to emulate the example of Sir Robert Falconer, president of the University of Toronto during most of Stanley’s time there as both a student and a teacher.⁷ Stanley, whom Falconer had in view as his own eventual successor,⁸ strove to become what his mentor and model had been – an innovator. Stanley was determined to drag Archibald MacMechan’s fabled “lyttil college” into the 20th century – initially by raising its standards of admission to those of Central Canada. A school administrator with long and salutary experience of the Montreal Protestant Central School Board, Stanley interested himself in all aspects of secondary-school education in Nova Scotia. Believing that the university’s first and highest pedagogical obligation was to teach teachers, he revitalized the university’s department of education, which had been established in 1928.

The premature and unexpected death of Sir Arthur Currie in November 1933 brought home to Stanley that he had made an error in judgement by leaving McGill. The post of assistant to the principal, which had been specially created for him in

5 See generally Djwa, *Politics of the Imagination*, pp. 129-31.

6 On Stanley’s administration at Dalhousie see Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 51-111. The Dalhousie post had first been offered to and declined by Stanley’s wealthy and influential Liberal friend, Vincent Massey, whose family’s money had paid for Stanley’s two years at Oxford; Vincent Massey, *What’s Past is Prologue: The Memoirs* (Toronto, 1963), p. 181. The presidency had also been offered to and declined by Rev. Dr. Edmund Henry Oliver, principal of St. Andrew’s College (University of Saskatchewan) and Moderator of the United Church of Canada: Clarence MacKinnon, *Life of Principal Oliver* (Toronto, 1936), pp. 100-02.

7 Sir Robert Falconer was also an early champion and exponent of academic freedom: “Academic Freedom is in fact one chapter in the history of Toleration, and is best understood as a phase in the general course of a people’s development in liberty of thought”: Falconer, *Academic Freedom: A public address delivered in Convocation Hall . . . under the auspices of the Alumni Federation of the University of Toronto* (Toronto, 1922), p. 6. This, the first authoritative Canadian statement on the subject, arose out of a “live” situation involving Robert Morrison MacIver, a professor of political economy at the University of Toronto. See Horn, *Academic Freedom*, pp. 68-70. Yet another of academic freedom’s ironies is that MacIver, years after leaving for Columbia University, as director of the American Academic Freedom Project, wrote a definitive text on the subject, *Academic Freedom in Our Time* (New York, 1955).

8 W.J. Alexander to Stanley, 17 December 1931, Carleton Stanley [CS] fonds, DAL MS-2-163/A-12, Dalhousie University Archives [DUA].

October 1930 as a springboard to the principalship, remained vacant after his departure and was never refilled. By leaving, however reluctantly, Stanley forfeited his claim to succeed Currie. The post of principal remained vacant for two years – only to be offered to a nondescript Englishman, Arthur Eustace Morgan,⁹ who, unlike Stanley, did not enjoy for long the complete confidence of Sir Edward Beatty, McGill’s all-powerful chancellor.¹⁰ As ex officio chair of the board of governors, Beatty intervened personally and directly in university affairs, both proposing and disposing of principals. Whereas Beatty (president of the Canadian Pacific Railway) was a man of the right, Principal Morgan was “more than a little inclined to the left”. Similarly, Stanley’s left-wing liberalism did not endear him to the “tories” on the Dalhousie board any more than Morgan’s easy toleration of socialist intellectuals among the academic staff endeared him to Beatty and other corporate bigwigs on the McGill board. What an emigrant Englishman such as Morgan was seen to be in Montreal, an expatriate Ontarian such as Stanley was seen to be in Halifax – a condescending outsider. According to Stanley Frost, Stanley, like Morgan, also “had unfortunately succeeded in alienating the sympathies of almost all who had any personal contact with him. This was particularly true of the members of the academic staff. Too many stories are told of an almost incredible insensitivity for them all to be apocryphal. His [Morgan’s] kindest critic was perhaps his secretary . . . but even she noted that ‘he often appeared arrogant and he was in fact a somewhat strange mixture of the autocrat and the socialist’”.¹¹ In 1937 the McGill board asked for and received Morgan’s resignation. The Morgan affair at McGill was eerily anticipatory of the Stanley affair at Dalhousie some eight years later.

Chagrined and checkmated by his premature departure from McGill, Stanley resigned himself to his tasks at Dalhousie. He remained active in the National Conference of Canadian Universities (later the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada) of which he was successively secretary-treasurer, vice-president and president between 1934 and 1937. A strong advocate of improvements in teacher education, Stanley was among the first to propose that universities take the lead in raising the standard of schoolteaching by assuming sole responsibility for teacher training – a radical idea in 1944.¹² Inclined to be superior and condescending, however, Stanley often had trouble communicating his vision of the social responsibility of the university to those “economic royalists” who dominated Dalhousie’s board of governors for years before and after his tenure.¹³ Stanley’s left-

9 On Morgan’s brief principalship see Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Volume II, 1895-1971* (Montreal and Kingston, 1984), pp. 192-7.

10 D.H. Miller-Barstow, *Beatty of the C.P.R.: A Biography* (Toronto, 1951), p. 151.

11 Frost, *McGill University*, p. 197.

12 Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada, 1663-1960* (Toronto, 1976), p. 544.

13 For most of the first half of the 20th century, the chair of Dalhousie’s board of governors was either a corporate lawyer or a financier-promoter or both (as in Stewart’s case). See John Barkans and Norene Pupo, “The Boards of Governors and the Power Elite: A Case Study of Eight Canadian [Ontario] Universities”, *Sociological Focus*, 7 (1974), pp. 81-98. The constitution and powers of the university’s board of governors and its executive committee were regulated by the Dalhousie College Act of 1935. Next to the chair in order of precedence sat the president, who, though not an officer of the board, was an ex officio member of the executive committee. During the Stanley presidency Dalhousie’s board of governors was not only “a huge cooptative body”, but also a hugely incestuous one. As a corporation dominated by big business, Dalhousie’s board was prone to inbreeding, 22 of

liberalism and his contemptuous attitude towards the vested interests inevitably made him enemies. He also gave what could be perceived as too many daring speeches, and his observations were frequently reported in local and national newspapers.¹⁴

“In eleven years’ time”, Stanley wrote in 1942, “I have had many struggles here for academic freedom and have always won”.¹⁵ The first occurred soon after his arrival in August 1931. R.A. MacKay, holder of the Eric Dennis Memorial Chair of Government and Political Science since 1926, published in *Maclean’s* – at the height of the Beauharnois political corruption scandal – a stinging indictment of the hypocrisy and unethical behaviour of political parties in and out of government.¹⁶ James McGregor Stewart, K.C. (a junior member of Dalhousie’s board) insisted that MacKay be dismissed. According to Stanley:

As I travelled here [Halifax] from Montreal, I read accounts in the newspapers of the Beauharnois scandal. Immediately after that, a Dalhousie professor wrote about the matter in public; and in my first conversation, after August 3 [1931], with Mr. Stewart,¹⁷ he strongly advised me to dismiss that professor, saying that if we did not we should lose a large amount of money. I answered, “If anyone wants to call a meeting even to discuss dismissing that professor, the meeting will have my resignation also. I have read the article the professor wrote, and I see nothing wrong in it, and quite a bit that is right”. We did not dismiss the professor and we did not lose the money.¹⁸

its 33 members in 1944-45 being order-in-council appointees nominated by the sitting members. For half a century the university’s board had been largely peopled, and exclusively run by corporate lawyers, promoters and financiers. See “Comments on letter from J. McG. Stewart to Colonel Laurie – Nov. 27, 1944”, Carleton Stanley [CS] series, file 6, in John Clarence Webster Manuscript Collection [JCW Collection], New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick [NBM]. Concerning the 1935 Dalhousie Act, see Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 74-6.

14 Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 49-53.

15 Stanley to H.N. Fieldhouse, 8 December 1942, CS fonds, file B-60, DUA.

16 Robert A. MacKay, “After Beauharnois – What? . . . The Problem of Money in Politics”, *Maclean’s* (October 1931), pp. 7-8, 61-3. See also T.D. Regehr, “‘High-powered Lawyers, Veteran Lobbyists, Cunning Propagandists’: Canadian Lawyers and the Beauharnois Scandal”, in Carol Wilton, ed., *Beyond the Law: Lawyers and Business in Canada, 1830 to 1930* (Toronto, 1990), p. 403 and *The Beauharnois Scandal: A Story of Canadian Entrepreneurship and Politics* (Toronto, 1990), p. 192 and Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 54-5.

17 “It happened that a notability here [Stewart], who professes a great regard for your opinions, was saying heavy, stupid things about a professor [MacKay] who had lifted up his voice about this same piece of political corruption [Beauharnois]. I was obliged to deal with him as the prophet dealt with David”; Stanley to Sir Robert Falconer, 22 December 1931 (copy), CS fonds, DAL MS-2-163/B-17, DUA.

18 Dalhousie University Board of Governors minutes [Board minutes], 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163, series B, files 84, 85, DUA. Unlike his mentor Falconer, whom he counselled in 1931 during the furore over the letter of the 68 Toronto professors protesting state harassment of alleged Communists, Stanley did not believe that university teachers should refrain from commenting publicly on controversial public issues. He himself continually did so. See Stanley to Falconer, 22 December 1931, quoted in James G. Greenlee, *Sir Robert Falconer: A Biography* (Toronto, 1988), pp. 299-300. See also Michiel Horn, “‘Free Speech Within the Law’: the Letter of the Sixty-Eight Toronto Professors, 1931”, *Ontario History*, 72, 1 (March 1980), pp. 27-48.

