

commentary

"Politically correct" at CUP: A reaction

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Over the Christmas break the Canadian University Press (CUP) held their annual conference in North Bay, Ontario.

What was most noteworthy about the conference was not the routine business carried out, but the emergence of the concept of "politically correct."

CUP, a cooperative of student newspapers from across Canada, sees itself as the closest thing to a student movement this country

has. However, there are several disquieting assumptions being made.

The first thing is that the press is something all powerful, in and of itself. There is the idea that the press is only as powerful as the number of people who read it—if no one reads a paper, what power does it have? This idea is not "politically correct." "Politically correct" says that we're the press, therefore we're powerful; it does not matter if your paper is read or not, or is popular or not. Quite a few of the "correct" papers are not popular. Suggest



this idea and you can expect to be grouped with flying saucer lunatics, or flat earthers.

The second assumption is that since objectivity in reporting is

impossible anyway, why try? We are "agents of social change", wiser and more farsighted than our readers, so we have the obligation to lead our readers along the same road to wisdom we have taken. We should be biased in our reporting because we know the truth: should we report what the KKK says about a cross burning? The trouble with that assumption is that looking around the office, I don't buy that we're that wise, or the truth is that simple.

The third assumption is the most dangerous and needs some

background.

The single most organized and powerful faction within CUP is the women's movement. There is nothing wrong with this *per se*. Anyone with an IQ higher than their age recognizes that there are real and pressing problems between the sexes, and that equal rights for women is one of the sanest ideas to come down the pike in centuries.

The problem is that this is a human movement and as such is not perfect, nor can it be. And there is the crux of the matter: if you suggest this idea and you're a man, you are dismissed (literally, you have **no say** and are put down quickly and efficiently) as a sexist attempting to destroy the entire movement. If you are a woman and suggest this, you are dismissed as being socialized (so completely dominated by patriarchal thought as to take it as your own thought). In this one field, "politically correct" means toe the party line completely, without question, or your opinions will not be heard.

This is wrong. As an idea, "politically correct" is not new. Nor is opposition to it. In the old Church, the term used was heresy. And at that time it didn't exist officially, either.

On the hopeful side, the people who were silenced at the conference have long memories, and they'll be around for a while yet.

Grenada and the american invasion

by Kari Polanyi-Levit

The invasion of Grenada of October 25, by the full force of the military might of the United States, with greater loss of life than has to date been revealed, was planned a long time ago. Its primary objective was the destruction of the Grenada Revolution of 1979 and the government of Maurice Bishop. Its secondary objective is the destruction of the Community of the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean known as CARICOM. Its third objective is to serve notice on all the peoples of the Caribbean and Central America, that this is America's backyard and that the United States intends to reassert

its imperialist hegemony by force of arms, and is prepared to ignore the condemnation of the

The United States has claimed that its citizens in Grenada were in danger. This is not true. We know that only a handful of the medical students indicated that they wished to leave the island prior to the invasion. It is known that the military council contacted the U.S. government several days before the invasion to discuss arrangements for their safety or evacuation. We know that from Saturday, October 22nd, permission had been received from the military council for a Canadian chartered plane to remove Canadians wish-

ing to leave. This chartered plane was not permitted to fly out of Barbados on Saturday 22nd, or on Sunday 23rd by order of the government of Barbados and no doubt on instruction of the Americans coordinating the invasion from Barbados. On Monday, October 24th, Pearls airport was open for anybody to leave, and a number of planes left the island. Why then the obstacles deliberately placed in the way of Canada? Obviously, because if Canada had been able to remove its nationals from Grenada, questions might be asked why the Americans could not also have evacuated any of its citizens wishing to leave. Thus, the necessary

initial excuse for the landing of marines, would have disappeared.

