



EDITORIAL

Boycotts not enough

Recently, the issue of boycotting companies that have ties with South Africa has received renewed attention and interest. In an article that appeared in this newspaper last week, arguments for such a boycott were explained in detail. In addition to the boycott in general, the article raised the fact that the Students' Union here partakes in the boycott of Rothman's Pall Mall and its products. This is why you never see Rothman's cigarettes on sale at the info desk on the main floor of SUB. And although products of Rothman's also include Carling beer, you can buy Carling beer in both RATT and Dewey's. You see, it is a rule of the A.L.C.B. that every bar must have available to its customers a complete variety of beers and wines. In this case, the Students' Union adheres to the boycott in principle.

Rothman's Pall Mall Ltd. is owned by a number of subsidiaries and these subsidiaries are all owned, whole or in part, by Rembrandts of South Africa.

This company employs black South Africans in an exploitive manner and endorses the apartheid policies of the government and so it is the target of the boycott.

But boycotting this company will not change the situation in South Africa. Economics are not the answer.

When in 1948, the government of South Africa officially enacted its apartheid policies, the countries of the world seethed with rage. At the time, South Africa was a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and after twelve years of threatened expulsion it was finally ejected from the Commonwealth circa 1960. After 22 years of life without the economic benefits the Commonwealth provides, South Africa is still apartheid. Nothing has changed. Ejecting the country has done more to harm the cause of change than help it.

Economic pressure will not change the attitude of prejudiced South African people. White supremacy is a way of life for these people. Economic pressure cannot reverse hatred.

The only way to bring about change in South Africa is through increased communication. But if South Africa is booted from the Commonwealth and other countries refuse to visit or talk, then communication is an impossibility. Whenever has silence been an aid in changing anything?

If you argue that boycotting South African products is a way of being vocal in your distaste then I argue that South Africa has known about the displeasure of the world ever since 1948. Closing off the lines of communication is simply shutting down the avenues of change.

The people who engage in the boycott of South African products must do so after a great deal of thought. If they want to simply see a reversal of the situation as it is now, with the black population in power, then I counter that blacks in power hating whites is as bad as whites in power hating blacks. There is no difference. If they want to see, however, a shift in the prejudiced attitude of white South Africans then the boycott they partake in is not the way.

During the 1970's, the black Prime Minister of a neighbouring African nation was criticized widely for his state visit to South Africa. He countered the criticism by explaining that his people needed food and South Africa was a supplier. And he also said that he was a man going to another country to meet other men. He was absolutely right.

That is the attitude that will help change South Africa.
Andrew Watts

Harrassing quacks

The only way that democracy can be made bearable is by developing and cherishing a class of men sufficiently honest and disinterested to challenge the prevailing quacks. No such class has ever appeared in strength in the United States. Thus the business of harrasing the quacks devolves upon the newspapers. When they fail in their duty, which is usually, we are at the quacks' mercy.

H.L. Mencken

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« LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

Religious attitude defended

"There are absolutely no absolutes" — for humans, anyway.

I refer to the editorial "The Spirit of Science" by Jan Jensen (in a recent issue of Gateway) in which Mr. Jensen expresses his admiration for the attitudes and traditions of science and contrasts them with his conceptions and negative impressions of religious attitudes and traditions. Mr. Jensen made a particular issue of the idea that the notion of "truth" is a mistaken and unworkable one and should be abandoned in favor of the more practical notion of "model". This is all very well as far as it goes; it is a relevant point to make when we are confronted with choices in the construction of theories.

However, in real life, the word "truth" — and the notion we all have, which lies behind its persistent use (either as noun or adjective) in our lives — is functionally indispensable. In doing it we are expressing the fact that there are some "models" which we believe to be so trustworthy that we ought to be responsibly committed to them and to the view of the world which they create for us.