It was J. McG. Stewart who would prove to be Stanley's nemesis.¹⁹ A Halifax corporate lawyer who joined the board in 1929, Stewart, like Stanley, was a self-made man. Both had graduated from their respective universities – Toronto and Dalhousie – with high honours. The two philologues, one the former holder of a chair in Greek, the other a former tutor, occasionally quoted Greek literary texts in their letters to each other. When Stanley arrived in Halifax, Stewart was already the most influential business and political lawyer in eastern Canada.²⁰

Stanley's second struggle for academic freedom occurred soon after the first, and occasioned his second serious disagreement with Stewart. He resisted Stewart's efforts to persuade him to dismiss the four professors who had supported G. Fred Pearson, then chair of the Dalhousie board, in his campaign to oust Stanley from the presidency.²¹ The Pearson "intrigue" culminated in Pearson's resignation, not Stanley's dismissal. On that occasion Stewart supported the president against the chair and his faculty partisans. Pearson was obliged to resign, and Stewart was rewarded with the vice-chairmanship. Stewart showed his appreciation by attempting unsuccessfully to drag on the neophyte president into dismissing the four professors who were implicated.²²

The chief difficulty between Stanley and Stewart was that Stewart held very decided ad hominem views on a subject about which the president believed that the board, both individually and collectively, was not entitled to hold any opinion whatever: the hiring, promotion and termination of faculty and staff. As Stanley declaimed to the board during the final crisis of 1944-45, "It is obvious, of course, that while he is President, the Board will approve his recommendations about appointments and promotions".²³ Nothing could have been less obvious to Stewart, for whom the board did not necessarily approve the president's recommendations about anything – especially faculty appointments.

Stanley would not tolerate the governors interfering directly in matters of academic preferment, nor would Stewart forbear attempting to influence appointments, the final decision in which, then as now, lay with the board. "And this sort of thing has gone on for more than thirteen years", complained Stanley in 1944 with regard to Stewart's chronic interference in academic matters over the entire course of Stanley's presidency.²⁴ "About dismissals", declared Stanley, "I am glad to be able to say that not many Governors have made demands to me that professors, or officials, be

19 J. McG. Stewart (1889-1955) was the foremost Canadian corporation lawyer of his day; see Barry Cahill, *The Thousandth Man: A Biography of James McGregor Stewart* (Toronto, 2000).

20 Stewart's venerable uncle, Dr. John Stewart, was the dean of medicine at Dalhousie University.

21 See generally Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 56-61. The professors concerned were Raymond Jackson Bean (medicine), H.L. Bronson (physics), Sidney Smith (dean of law) and George Wilson (history).

22 McInnes and Stewart, Conservatives both, were the chief beneficiaries of the Liberal Pearson's fall. At the decisive board of governors meeting on 6 June 1932 it was Stewart who, despite expressing "regret" at the "impasse" which had been reached between the chairman and the president, moved the motion that passed unanimously and led immediately to Pearson's resignation as chair and member of the board. The same language would be used in 1945, only then the impasse existed between the president and a majority of the board.

23 Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

24 *Ibid.*

dismissed. But Mr. Stewart has demanded that six professors in all be dismissed, and many of you know that he urged this, in one case, in a Board meeting".²⁵ Stewart rejoined:

He [the president] says that I pressed for dismissals in six cases. I certainly deny that I pressed for the dismissal of as many as that. I may have asked him why he didn't recommend dismissals, but that is an entirely different thing from asking for dismissals. In two cases, he very properly referred to academic freedom. We discussed academic freedom and how far it went. If I had been pressing for dismissals, I assure you I would have brought the matter before the Board. But I was satisfied with the discussion and I dropped it.²⁶

Two years after Stewart became chair of the board, in July 1937, the Second World War interposed and changed Dalhousie forever; when it was over, Stewart was still chair in everything but name but Stanley was no longer president in name or in fact. Despite their philosophical and political differences, the conflict between Stewart and Stanley was one more of character and personality than of ideology. Though never friends and often in disagreement about university affairs, especially after the outbreak of war in September 1939, Stewart and Stanley were not public enemies until the existence of a "coup plot" was revealed in October 1944. Stanley was a liberal democrat with a Christian Socialist's conscience, while Stewart was a Tory grandee who believed that university teachers, and especially university administrators, should be seen and not heard outside the senate room. He also believed they should stay well away from issues of political economy, and especially the politics of social action.

Stanley's final climactic struggle for what he saw as issues of academic freedom was to be his own struggle for survival. In April 1943 Stewart suddenly and unexpectedly resigned as chair of the board for no reason other than that he had had enough of Stanley.²⁷ The president had more authority and responsibility than real power, and he had made influential enemies both inside and outside the university. Stewart quickly took the measure of the naive and inexperienced governor who

25 Memorandum, Stanley to Dalhousie Board of Governors [ca. 23 January 1945], CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-85, DUA. The professor concerned was probably Basil Fletcher, "one of the most distinguished professors I ever brought here, and who was attacked in Board meetings by the then Chairman [Stewart] on no other ground except that he had praised the Cooperative Movement. Fletcher finally left us, knowing of these attacks": Stanley to Webster, 20 February 1945, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM. Fletcher was O.E. Smith Professor of Education from 1935 to 1939. The six were Sidney Smith (law), R.A. MacKay (political science), Basil Fletcher (education), Allan Findlay (law), R.J. Bean (medicine) and Howard L. Bronson (physics). Smith resigned in 1934, after five years as dean of law; MacKay remained until 1947; Fletcher resigned in 1939 after four years; and Findlay's position was abolished at the end of his probationary year in 1940. On the Findlay affair, see Barry Cahill, "Academic Freedom in Wartime: The Defence of Canada Regulations, Dalhousie Law School and the Prosecution of Allan Findlay" (paper presented at New Currents in the North Atlantic: Emerging Scholarship on Atlantic Canada, Atlantic Canada Workshop, August 1997).

26 Board minutes, 23 January 1945, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

27 Stewart declined to consider the board's offer of a leave of absence from his post as chair, seeming "to think that even this was not possible": Board minutes, 27 April 1943, DAL-MS-1-1/A-9, DUA.

replaced him as chair in May 1945 and then placed him at the head of a carefully selected cadre whose loyalty (and silence) he could depend upon. In the four months between the end of September 1944 and the end of January 1945, these “palace revolutionaries”, with Stewart “leading from behind”, slowly but surely widened their base of support. The coup was so well-planned and well-executed that it deserved to succeed and it did.²⁸

The new chair of the board, Colonel K.C. Laurie, a retired army officer, was out of his depth and woefully unprepared. It was obvious to everyone, especially Stanley, that whoever succeeded Stewart would simply be a frontman for the past chairman. No sooner had Laurie succeeded him than Stewart began sowing the seeds of discord between chairman and president.²⁹ Apparently, according to Stanley, Laurie was unable or unwilling to take a step without consulting Stewart.³⁰ Stanley, having encouraged and approved this transition would soon repent of his misplaced trust in the ex-chairman and his protégé: “Stewart is the villain – Laurie the tool”.³¹

Stanley later claimed to have known since October 1943 “that a cabal was out to remove” him.³² Sometime after July 1943, Stewart decided that the university’s contribution to the war effort was being discredited by the president’s insistence on financial remuneration for military use of Dalhousie land and buildings. On this matter Stanley had taken it upon himself to speak for the board, in his capacity as an ex officio member, a practice encouraged by Stewart’s many distractions and absences during the war. But the president was not an officer of the board and had no authority to speak on its behalf. On more than one occasion Stewart had been severely embarrassed by Stanley’s attempts to conduct delicate financial negotiations with

28 As Stanley observed, Stewart, who “was powerfully entrenched in every sort of way, [had] built up round him a group of people who would do his bidding”: Stanley to Webster, 28 May 1945 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-120, DUA.

29 See Stanley’s retrospective, 12-point indictment of Stewart’s brinkmanship: CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-81, DUA.

30 Stanley to Webster, 15 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-119, DUA; cf. “I have just seen a prominent Haligonian who believes that the unscrupulous lawyer [Stewart] is the active spirit in the intrigue, & that he is cleverly using the drill-sergeant Colonel [Laurie]”: Webster to Stanley, 14 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-119, DUA.

31 Stanley to John A. Stevenson, 29 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-74, DUA.

32 Stanley’s decline and fall may have begun as early as 6 October 1943, when, in his capacity as chair of the Subcommittee on Rehabilitation, Carnegie Advisory Committee for the Maritime Provinces, he was invited by Commissioner Robert MacGregor Dawson to give evidence before Nova Scotia’s Royal Commission on Provincial Development and Rehabilitation. Stanley pointedly condemned the public school system, blaming its inadequacy on the poor quality of teacher education. But he saved his strongest criticism for Maritime universities, claiming that there were far too many of them. In Stanley’s estimation, Dalhousie already was the interprovincial university and Atlantic Canada’s answer to the University of Toronto. And the prime example of university federation, which the Committee advocated, was the formal relationship which had existed between Dalhousie and the University of King’s College since 1923. Many of Stanley’s ideas found their way into the volume of the Commission’s report dealing with education, in which his testimony is quoted. See “‘Carpet Bagging’ For Students Charged; Too Many Degree-Granting Bodies In Maritimes. University Head Says”, *Halifax Chronicle*, 7 October 1943 (Stanley, of course, made clear he was speaking *ex parte*); *Report of the [Nova Scotia] Royal Commission on Provincial Development and Rehabilitation – V Report on Education* (Halifax, 1944), especially Chapter XI, “University Education”, pp. 103-18 (Stanley is quoted on p. 46, in the chapter entitled, “Education in the Junior High School”).

Nova Scotia's ministers in the federal cabinet.³³ These did more harm than good, and for their ultimate failure Stanley was scapegoated by his opponents on the board, who did not appreciate his activities as a financial intermediary. Stewart, in particular, was fearful that the president's sledgehammer approach and lack of political astuteness would reflect on the university and its commitment to the war effort. He therefore decided to rid the university of what he saw as its meddlesome president before Stanley could do any more harm to Dalhousie's good relations with government.