Another reason which has been given for the invasion was the shock of the massacres of men, women and children, and the assassination of Prime Minister Bishop and his cabinet colleagues by units of the PRS on Wednesday, October 19th. Dreadful as were these events—which in effect checked the Grenada Revolution of 1979 and delivered a monumental setback to the progressive forces of Grenada and the whole Caribbean—they could in no way justify the invasion. This was *continued on page 7*

you were saying

An appeal to the chair

To the Editor:

As your paper is ostensibly [sic] progressive and liberal, we suggest that you cease and desist using the word "chairperson": it is clearly prejudicial to members of the fairer sex because it contains the masculine word "son". Instead, we suggest that all those interested in eliminating bias use alternative terms such as "chair-unit" or "chair-individual".

Yours truly,
Peter Falkins
Bruce Gordon
David K. Baker

Editor's Note: We prefer to use the neutral form "chair". Other forms which might appear in the Gazette are editing oversights.

Pro NATO

To the Editor,

In the last issue before Christmas a student complained that I was not "literate". Although he was not clear about what he meant, there is one point about what the Gazette has been doing to letters in the process of editing them for publication.

While it is normal journalistic practice not to make alterations in the content of letters before publication without consulting the author, this is what the Gazette did with my letter in the November 24 issue. Huge portions were chopped and the resulting unintelligible mess was printed if as if it came from the author. Moreover, what the exacto knife selected for deletion was my argument that all the capitalist political parties, the Liberals, Conservatives or N.D.P., have essentially the same pro-NATO position on the peace movement.

The line of these parties reflects the interest of the Business Council on National Issues which includes the heads of all the biggest multinational corporations in Canada with the combined assets of over \$150 billion. Some supporters of the N.D.P. would prefer to suppress this. Hence the last minute Chopping and splicing.

In order to have a democratic student press, the Gazette should reaffirm that it will print all letters except those which are racist, sexist or fascist, so that many views can be presented and a lively exchange can be developed. Also I think that the current limit of 300 words is too restrictive and should be extended to 500-600 words in length, and no deletions should be made without consulting the author.

Charles Spurr

Dr. Berit As

To the Editor:

In reference to Dr. As's last lecture at the Mount on rape, pornography, incest, battery and prostitution one must ask, how far have we progressed?

Dr. As refers to the above as methods for scapegoating women, but viewed women's progress in these areas as positive. Still coming out of the dark ages on these issues, she points out that women have removed the legal sanctioning of battery and have established rudimentary refugee shelters for its victims. Though only an initial step in focusing in on the problem, she applauds it in light of the prejudicial odds. She offers to remind us that because these problems are now out in the open, they are not new, and we, women, must now construct methods for remedying them.

She quotes some alarming statistics. 25% of all girl children are subject to incestual sexual crimes; 66% of males interviewed would like to rape a woman once, an indication of an unbelievable social sickness, and pornography has emerged as the third largest industry in the U.S. today. With the possible decline in women's status in the 80's, and the disheartening facts above, she

recommends to women that they see themselves as instrumental in forcing change. Her adage is that an oppressor cannot liberate himself, leaving the task of providing justice largely a woman's responsibility.

She warns women to beware of the current trend to document sexual crimes in detail as a form of media coverage. She sees this only as an attempt to keep women inside and recognizes the selling potential it has based on corner-store magazine racks.

In summation she painted an optimistic picture. Videos of her series are available at the Mount I believe, and I recommend anyone, or group, taking the time to look at them.

M. Reed

An objection

To the Editor:

Thank you for publishing my letter in your 1 December issue. However I cannot express too strongly my anger at your title, "Stop the Communists". Such was not, and is not, my intention.

As a student with leftist views myself, I would be the last person to subscribe either to stifling free opinion, or to outlawing Communist doctrines. On the other hand, I find Mr. Spurr's commentary frequently illogical, poorly-written, badly informed, and showing a very poor grip on Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The editorial addition of an unnecessary title altered the entire meaning of my letter, representing me as strongly anti-Communist, which is not the case. I resent this unilateral decision, and with it the implication that there is no difference between disagreeing with Charles Spurr and being a reactionary. You don't like him that much do you?

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