As Michael Polanyi has so effectively argued in his philosophy of "personal knowledge", it is precisely through the practice of *responsibility* (and that means critical *commitment*) that the process of learning and discovery takes place in science, and indeed in all human knowing. Mr. Jensen's editorial itself was an impassioned expression of his belief in and commitment to the ideals and aims of science. In arguing for them, he is, in effect, arguing that they represent a *truer* grasp of the relation of human beings to what is real, than do some older ideas about that. In the *very* act of making this appeal to us, he really undercuts his surface claim that "truth" is not a valid notion.

I happen to share Mr. Jensen's view that it is not for human beings to possess absolute truth in some rational or intellectual form. As a person with religious beliefs, I also share his frustration with those who think that true religion consists in forming and imposing a rigid mindset. However, I think the rigidity which Mr. Jensen criticises may have more to do with medieval rationalism and its inmost recalcitrances than with a genuine understanding of religious truth. Oddly enough, the biblical usage and meaning of the

word "faith" is completely congruent to the notion of "responsible commitment" which I have mentioned already. The fact is that in the wide range of "models" which we employ to grasp our environment, there are some on which we rely much more than others, and for these models the idea of "truth" is a necessary and consistent limiting concept. This is as true for science as it is for theology. It applies equally well to Professor J.A. Wheeler's belief that the quantum mechanics has a structural relation to the meaning of time in the present universe, and to the Christian belief that the God who created that universe has expressed himself per-

sonally in the Incarnation. Mr. Jensen has rightly praised the clear and very relevant article "The Galileo Affair" (*Scientific American*, August 1982) by Owen Gingerich of Harvard. He might be interested to know that Owen Gingerich, like myself, is a person with orthodox Christian beliefs. This sort of thing just goes to show (as C.S. Lewis put it) that really, a young atheist cannot guard his faith too closely; temptations to religious belief abound on all sides!

Yours faithfully,
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Dept. of Chemistry

Tenant Association details

With regards to your article in the Gateway Tues. 28th concerning the H.T.A., I feel some of the issues mentioned need clarifying.

The issue regarding the legality of the H.T.A. constitution was that the constitution was not registered with the Council of Student Services (C.O.S.S.). Before the constitution of any association on campus is recognized by the University, it must first be approved by C.O.S.S. The constitution under which the H.T.A. has been working, although approved at the H.T.A. general meeting of November, 1981, has not as yet been approved by C.O.S.S. This was an issue that appeared during our investigation into the legality of the \$15 fee.

Aside from the matter concerning the constitution, the main issue was the way in which the \$15 mandatory fee was passed by the H.T.A. The issue of the fee was brought before a coordinating committee of H.T.A. for approval at 7:00 pm on January 10, 1982. This committee was comprised of five

people, two of whom were H.T.A. executives. However, the minutes of the executive meeting held at 10:00 am, the same day, also attended by five people, show that the executive had already started setting up the mechanism for the collection of the fee. At no time was a general meeting of the H.T.A. called to discuss this matter. These events cast serious doubts concerning the democracy of the H.T.A.

The other concern of the tenants was the fact that Housing and Food Services, responsible for the collection of fees, had told a number of tenants that failure of payment would result in eviction. Housing and Food Services had also included the mandatory fee to the lease agreements signed after May 31st, 1982, despite the fact that the board of finance had not yet approved the fee. Housing and Food Services has since apologized for this error. I sincerely hope this letter has clarified some of the issues concerning the mandatory fee.

David Bentley
HUB

Outside Sources

A democracy is no more than an aristocracy of orators, interrupted sometimes with the temporary monarchy of one orator.
Thomas Hobbes, 1659
De corpore politico, II

Two members of WERADAS (Women For the Reform of Alcoholics, Delinquents, and Arts' Students) saved Jack Vermeer, Nate La Roi, Martin Coutts and Stacey Berles from a fate worse than death in RATT yesterday.

Dan Leskiew told construction workers who are renovating the pub that the foursome were Gateway staffers. They were about to be reupholstered when Heather-Ann Laird and Karen Kebarle intervened.

Just because they work at Gateway doesn't mean they are Deleretics," said Ms. Kebarle and Micro Mike McKinney.

The women escorted the group out of RATT with the help of two bystanders, Michael Leitch and John Algard.