Stewart later claimed to have known that Stanley was *persona non grata* to federal ministers. Stewart, "the man round the University who had the confidence of the government",³⁴ believed that the president was injuring the university's reputation among "members of governments to which Dalhousie would naturally go for support".³⁵ The main obstacle lying in Stewart's path, as he sought to manage the fiscal crisis and limit the damage done by the president's meddling, was Stanley himself. So active was Stewart as lead conspirator after his resignation as chair that, as early as May 1943, immediately after succeeding Stewart, Laurie reported to John Clarence Webster (vice-chair of the board) the existence of a movement to effect Stanley's "retirement" from the presidency.³⁶ By October Stanley "was beginning to have positive assurance that Stewart and Laurie were working very hard to undermine" him.³⁷ In November 1944 Stanley confided to Webster: "As far back as November, 1943, I was driven to conclude that someone [Stewart], who seemed to be in a desperate hurry, was egging Colonel Laurie on to reckless courses".³⁸

The financial situation was further complicated in December 1943 when, in Stanley's words, the university "partially lost [its] opportunities . . . to secure money from business firms, as other universities have been doing".³⁹ Dalhousie, lacking a permanent government grant, relied on its endowments, which in March 1944 stood at about \$4,000,000, one-quarter of which was the gift of Viscount Bennett.⁴⁰ The

33 Full documentation of these negotiations is to be found in the CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-111, DUA. They had to do with the amount of money which Dalhousie-King's would receive in compensation for naval use of university buildings and property during the war. The issue became a political football kicked back and forth among Dalhousie's board of governors, J.L. Ilesley (Minister of Finance) and Angus L. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence for Naval Services). See Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 107-8.

34 F.R. Davis (Nova Scotia Minister of Health and Welfare), cited by Stanley, *aide-mémoire* on C.J. Burchell, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-69, DUA.

35 Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, B-85, DUA.

36 Webster to Laurie, 22 June 1943; quoted in Laurie to Webster, 13 November 1944, CS series, file 1, JCW Collection, NBM. Concerning Webster see George F.G. Stanley, "John Clarence Webster: The Laird of Shediac", *Acadiensis*, III, 1 (Autumn 1973), pp. 57-71.

37 Carleton Stanley memorandum on George MacGregor Mitchell, 18-19 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-69, DUA; cf. "Since October, 1943, I have known that a cabal was out to remove me from my present position": Stanley to Stevenson, 29 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B74, DUA.

38 "This statement was prepared for, but not used at, the 28 November, 1944 Board meeting. C[arleton] S[tanley]": CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM.

39 For this and what follows see Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA. The reason for the moratorium was the impact of the Excess Profits Tax Amendment Act, which prevented corporations from writing off "excess profits" as charitable donations.

40 R.B. Bennett, former Conservative prime minister and long-time member of Dalhousie's board of governors, during the war years was Dalhousie's greatest benefactor to date.

perennial fiscal crisis, which had deepened during the war, was scarcely affected by the annual \$20,000 subvention from the government of Nova Scotia to assist the medical and dental schools.⁴¹ And, despite Stewart's encouraging interview with the prime minister, no financial assistance for the professional faculties would be forthcoming from Ottawa.⁴² By way of response to the emergency, Stewart counselled what seemed to Stanley extreme and unacceptable measures. Of Stewart, Stanley wrote:

I have opposed him often in many, many ways, but we have always refrained from quarrelling and heat. He has been very suave, and I never get agitated about Dalhousie business. But there is one thing that he has urged upon me, over a long period since the war began . . . and that was his plan, ostensibly as a necessity of war, to close the University down in whole, he sometimes urged, and in part at other times, but there is no part of the University which he has not at one time or other urged me to close down.⁴³

At a private meeting held sometime between March and September 1944, the chair and the chair emeritus had tried and failed to dissuade the president and the dean of medicine from appointing Dr. Chester Bryant Stewart as Mrs. E.B. Eddy Professor of Epidemiology and Nursing Education, one of the four chairs which Viscount Bennett had endowed. Stanley, who strongly opposed the alternative candidate put forward by Laurie and Stewart, afterwards accused Stewart of threatening him ("If you don't make this appointment you will live to regret it"). Stewart denied the accusation;⁴⁴ yet if it was a threat, then Stewart was as good as his word. At the regular board meeting in February 1945, Stewart would triumphantly declare, "The Board has absolute power to make all appointments. It is only by custom that the President's recommendations are accepted".⁴⁵

The beginning of the end for Stanley took place at the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa, on 5 June 1944. The occasion was a luncheon meeting of the Dalhousie University Association of Ottawa, which was hastily convened to coincide with a visit to the capital by President Stanley. In attendance were two of Nova Scotia's four federal ministers (J.L. Ilesley and Angus L. Macdonald) and the former acting Conservative Party leader (R.B. Hanson of New Brunswick),⁴⁶ as well as George

41 "Dalhousie University Special Gifts and Grants, etc.": Session 1918/19 to 1930/31 – Session 1931/32 to 1943/44, all inclusive [19 November 1944], CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-87, DUA.

42 Stewart to Stanley, 25 February 1940, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-115, DUA.

43 Stanley to Webster, 17 November 1944, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM.

44 Board minutes, 28 November 1944 (per Stewart); cf. "It is an astounding statement that any Governor cannot make suggestions to the President of the University, in his office, that a certain person might be a suitable candidate for a certain appointment. If we do this we are supposed to have trespassed. Surely it is a function of ours [the board] to do everything we can to aid the University": Board minutes, 23 January 1945 (per Stewart). A more candid and sinister account of "this private meeting of four in my [the president's] office," in which Stanley came close to accusing Stewart and Laurie's candidate, as well as other unnamed members of the Faculty of Medicine, of gross anti-Semitism, is extant: CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, DUA (typewritten draft with holograph revisions).

45 Board minutes, 27 February 1945, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

46 All three of them graduates of Dalhousie Law School and Macdonald a former professor.

Farquhar, the editor of the *Alumni News* and a member of the university's board of governors. Stanley gave a "state of the university" speech in which he allegedly drew unfavourable contrasts between his own enlightened and progressive regime and the previous one. Thanks to Farquhar, the speech was hostilely reported and editorially criticized in the next issue of the *Alumni News*.⁴⁷

The president's remarks⁴⁸ occasioned two widely-circulated poison-pen letters, written by John E. Read, K.C., assistant under-secretary in the Department of External Affairs, which did more harm to the president's increasingly precarious situation than anything Stanley could possibly have said at the Alumni luncheon.⁴⁹ Read, a former dean of Dalhousie Law School, had only recently ceased to be chair of the Dalhousie University Association of Ottawa, so his comments carried some weight. Moreover, his observations were seen as credible since he had been in attendance at the luncheon. Read's original letter, which was addressed to the chair of the board though intended for and aimed at the president, was read to Stanley by Laurie and afterwards shown to other members of the board, including Stewart.

By August Mr. Justice J.W. Doull of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, a former Conservative attorney-general and close political associate of Stewart's, had joined the board of governors.⁵⁰ At the meeting of the executive committee on 22 August, immediately before the regular meeting of the full board, it was recommended that the board be asked to hold a special meeting, ostensibly "for the sole purpose of discussing [financial] campaign matters".⁵¹ The date for the special meeting was set for 15 September. Stewart, who had not been present at the regular board meeting, took pains to appear at the special one, where he was the first to speak. According to the minutes of the meeting:

since receiving the notice of the meeting he [Stewart] had given much thought to the Dalhousie situation, and he believed that it was practically a necessity that an appeal should be made to the public, but he realised that *there were immense practical difficulties in the way of launching a campaign under present conditions*. He suggested that a small committee of about five members should be appointed to make an intensive study, and report to the Board at its earliest opportunity.

47 Dalhousie University, *Alumni News*, October 1944, p. 12 – "Ottawa Association"; for President Stanley's own detailed account, see Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA. See also "Foresees Boom For Canadian Colleges in Post-War Years", *Ottawa Journal*, 6 June 1944 and "Tells of Growth of Dalhousie U.", *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, 6 June 1944.

48 The president spoke from notes, which were still in his possession five months later, but are not now extant: Board minutes, 28 November 1944 (per Stanley), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

49 Read to Laurie, 25 June 1944 (copy, unsigned) and Read to Laurie (copy, signed), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-114, DUA.

50 Writing to Viscount Bennett in January 1945, Doull explained the background and progress of the conspiracy as: "J. McG. Stewart was Chairman for some years and no one knew of any open break between himself and the President, yet relations were such that this former Chairman is the mover of the resolution which has given rise to the present situation. He is the active spirit in the attack": Doull to Bennett, 26 January 1945 (copy), Colleges and Universities [CU] collection, MG 17, vol. 20, file 3, Public Archives of Nova Scotia/Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management [PANS].

51 Board minutes, 22 August 1944, MS-1-1/A-10, DUA.

After some discussion, in which Stewart's arguments were forcefully supported by Treasurer F.B. McCurdy, the chair emeritus moved that a campaign be undertaken. Stewart's motion having been carried unanimously, Doull then "moved that a committee be appointed to make a preliminary study of the situation".⁵² When the motion was carried, Doull moved that the chair of the board be the chair of the select committee with power to co-opt the other four members; the motion was seconded by Stewart and carried. Not surprisingly, the members chosen by Laurie were Stewart, Doull, Charles Fogo Mackenzie (a lawyer, secretary to the board and nephew to the late former president) and George Farquhar. This financial planning committee would quickly metamorphose into a select committee to remove the president.

For Stanley, then, the die was cast. Over the next six weeks, the Pre-Campaign Committee, as it was officially known,⁵³ organized a quite different campaign from that which was ostensibly intended. The committee was small and homogeneous enough to serve as a front while Stewart got on with the task of bringing round to his point of view the other active members of the board. Stanley innocently took the bait; he approved setting up the committee, if only because the university was (as usual) in dire financial straits and it was the board's responsibility to find the money while the president got on with the job of spending it. In his only letter to Chairman Laurie concerning this business, written ten days before the committee held its first and only meeting, Stanley waived any interest in serving personally or in recommending the members of the committee.⁵⁴ Thus the Pre-Campaign Committee was able to operate quite independently of the president.

The committee met on 29 September in Stewart's office with all five members in attendance. Stanley was later to complain: "I was not notified that this meeting was being held nor invited to it, nor told anything about it until a month later. The whereabouts of the meeting; whether it was long or short; whether any minutes were kept of its proceedings: all this has been wrapped in mystery".⁵⁵ Purposely, no minutes were kept and, on the pretext that it was a committee of the board, not a subcommittee of the executive, the executive committee was also kept in the dark. The report had to be kept secret from everyone until such time as Laurie and Stewart were ready to reveal its central finding to the president. The executive committee, therefore, which met next on 20 October, was not apprised of the report, though two members were present in their capacity as officers of the board. Furthermore, ordinary members of the board had allegedly been canvassed by or on behalf of the committee during the three weeks which elapsed between its inaugural meeting and the disclosure of its damning report to the president.

Stanley was kept in the dark until the last week of October, when Laurie and Stewart called on him to present the committee's report. It could not be released to the board for another month, when the third-quarterly meeting was scheduled to be held.

52 Ibid. Emphasis added.

53 Unofficially, the Pre-Campaign Committee was known as the "Committee of Five".

54 "I have, of course, been thinking hard about who your four colleagues should be on the [Pre-Campaign] committee, but have no wish to intrude my opinion, as that choice was certainly left to you decisively": Stanley to Laurie, 19 September 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-89, DUA. (The president was an ex officio member of all standing committees of the board, not ad hoc or select ones).

55 Board minutes, 23 January 1945 (per Stanley), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

According to Stanley's account, "On October 24 . . . by previous arrangement Mr J. McG. Stewart and Colonel Laurie came to see me in my office. Colonel Laurie had telephoned to me that he and Mr Stewart wished to discuss with me the financial campaign. As soon as they were seated, Colonel Laurie began to read out what I at once saw was an indictment against myself".⁵⁶ Little wonder that Stanley afterwards concluded that this committee "went far beyond its terms of reference".⁵⁷ Or that "the general opinion was that the committee was unable or unwilling to conduct the campaign for funds and the attack on President Stanley was merely an excuse for not doing anything".⁵⁸ Nothing was achieved at the meeting, at which Laurie did most of the talking, while Stewart either maintained a discreet silence or acted as prompter. "For an hour and a half", declared Stanley,

the two of them kept pressing me for a reply, to the Committee of Five. I answered that I had nothing to say to them nor to the Committee of Five; but I kept pressing them to say what the real charges were against me. I said it is impossible that any Committee of the Board met and came to such a drastic conclusion unless other matters, than the Board's inability to raise money while I was President, were also talked of.⁵⁹

In hindsight, the meeting served to confirm Stanley's worst suspicions. He wrote his son three weeks later: "So three minutes after the attackers opened, October 24 last, I knew they were licked. And I was glad that at last they were going to hit me openly. For I have known, as an honest clean guesser can know, that they and others were gunning for me since Oct. 1943".⁶⁰ The coup plotters nevertheless had a month's head start, while Stanley was being forced to fight a rearguard action.

On 27 October, both the chairman and the president went to Shediac, New Brunswick to consult with the vice-chair, Webster. When Stanley arrived at Webster's house, Laurie's car was already parked in front so the president decided to return the next day. "You were the first person I went to see, as Vice-Chairman of the Board", Stanley explained to Webster. "I had to see you because the Chairman and the ex-Chairman were ganged up together".⁶¹ Webster "repeated the various charges against him, reported by [Laurie] and asked him to reply to them. He did so frankly and without any reservations".⁶² Upon hearing Stanley's account of the situation, Webster advised him to inform Viscount Bennett. "The real attack is made because I refuse to appoint incompetent people to academic posts and refuse to dismiss those who are

56 Board minutes, 28 November 1944 (per Stanley), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

57 Board minutes, 23 January 1945 (per Stanley), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85 DUA.

58 Bennett to Laurie, 28 April 1945 (copy), CS series, file 7, JCW Collection, NBM, cf. "But now, in the face of the whole record about finances – my activity, and the comparative inactivity of the Board – a committee of five of unconstitutional character attempts to exculpate the Board for not being active about finances by making me the scapegoat": memorandum, Stanley to Dalhousie Board of Governors [after 28 November 1944], CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-85, DUA.

59 Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

60 Stanley to C.A. Stanley, 16 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-74, DUA.

61 Stanley to Webster, 17 November 1944, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM.

62 Webster to Laurie, [7] November 1944 (copy), PANS fonds, RG 53, vol. 11, PANS.

unjustly charged. . . . The little cabal is working very fast".⁶³

Rightly suspecting that it was Stewart (and Stewart alone) who was the prime mover of the conspiracy to overthrow him, Stanley nevertheless decided to make a final appeal directly and privately to the ex-chairman to recant and disavow. One week after learning of the committee's findings on 31 October, Stanley confronted Stewart in his office:

He [Stewart] had agreed, over the telephone, to see whether he and I could not do something in Dalhousie's interest, despite all the beans that had been spilt. I told him that it had been my idea entirely to see him, but that one or two very honourable gentlemen with whom I had discussed matters, after they had heard things from the other side, had concurred with me in the belief that he, Mr. Stewart, was able to do much, even at this late hour, to prevent a widening out of the scandal – though these gentlemen had urged me also, for the good of Canadian affairs, as well as Dalhousie's, not to let the game go by default. Giving him no chance to reply, I went on: 'I say to you, as confidently as I can say anything, that in my best judgment you would not have done what you did last Tuesday [24 October] had you known even some of the things I know about this situation. I have nothing to say to you at the present moment. I don't want you to ask me what is the truth of the situation at this moment. I have, however, in my possession some papers indicating that most improper suggestions have been made to me about the administration of Dalhousie's affairs, and that some things have actually been done over my protest which should never have been done. Will you look at these papers, or will you rather look, first of all, at one of them? I shall be amazed if you are not amazed by that letter, and if you agree about that letter, and think you should see more, I will show you just two or three more, though there is quite an accumulation of them. One of them indeed is a suggestion that I should do in my own name and in the name of Dalhousie, and in a very public way about as dishonourable a thing as a man could be asked to do'.⁶⁴

This seemed to have rather a rib-crushing effect; but the immediate answer, in a quite friendly tone, was to enquire about my opinion about a number of Dalhousie and other matters quite irrelevant to this main issue. I rose to go, and said I had nothing else to speak about at this moment. Time was pressing, and would he come to look at these papers soon? He promised to communicate with me to-day [31 October], or at latest to-morrow; and I came away.⁶⁵

63 Stanley to Bennett, 29 October 1944 (copy), CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM.

64 A reference to the letters of 22 and 26 July from Laurie, asking the president to modify the text of his 1944 convocation address to be published in the forthcoming *Annual Report*: Board minutes, 28 November 1944 (per Stanley).

65 Postscript, Stanley to Webster, 31 October 1944, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM. Not having had any reply from Stewart to his letter of 31 October, Stanley wrote to him again a few days later: Stanley to Stewart, 4 November 1944 (copy), CS series, file 5, JCW Collection, NBM. Stewart replied

Later the same day Stanley, following Webster's advice, set out his position in a five-page letter to Viscount Bennett.⁶⁶

Pleading ill-health, Stewart was prevented from honouring his undertaking to Stanley, who afterwards diagnosed Stewart's severe bronchitis as diplomatic. Little more seemed to happen until 8 November. At this point, the chair of the board dispatched a telegram notifying governors "of a meeting of 'the majority members of the Board' in the Bank of Nova Scotia Building at 4.30 P.M., Friday, November 10th".⁶⁷ The location had been changed from Stewart's suite in the Roy Building to the boardroom of the Bank of Nova Scotia – not only a neutral venue but also one which could accommodate a larger number. Nineteen members of the board attended, including nine of the 12 members of the executive committee and four of the five members of the Pre-Campaign Committee. One of the five, George Farquhar, distributed copies of the October issue of the *Alumni News*, which contained his article critical of the president's Ottawa speech.⁶⁸ The chief, though not the first item on the agenda, was to obtain retroactive approval of the action of the Stewart-Laurie delegation to the president on 24 October. Stewart as usual led the way, informing the meeting that he had always supported the president until now but did not intend to do so any longer. So confident was Stewart that he was able to state that "recompense would be made in the event of the President's resignation".⁶⁹ Seven members opposed voting at all, on constitutional grounds, as the gathering was not a regularly-convened special meeting of the board, so the matter was left unresolved. "At this meeting", wrote Stanley from the first-hand account of one of his supporters who was present, "the attempt was made to get a resolution in favour of the findings of the Committee of Five, and after a time a vote was taken, but it was not counted and the names of the voters, pro and con, were not set down, though both of these things were asked for in the meeting. The Chairman [Laurie] and Ex-Chairman [Stewart] encountered violent opposition in the meeting and evidently ran into unforeseen snags".⁷⁰ The first item on the agenda was to discuss the first of three letters from Webster to Laurie, in which the vice-chair tried to quash the board revolt against the president by threatening dire consequences if the plotters did not desist.⁷¹ The letter, written on 7 November, probably did more harm than good to the beleaguered president, whose attempt to sow dissent among the officers of the board seems to have crystallized opposition to

on 10 November, suggesting a three-way meeting with the president, Laurie and himself, but the meeting never took place: Stewart to Stanley, 10 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-116, DUA.

66 Stanley to Bennett, 31 October 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-65, DUA.

67 H.P. Duchemin to Stanley, 9 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-81. Reference to "the majority members of the board" begs the question whether a majority consisting of Stanley's opponents existed before 28 November. The chair had every right to call a special meeting of the Board of Governors at any time; he did so on 8 January 1945. But he did not have the right to withhold invitations from particular members, especially not a senior ex-officio member such as the president. It was for this reason that both Laurie and D.C. Harvey were careful to style the meeting as one of *members* of the board rather than of the board per se.

68 "Report of Nov. 10/44 meeting", CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-81, DUA.

69 The only source of information about this irregular meeting, of which no minutes were kept, is a three-page memorandum in the Stanley papers, apparently drafted by Jotham W. Logan, one of the president's diehard supporters: "Report of Nov. 10/4 meeting", CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-79, DUA.

70 Stanley memorandum [n.d.], CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-74, DUA.

71 Webster to Laurie, [7] November 1944 (copy), PANS fonds, RG 53, vol. 11, PANS.

Stanley among undecided or wavering governors. Not only was the president his own worst enemy, but with friends such as Webster, he hardly needed any enemies of his own making. George Patterson of New Glasgow, the most senior member of the board, told Stanley as much. Patterson, who did not attend any of the meetings, was consistent in his support of the president, though astounded at the methods of his supporters. “One of them [Webster] with the best intentions”, he wrote Stanley, “has done you serious wrong”.⁷²

Stanley wrote that he “was not invited to this meeting and such short notice of it [two days] was given that out-of-town members could not come. On that evening [10 November], after the meeting, the Ex-Chairman in a letter to me excused himself for not keeping his promise of October 31, and offered to see me the following day – not alone, but with the Chairman”.⁷³ Also that evening an Alumni “smoker” (undergraduate stag party) took place in the university gymnasium, at which the president of the university was unceremoniously cut by the chairman and another member of the board fresh from their informal meeting downtown. Moreover, the second meeting with Stewart did not take place. Stanley did not reply to Stewart’s letter, and all private communication between president and chair emeritus ceased. “Up until November 10”, Stanley wrote to the board two months later, “I pleaded with my arch-opponent [Stewart] for reconciliation in Dalhousie’s behalf. He would not listen. On that day, a great breach was made in the institution”.⁷⁴

The informal meeting of governors on 10 November, which had been attended by three-quarters of the executive committee, decided to approach the president through one of their own. Those governors against Stanley were trying to maximize their base of support on the executive in the few remaining days before a report would have to be laid before the full board. The choice fell on the provincial archivist, Dr. D.C. Harvey, as emissary to the president. Their 20-minute conversation, during which Harvey told the president that he had done “a very unwise thing in seeing Webster”, was an uncivil parting of long-time friends.⁷⁵ Stanley felt that Harvey disgraced himself by trying to bribe him with Stewart’s sporting offer of recompense should the president agree quietly to resign. “On November 13”, according to Stanley’s detailed aide-mémoire, “one of the Governors came to see me, and after many irrelevancies, made this proposal: If I would guarantee to him there and then to go away quietly, saying nothing and writing nothing, then or later, he would guarantee on behalf of the Board that I would be generously treated financially”.⁷⁶ Stanley made no such undertaking; his only response was to state in an open letter to the board of governors,

72 G.G. Patterson to Stanley, 13 January 1945, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-81, DUA.

73 Board minutes, 23 January 1945 (per Stanley), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

74 Stanley to Dalhousie Board of Governors, 20 January 1945 (copy), CU collection, MG 17, vol. 20, file 3, PANS.

75 Stanley and Harvey had known each other since their student days at Oxford. As president of Dalhousie University, moreover, Stanley was an ex-officio member of the board of trustees of the Public Archives.

76 Board minutes, 23 January 1945. Stanley’s “exact record of the entire conversation”, made over Harvey’s protests, is in the CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-73, DUA. For Harvey’s account of this meeting, see Harvey to Webster, [ca. 13 November 1944] (draft), D.C. Harvey fonds, MG 1, vol. 2115, file 2, PANS.

on 20 January 1945 – three days before the resolution calling for his resignation passed by a wide margin – that “[t]he exhibition of my opponents’ methods on November 13 shocked me”.⁷⁷

By the middle of November Stanley was taking private legal advice. He could not turn to the university’s solicitor without revealing his hand, but his choice was to prove an unfortunate one. F.D. (Frank) Smith was the younger brother of C.B. Smith, a senior member of Stewart’s law firm. As such, Stanley wrote, Frank Smith was “perhaps a little intimidated by the power of J. McG. S.”⁷⁸ Stewart was annoyed that the president was taking advice from a lawyer who was also legal adviser to the Mayor of Halifax, John E. Lloyd, one of the president’s strongest supporters on the board. Soon Frank Smith disappeared from the scene without explanation, and Stanley had to find himself another lawyer.

A week after the informal meeting of members of the board, Webster wrote a second letter to Laurie, in which he stated as his firm belief “that Mr. Stewart is the *fons et origo* of the movement [to oust the president] and that he has cleverly persuaded you to take a leading part in bringing it to fruition”.⁷⁹ Laurie had protested too much in his anxiety to reassure Webster that Stewart had no animus against the president.⁸⁰ Webster’s subsequent interview with Stanley completed the destruction of Laurie’s credibility in the mind of his vice-chair. “As I reflect on the actions of your group thus far”, Webster wrote, “I am more incensed than ever for I consider your action most reprehensible. Charges were developed in private meetings and you laid them before the President orally [on 24 October], trying, I presume, to terrorize him and force his resignation”.⁸¹

Between the receipt of Webster’s third letter (19 November) and the regular meeting of the board on 28 November, no major moves, on either side, were made. To his credit, Laurie consulted with the president as to whether a meeting of the executive committee was necessary that month.⁸² Stewart, perhaps to dissociate himself publicly from what he knew was coming, took the unusual step of having it announced in the *Halifax Herald* on 18 November that he would be going to Montreal on a short business trip. Stanley was sceptical and bemused; on that day he too travelled to Montreal.⁸³ Ten days later the board met, with 25 members in attendance.⁸⁴ Chairman Laurie called on Secretary MacKenzie to read the exceedingly concise, two-month-old report of the Pre-Campaign Committee. The gist of the report

77 Stanley to Dalhousie Board of Governors, 20 January 1945 (copy), MG 17, vol. 20, file 3, PANS.

78 Stanley to Webster, 26 December 1944, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM. Stanley’s choice fell on John A. Walker K.C., a former Conservative cabinet minister who had made his name in the 1920s defending working-class radicals, such as J.B. McLachlan, during “labour’s wars”.

79 Webster to Laurie, 17 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-76, DUA.

80 Laurie to Webster, 21 November 1944, CS series, file 1, JCW Collection, NBM.

81 Webster to Laurie, 19 November 1944 (copy), CS series, file 4, JCW Collection, NBM.

82 Laurie to Stanley, 14 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-109, DUA. An executive committee meeting was not held in either December or January as the president and four of his supporters were members. While the “anti-Stanleyites” had a majority on the board, they were in a minority on its executive committee.

83 CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-73, DUA.

84 One of the two versions of the unabridged stenographic report of the meeting runs to 26 pages of single-spaced typescript: CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

was that a fund-raising campaign was impossible under President Stanley. Amplifying his motion that the board concur in the report, Stewart made a lacerating statement (several times the length of the report itself) which was in effect an indictment of Stanley's entire presidency.⁸⁵ Stanley afterwards related that "at a meeting of the Board of Governors, the findings of the Committee were read, and immediately the Ex-Chairman of the Board, who is called by many the 'Huey Long of Nova Scotia' made a rather savage attack on myself".⁸⁶

After some discussion of the implications of concurrence in the report and whether doing so was granting *carte blanche* to Stewart to draft a resolution demanding the president's resignation, Stanley laid in with a lengthy prepared statement in which he "named names". No one was spared. "I have here in my hand", declaimed the president, in a mock-conciliatory style,

correspondence between Mr. J. McG. Stewart and myself which shows that soon after the October 24 meeting and right up till November 10 when a meeting of some Board members was held, I was trying my hardest to get Mr. Stewart to see at least a little light and help me prevent the breach being widened, for Dalhousie's sake You see, after the meeting on November 10, it seems Mr. Stewart began to think again. But that meeting did what I was trying to prevent. It has made a real breach in the University.⁸⁷

Ironically, had it not been for Vice-Chair Webster's portentous letter to Laurie on behalf of the president, the extraordinary meeting of governors on 10 November 1944 might not have taken place at all.

Apprehensive that the board's failure to concur in the report would confirm the conspiracy, Stewart and his supporters defeated by a hair's breadth a determined effort on the part of the president's supporters to defer the vote. The amendment to adjourn having been defeated 12 to 11, the original motion approving the "finding" of the committee was put and carried by the much wider margin of 16 to 6, which was one short of an absolute majority. Only three members of the board held forth on the president's behalf. "It was most obviously a 'framed meeting'", wrote Stanley, "[b]ut nothing could be done to change the atmosphere . . . which was mephitic".⁸⁸ The true nature and purpose of the report is clear from the following exchange during the meeting:

E. Chesley Allen: I should like to ask if in accepting this motion by the Board it is implied that this Board is asking for the President's resignation.

⁸⁵ Board minutes, 28 November 1944.

⁸⁶ Stanley to M.W. Wallace, 9 January 1945 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-76; cf. Stanley to Stevenson, 29 November 1944. "Only recently have I had evidence that the Huey Long of Nova Scotia [Stewart], who has purloined seven acres of Dalhousie property, and who, I think, has had designs on more of it, had no scruples about firing me": CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-74.

⁸⁷ Stanley then read out his letter to Stewart of 31 October and Stewart's belated reply of 10 November; the latter is in CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-116, DUA.

⁸⁸ Stanley to Webster, 29 November 1944 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-119, DUA.

Colonel Laurie: You have already been answered by mover [Stewart].

J. McG. Stewart: No indication of that sort. Concurrence in report only.⁸⁹

“Concurrence in report only” was but the prelude to, and pretext for, drafting a resolution calling for the president’s resignation.

Two days later, on 1 December, Stanley boarded a plane for New York City, where he intended to lay his case before the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and to enlist the support of friends in the Dalhousie Club of New York. While airborne, he received a telegram from the chairman of the board “forbidding [him] to leave Halifax, or spend money on travel, without the authorization of the Board of Governors”.⁹⁰ Later in December Stanley went to Ottawa to consult with federal ministers. He saw J.L. Ilsley (Finance) and C.D. Howe (Munitions and Supply), both of whom were at pains to deny Stewart’s allegation that Stanley was *persona non grata* to the cabinet.

On 13 December the secretary of the board wrote to the president’s secretary, asking her to hand over any and all documents relating to Stanley’s 1931 appointment.⁹¹ Clearly the committee to depose the president already had under consideration the terms which would be offered him should he agree, or be forced to, resign. On Christmas Eve Webster wrote to Stanley that someone recently had told him “that he heard in Halifax that the enemy might try to make Stewart president. Ye Gods!”⁹² On 4 January 1945, Laurie wrote to Stanley “suggesting that there was not enough business on hand to hold the regular monthly meeting of the Executive [Committee]”⁹³ Stanley concurred, suspecting that the only “business” was his resignation, and that it was not yet quite “on hand”.

On the same day as Laurie was writing Stanley, Stewart wrote Donald McInnes, the board’s solicitor, who the day after Christmas had supplied a five-page advisory opinion on the powers of the board of governors to dismiss the president.⁹⁴ Stewart helpfully enclosed for McInnes’s benefit a statement of the reasons that impelled him “to press for the resignation of President Stanley”. Stewart wrote: “I must confess, that no single act or omission on the part of the President is decisive in my mind. It is simply the cumulative effect of his arrogance, lack of diplomacy, and indirectness of speech (not to use a stronger word) that convinces me that the usefulness of the

89 Board minutes, 28 November 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

90 For this and what follows see “Message from Colonel Laurie”, 1 December 1944 and Stanley to Webster (copy), 21 December 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-77, B-109, DUA.

91 MacKenzie to Henry, 13 December 1944, Dalhousie University, President’s Office, Staff Files, Carleton W. Stanley, President, 1930-1972, MS-1-3-STA, file 478, folder 2, DUA.

92 Webster to Stanley, 24 December 1944, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-119, DUA; cf. “I have heard more of the malevolence & cunning of S. [Stewart]. He would appear to be the chief enemy”: Webster to Stanley, 29 December 1944, *ibid.*

93 Stanley’s *aide-mémoire*, 23 January 1945, p. 4, CS series, JCW Collection, NBM.

94 McInnes to Dalhousie Board of Governors, 26 December 1944 (copy), file D/1376(A) Dalhousie College – Re President [“settled”], Macdonald, McInnes, MacQuarrie and Pattillo fonds, MG 1, vol. 1190, file 2, PANS.

University has been greatly impaired and will continue to deteriorate as a result of his incumbency of office".⁹⁵

Then on 8 January 1945 Secretary MacKenzie served formal notice of a special board meeting on 23 January "for the purpose of considering, and if thought advisable adopting, a Resolution which will then be presented to the Meeting requesting Dr. Carleton Stanley to resign forthwith as President of the University".⁹⁶ Upon receiving this notice Stanley wrote wearily to C.D. Howe, "Nothing adds up. It is only a reckless attempt to wear me down".⁹⁷ Asked by Stanley for permission to allow a representative of the AAUP to attend the meeting,⁹⁸ Laurie refused, because to have done so would be to admit, at least in Stanley's understanding of the matter, that academic freedom was at issue. Asked by Stanley for "a list of charges, in writing, upon which the discussion of January 23 would presumably be based", Laurie flatly denied that there were any: "I understand, however, that a member of the Board of Governors [Stewart] proposes to submit to the meeting called for the 23rd of January, reasons which he considers to be proper to call for your resignation". The seven reasons enumerated in Laurie's reply to Stanley derived from Stewart's bellicose statement of 28 November 1944, and these became the five grounds of the resignation resolution which he subsequently drafted.⁹⁹

By the middle of January Stanley's supporters on the board had been reduced to Mayor Lloyd and five others;¹⁰⁰ though the final battle had yet to be fought, the president had already lost the war. "The Ex-Chairman", observed Stanley resignedly, "controls the majority in devious ways".¹⁰¹ Three days before the special meeting, Stanley sent an open letter to members of the board of governors pleading for reconciliation in Dalhousie's behalf. Placing the blame squarely on Stewart's shoulders, however, was enough to ensure that this deathbed "appeal to the better judgment of all members of the Board" fell on deaf ears.¹⁰²

The special meeting of the board of governors convened on Tuesday, 23 January 1945, at 8 p.m., with 24 members in attendance, including all but two of the executive committee – Webster, who sent regrets, and Mr. Justice W.F. Carroll (an ally of Stewart's). The day before, Laurie had received a telegram from Viscount Bennett, who claimed personally to know that "Carleton Stanley never had [a] square deal at Dalhousie".¹⁰³ Though Bennett's cable was read out at the meeting at his request, the

95 Stewart to McInnes, 4 January 1945, MG 1, vol. 1190, file 2, PANS; the enclosure is not extant.

96 D.C. Harvey fonds, MG 1, vol. 438, file 40, PANS.

97 Stanley to Howe, 9 January 1945 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-111, DUA.

98 Stanley's *aide-mémoire*, 23 January 1945, p. 6, CS series, JCW Collection, NBM.

99 Laurie to Stanley, 15 January 1945, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-109, DUA.

100 This is an inference from the six who voted on 28 November 1944 against adopting the report of the committee.

101 Stanley to Stevenson, 16 January 1945 (copy), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-74, DUA. In the midst of all this aggravation, Stanley was invited to become regional vice-president of the National Council for Canadian-Soviet Friendship, then a fashionable organization to which to belong; he accepted the invitation: Peter Bryce to Stanley, 13 January 1945, CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-65, DUA.

102 Stanley to Dalhousie Board of Governors, 20 January 1945 (copy), Harvey fonds, MG 1, vol. 2115, file 2, PANS.

103 Board minutes, 23 January 1945; verbatim text of cablegram. The reference was to the events of April-June 1932, when then chairman, G. Fred Pearson, attempted unsuccessfully to have Stanley dismissed as president.

first item on the agenda was the minutes of the regular quarterly meeting of 28 November, to which Stewart, Mitchell and Farquhar – all die-hard opponents of the president – proposed amendments which were accepted.¹⁰⁴ Chairman Laurie, having explained the reason for calling the special meeting, scarcely needed to call upon his predecessor to introduce the resolution and move its adoption. Declared Stewart:

I am sure that all of us who attended the meeting of November 28 left that meeting in the hope, or at least in the fervent wish, that the President, having been present when the vote of 16 – 6 was recorded, would cut the Gordian Knot and present his resignation and thus prevent any further discussion being entered into by this Board. That course was surely dictated by the proprieties. It is a sad thing for us, and for Dalhousie, and, I think, for the President himself, that that course was not pursued. However, we must face the facts as they are: either, I think, this Board must abdicate or else the President must go. At any rate, it is perfectly clear that matters could not be left long in the position in which they were left at the conclusion of the November meeting.¹⁰⁵

The vote on the resolution, which included a five-point motion of non-confidence in the president, was 18 to 5. The vote was one short of an absolute majority, since there were vacancies on the 35-member board. As well, there was one abstention, presumably Stanley himself. The last word was Stanley's: "The matter is simple: I am not resigning".¹⁰⁶ He was given until 7 February to do so. At least four known supporters of the president were absent and their votes would have been enough to reduce an absolute majority to a simple one. The president might have survived. Yet Stanley had consistently underestimated both the determination and the resources of his opponents. Not only did they concentrate their efforts on governors residing in Halifax who regularly attended board meetings, but in the space of two months they also converted a majority in favour of deferring the financial campaign into a majority in favour of firing the president. Timing was all, and the special meeting would not have been called unless and until the conspirators were certain of enough votes to win.

As soon as he heard the news, Webster, whose effort to cast a vote by proxy had been blocked by Stewart on procedural grounds, telegraphed Viscount Bennett: "Board 18 to 5 demanded resignation or dismissal and with Hitlerian brutality insisted on evacuation of residence by February seven. Chairman had to be forced to read your cable [of 22 January 1945]. Writing airmail".¹⁰⁷ The vice-chair was confused on one point: the president had been given until 30 June to vacate his official residence.

Communication between president and board was henceforth to be through their respective solicitors: John A. Walker, K.C., who had represented Stanley since 18

104 It needs to be said that the recording secretary of the board was the president's devoted secretary, Lola Henry, who remained keeper of the flame for the duration of Stanley's life.

105 Board minutes, 23 January 1945 (per Stewart), CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-84, 85, DUA.

106 *Ibid.*

107 Webster to Bennett [after 23 January 1945] (copy), CS series, file 7, JCW Collection, NBM.

January,¹⁰⁸ and Donald McInnes¹⁰⁹ whose firm represented the university. After the request for his resignation was formally approved on 23 January, Stanley did not attend any further board meetings. An informal meeting of governors, at which all members of the executive committee (except the vice-chair and president but including one non-member, Stewart) were present, was held in Stewart's office on 1 February. It was decided to offer the president a more generous severance package if he abided by the resolution and submitted his resignation within the week. Laurie wanted to have all outstanding matters settled, if possible, before the next regular meeting of the board on 27 February.¹¹⁰

Unknown to the board, Stanley had already drafted a letter of resignation, which he sent for approval to his solicitor on 31 January.¹¹¹ On 6 February, one day short of the deadline, the letter was signed and ready for delivery. The following day Walker, having received from McInnes a letter setting out the new terms and conditions approved at the meeting of 1 February, forwarded to him the president's official letter for transmission to the secretary of the board. Walker insisted that all 18 members of the board who had voted on 23 January for the president's resignation sign the undertaking, which set forth the revised terms to be offered him.¹¹² The carefully-drafted and delicately-worded joint press release of chair and president was delayed until 13 February. The Halifax press was effectively muzzled; the *Chronicle* newspapers were owned by F.B. McCurdy, treasurer of the board, while the editorial policy of the *Herald* newspapers was in the hands of counsel Gordon McLaren Daley, whose law firm had been added to the university's solicitors to ensure that press coverage of the affair was effectively controlled by the board.¹¹³ On 14 February, however, the Toronto *Daily Star* in a feature article told the inside story. The *Star* had sent an associate editor, not a mere reporter, to Halifax who succeeded in conducting an "off-the-record" interview with Mayor Lloyd.¹¹⁴ The *Star's* scoop, which set forth explicitly the role played by the "Bourbon of the Maritimes" (Stewart), was itself news in the Central Canadian press. On Stanley's side, according to the *Star*, "This is a question of academic freedom. Apparently presidents of universities are to be fired because they do not do the bidding of economic royalists who try to dictate to him

108 Stanley's correspondence with his solicitor is in the CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-76, DUA.

109 McInnes became chair of the board in 1958.

110 Laurie to Dalhousie Board of Governors, 1 February 1945 (copy), Osborne R. Crowell fonds, PANS; Board minutes, 27 February 1945 (per Laurie).

111 Copy of draft in CS fonds, MS-2-163/B-76, DUA.

112 The 18 governors who signed the original undertaking were E.C. Allen, M.E. Burns, T.H. Coffin, O.R. Crowell, J. Doull, G. Farquhar, G.L. Faulkner, D.C. Harvey, K.C. Laurie, J.W. Logan, J.E. Lloyd, C.F. Mackenzie, G. MacG. Mitchell, R.J. Moore, R.B. Nichols, G.G. Patterson, Mrs. F.H. Pond (Margaret Nicoll), and J. McG. Stewart. See Stanley resignation case file, MG 1, vol. 1190, file 2, PANS.

113 Stanley to Webster, 16 February 1945, CS series, file 2, JCW Collection, NBM.

114 T.G. Lytle, "President Stanley Quit; Board Wasn't With Him", *Daily Star* (Toronto), 14 February 1945. See also Judith Robinson, "Money Talks at Old Dalhousie", *News* (Toronto), 10 and 17 February 1945; "University Controversy Rages Over Ex-President of Dalhousie", *Montreal Gazette*, 15 February 1945; "Tells 'Inside Story' Of President's Resignation", Canadian Press, 14 February 1945; "Carleton Stanley Resigns", *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 February 1945; "Dr Stanley Retires", *Saturday Night*, 24 February 1945; J.V. McAree, "Dalhousie To Lose Its Famous President", *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 26 February 1945; Robinson, "Dalhousie Drops a President", *Nation* (New York), 10 March 1945.

[sic] the manner in which he shall act concerning the curriculum and the staff".¹¹⁵

Thus ended Stanley's 14-year reign. His dismissal was much more than a scandal in academe. It precipitated the movement which ultimately led to the founding in 1951 of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).¹¹⁶ It also followed by two months the dismissal of Homer Price Rainey from the presidency of the University of Texas.¹¹⁷ Comparisons between the two are instructive. Like Rainey, Stanley by 1931 was known as a "liberal educator with a leaning toward the arts [and] an able administrator".¹¹⁸ Like Rainey, Stanley defended the rights of faculty to secure tenure and free speech and was dismissed by a reactionary board controlled by big businessmen – of whom J. McG. Stewart was far and away the biggest and most influential. Unlike Rainey, however, who was a native returning in triumph to his homeland, Stanley was a "come-from-away" – an American-born resident of Toronto and Montreal. He had less support than Rainey among faculty, students and alumni, little in the wider community and none in government. Though Dalhousie, unlike Texas and Toronto, was not a state or provincial university, government influenced its administration through order-in-council appointments of governors such as Stewart. Like Rainey, Stanley remained in academe after his dismissal but he did not obtain a position commensurate with the one he had lost.¹¹⁹ Unlike Rainey, he did not attempt to climb into politics on the back of the affair, nor did he publish in later years an unrepentant memoir of the controversy which had culminated in his dismissal.¹²⁰

Despite not being a member, Stanley persistently tried to have the AAUP censure Dalhousie's board of governors for violations of academic freedom, as it was shortly to do in the Rainey case. According to Frank Abbott, the AAUP's writ did not run in Canada, "and it could not be expected to perform its employee-protection functions on behalf of its Canadian members"¹²¹ – much less Canadian non-members. "Presumably the AAUP could place a Canadian university on its non-recommended list",¹²² but Abbott could find no occasion when that had been done. By and large, Canadian university teachers were no more interested in the AAUP than were Canadian universities. Or, for that matter, than the National Conference of Canadian Universities (NCCU) was in the concept of a separate Canadian association of university professors comparable to the AAUP. At the time of CAUT's founding in 1951, according to Abbott, the AAUP "had managed to recruit fewer than 100 Canadian members, and of these, 63 were at the University of Manitoba. For the most part, faculties across [Canada] continued to spurn the AAUP and to reject proposals to establish local chapters".¹²³

115 Lytle, "President Stanley Quit".

116 See Frank Abbott, "Founding the Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1945-1951", *Queen's Quarterly*, 93, 3 (Autumn 1986), pp. 508-24.

117 The definitive study is Alice C. Cox, "The Rainey Affair: A History of the Academic Freedom Controversy at the University of Texas, 1938-1946", Ph.D. thesis, University of Denver, 1970.

118 Quoted in "Homer P(rice) Rainey", *Current Biography 1946*, p. 498.

119 In 1946 Stanley was appointed senior professor of English at United College; he retired in 1953.

120 Homer P. Rainey, *The Tower and the Dome: A Free University versus Political Control* (Boulder, Colorado, 1971).

121 Frank W.C. Abbott, "The Origin and Foundation of the Canadian Association of University Teachers", Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1985, p. 32.

122 Abbott, "Origin and Foundation", p. 32, note 37.

123 *Ibid.*, pp. 112-3.

Thanks to Sidney Smith, its immediate past president, the NCCU did not comment on, much less protest, the removal from office of one of its own former presidents.¹²⁴ Unfortunately for Stanley, Smith was a bitter personal enemy who chose to forget that Stanley had saved his skin in 1932 when Stewart wanted Smith fired for having supported Pearson's assault on Stanley.¹²⁵ The NCCU in any case was an organization of universities, not of presidents, and one of the factors leading up to the drive to organize the CAUT was that presidents, no less than professors, might be vulnerable and need protection from predatory boards.¹²⁶ Yet, for the NCCU, the Stanley affair was to be passed over in discreet silence.

What had prompted Stanley, while NCCU president in the mid-1930s, to take a stand on academic freedom ("In my own belief no other subject matters just now") was an attack on freedom of the press from within the University of Toronto.¹²⁷ In 1937 the university librarian, W. Stewart Wallace, had, with the tacit approval of President H.J. Cody, cancelled the university library's subscription to *New Republic* ("a journal of opinion") for having published an article by the English radical socialist, Henry Noel Brailsford, on the ramifications of the Abdication Crisis for the British ruling class.¹²⁸ That was too much for Stanley, for whom academic freedom was the higher education equivalent of freedom of the press, and no less fundamental. At the 1937 meeting of the NCCU Stanley declaimed in his presidential address that

- 124 The NCCU's annual meeting convened at Laval in June 1945. According to Professor George V. Douglas, one of Dalhousie's delegates and an extreme partisan of Stanley's, "this Universities Conference amazed me. If half of them had their heads chopped off the rest would just say too bad & try & snuggle into the affections of their Boards": G.V. Douglas to Stanley, 22 June 1945, CS fonds, file B-101, DUA. Ironically, the then president of the NCCU, Saskatchewan's James S. Thomson, was a former professor at Pine Hill Divinity Hall in Halifax whose career Stanley had helped further.
- 125 The case of Sidney Smith is of unusual interest. Smith was an implacable enemy of Stanley, who nevertheless disapproved of Stewart's offering to use his connections in Winnipeg to have Smith "kicked upstairs" to become president of the University of Manitoba. Yet that is exactly what Stewart, then vice-chair, appears to have done behind the president's back. The "connection" was D'Alton Corry Coleman, vice-president of the CPR and chairman of the board of governors of the University of Manitoba: E.A. Corbett, *Sidney Earle Smith* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 15-6.
- 126 This was the position taken by no less a figure than Harold Adams Innis in his stirring convocation address at the University of New Brunswick in May 1944. According to Innis, "the University has been left to the tender mercies of a stepfather in a Board of Governors. A University president in Canada is required to have some of the qualities of the superintendents of lunatic asylums or of ringmasters in circuses": H.A. Innis, "A Plea for the University Tradition", *Dalhousie Review*, 24, 3 (October 1944), pp. 302-3. It was the Underhill affair of 1940-41 which made Innis a friend of academic freedom, which he had not been in the 1930s: E.K. Brown, "On Academic Freedom", *Dalhousie Review*, 16, 2 (July 1936), pp. 225-6. Sidney Smith, who became president of the University of Toronto in 1945, was among those presidents who opposed the idea of a separate Canadian Association of University Teachers; such opposition delayed CAUT's founding for several years. See Abbott, "Founding", *passim*.
- 127 "But the main question to ask is, how universities can expect academic freedom to remain inviolable if their officials refuse freedom to the press . . . that question remains, and ought to be pressed, especially in these times when academic freedom is in such danger": Stanley to M.W. Wallace (principal of University College), 6 February 1937, CS fonds, file B-37, DUA.
- 128 "All Shades of Opinion, But" [letter to the editor], *New Republic*, 27 January 1937, p. 387. Ironically, the same issue (6 January 1937) in which Brailsford's "asinine article" appeared had as its leader an editorial entitled, "Wisconsin and Academic Freedom", which dealt with the impending dismissal of Glenn Frank as president of the University of Wisconsin on account of his liberal-internationalist political views.

“This earnest and passionate demand for Academic Freedom seen in the United States, in Britain and among our own Canadian universities may be described in the briefest of phrases: it is nothing but the instinct for self-preservation. No freedom, no university”.¹²⁹ Stanley’s advocacy of academic freedom was far from disinterested and cannot be separated from his internationalism and early and outspoken anti-Fascism. He was among those “growing numbers of prominent Canadians” who, in Abbott’s words, “as the decade of the 1930s drew to a close . . . began to equate the defence of academic freedom with the defence of democracy itself”.¹³⁰ For Stanley, the defence of academic freedom was of a piece with defending Spanish democratic republicanism during the curtain-raising Spanish Civil War.

Michiel Horn is right to acknowledge that no Canadian university president defended academic freedom more vigorously (or at greater personal cost) than Carleton Stanley.¹³¹ But, unlike his fellow presidents in the 1930s and 1940s, Stanley had to defend not only professors who practised academic freedom, but also his own fearless practice of it. “The real difficulty”, Stanley wrote shortly before his dismissal, “is that I have stood out for academic freedom on the part of my professors successfully hitherto; now the artillery is turned on me”.¹³² The historical difficulty is whether Stanley’s view of the *causa causans* of the attack on him is the correct one. There is no evidence to suggest that Dalhousie’s board of governors thought inconvenient professors would be easier to sack if their presidential defender were got rid of first. No professors – not even his stoutest defenders, G.V. Douglas (geology) and H.L. Stewart (philosophy) – resigned or were fired as a result of Stanley’s dismissal. Stanley assumed, rather than argued, that the scope of academic freedom included university presidents – especially those who, like himself, were once professors. Moreover, Dalhousie’s president held office “during pleasure” not “during good behaviour”; no time-limited or renewable employment contract existed.¹³³ If, as Horn argues, “the freedom of universities from external control” is one of the two meanings which scholars have given to academic freedom,¹³⁴ were universities also to be free from external control internalized as a board of governors appointed from outside, or, worse, co-opted from inside? Making Dalhousie’s president an *ex officio* member of the board did not begin to address the problem of non-secure tenure.

The irony of university presidents’ defending university teachers whose tenure was more secure than their own is not lost on Horn, whose chief concern is academic freedom in the sense of “the freedom of researchers and teachers to do their work”.¹³⁵

129 *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Meeting of the National Conference of Canadian Universities*, p. 47.

130 Abbott, “Origin and Foundation”, p. 96.

131 Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 177. Hard on the heels (and probably because) of an academic freedom controversy involving Arthur R.M. Lower, visiting professor at Dalhousie in 1938-39, Stanley went on the national network of the CBC in December 1938 to speak in a debate on academic freedom: Waite, *Old College Transformed*, pp. 90-1; Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 147.

132 Stanley to James S. Thomson, 10 January 1945, CS fonds, file B-75, DUA.

133 The customary practice was that employment could be terminated, without an assigned cause, on six months’ notice by either party. Implicitly, the employment relationship could be ended, with cause assigned, without notice. Stanley may be considered to have had three months’ notice (October-January).

134 Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 4.

135 *Ibid.*

Granted that academic freedom as the freedom of universities from external control has “implications” for the freedom of university teachers to teach without fear or favour, it seems clear that in the Stanley affair the two themes converged. Questioning whether “academic freedom [was] in fact at issue in Stanley’s dismissal”,¹³⁶ Horn allows only that academic freedom does encompass university presidents – though in a quite different and narrower sense than university professors. Horn takes the view that university presidents were entitled to the privileges of academic freedom only to the extent that they were teachers and scholars (as Stanley was). “They cannot, however, presume to exercise the same academic free speech of ordinary professors”.¹³⁷

But Stanley obviously felt he should be free to say more, not less, and he invariably did. A university president could not be an effective academic administrator unless he was also a professor par excellence. As the redoubtable H.L. Stewart, Dalhousie’s long-time professor of philosophy, commented, “I say he [Stanley] is on the side of education, which is more than can be said about many a university president!”¹³⁸ And that meant that the canons of academic freedom applied to professor-presidents even more so. Theirs was the greater responsibility; not merely to exercise academic freedom but to defend on behalf of the professoriate the free, full and uninhibited exercise of it.

On the other hand, Horn points out that university presidents must enjoy the confidence of their governing boards.¹³⁹ And Stanley did – at least at first. He did not apply, but was recruited for the Dalhousie presidency. The board had such confidence in him that they acquiesced unanimously in 1932 to his overthrow of their own chairman. But that confidence was eroded over the years largely because of Stanley’s advanced views on every subject on which he cared to express himself and his relentless critical commentary on the most controversial economic, social and political issues of the day. Stanley, the product of Falconer’s Toronto and Edwardian Oxford, was the first of Dalhousie’s 20th-century presidents to engage with the 20th-century world; three of his four predecessors had been Presbyterian clergymen. No Canadian university president spoke out against European fascism before Stanley, and none supported so outspokenly the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. And introducing the likes of Dr. Norman Bethune, a self-professed marxist, when he spoke at Dalhousie in September 1937 on his experiences during the Spanish Civil War, would have summoned all the courage of Stanley’s profoundest convictions.

For Stanley, academic freedom was pre-eminently “free speech in the form of comment on public events”, which, as Horn points out, “could be dangerous”;¹⁴⁰ for Stanley it was fatal. His addresses to the university at the beginning of the academic year and at convocation, many of which were printed or published, and almost all of which were extensively reported in the local or national press, were studied messages which seemed deliberately to court controversy. For Stanley, the university president, far more so than the university professor, was the supreme pedagogue, the teacher of

136 *Ibid.*, p. 182.

137 *Ibid.*, p. 183.

138 Quoted in Arthur R.M. Lower, *My First Seventy-Five Years* (Toronto, 1967), p. 215.

139 Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 183.

140 *Ibid.*

righteousness. The president did not merely teach the students; he taught the university as a whole and the community at large. His was a window on the world. Indeed it was his perception of his role as a public intellectual that prompted Stanley, quite unlike his socialistic friends Frank Underhill and F.R. Scott, to steer clear of partisan politics.¹⁴¹ In Stanley's case, the Second World War did not reinforce Horn's "well-established preference of Canadian academics for keeping their heads down".¹⁴² On the contrary, Stanley stuck his neck out, risking (in Horn's sanguinary metaphor) decapitation. In his determination to preserve liberal education and the small university, Stanley offended many and alienated some, including magnates such as Stewart, on whose pleasure his survival depended. Stanley was always ready and willing to make a last stand on academic freedom, which for him was what made the university "a bulwark of freedom".¹⁴³

Academic freedom, though not at issue in Stanley's firing, bore directly on Stanley's conceptualization of the rights and privileges, prerogatives and responsibilities of the university president. For Stanley there was no distinction between the university teacher and the university president where academic freedom was concerned. They were equally privileged to be its beneficiaries and obliged to be its defenders. The position of Dalhousie's board, however, was that a university president who practised academic freedom was going too far, setting the worst possible example for professors and damaging the university's public reputation. Moreover, relations between the board as an employer and the president as an employee lay outside and far beyond the scope of academic freedom. In response to official representations, the chair of Dalhousie's board of governors assured the AAUP that academic freedom was not involved in the Stanley affair.¹⁴⁴

Returning to his Victoria University roots, Carleton Stanley fell back into teaching English at United College (later the University of Winnipeg) but retired five years before the dismissal of historian Harry Crowe. "In the history and mythology of academic freedom in Canada", writes Horn, "only the Harry Crowe case at United College in 1958 looms larger than the attempt in 1940-1 to dismiss Frank Underhill".¹⁴⁵ The Carleton Stanley case, on the other hand, looms not at all in either. Stanley wanted to have his cake and eat it; to defend academic freedom *and* practise it more liberally than any professor. It was a matter of his claiming for university

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

143 Title of an address delivered over the national network of the CBC, 5 January 1940.

144 K.C. Laurie to R.P. Ludlum (associate secretary, AAUP), 20 January 1945, CS fonds, B-99, DUA.

145 Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 154. Carleton Stanley was Frank Underhill, only more so. No less an "intellectual provocateur" (R. Douglas Francis) than Underhill, who was nearly dismissed by the University of Toronto in 1940-41, Stanley suffered the very fate which Underhill had so narrowly escaped. It is ironic that Dalhousie in 1968 should have conferred an honorary doctorate on Underhill, citing him as "a defender of academic freedom" – as if the university's own penultimate president (Stanley was then still living) had not been one. After the first attack on Underhill in April 1939, Stanley confided to a colleague that if academic freedom were ever violated at *his* university, he would immediately resign: Stanley to Basil Fletcher, 3 July 1939; Fletcher staff file, MS-1-3/STA No. 134, DUA; see Horn, *Academic Freedom*, pp. 118-22, 157-64. Even more ironic is that at the same convocation at which Underhill was honoured, an LL.D. was conferred on Lola Henry. Although she remained at Dalhousie as secretary to presidents after Stanley's dismissal, one wonders whether the "blacklisted" honoree was not really Stanley himself.

presidents a fundamental freedom which neither boards nor presidents wanted them to have, and of which, in their view, professors already had quite enough. Academic freedom was fine, so long as it remained, in Horn's words, "Not a burning question".¹⁴⁶ Stanley, however, took an idealistic and rather ultramontane view of academic freedom, which he considered a sacred trust. University presidents were to set an example for the professoriate by practising what they preached, and in so doing raise public consciousness about the great national and international issues of the day and enlighten the despots who made up the governing boards. How could university presidents credibly and effectively defend academic freedom if they did not practise it themselves?

146 Horn, *Academic Freedom*, p. 4.