

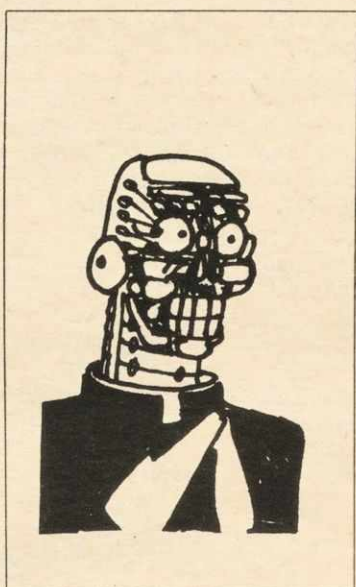
commentary

On university life and sincerity without truth

by David G. C. McCann

Sincerity without the truth can be a very dangerous thing. That this statement is true can be seen in many sectors of the university environment. One case in point is the editorial by Catherine Ricketts in September 29th issue of the Gazette. The good intentions of the Gazette's editor in this article were laudable; the results of her misplaced sincerity were, unfortunately, quite destructive.

Proceeding from the assumption that the Dal Newman Society had simply not bothered to send a representative to the Student Council meeting where the Newman Conference '84 budget was to be discussed, the editorial built a case against both the Newman Society and Student Council. In the most favourable scenario, Council stood accused of patronage; in the worst possible scenario, both groups were accused of collusion. Neither scenario was in harmony with the truth. In fact, the Newman Society did send a representative to the Council meeting on September 25—Ms. Joan Kean. It was intended that any questions arising from the budget request would be answered by her. Unfortunately, Ms. Kean arrived in Council Chambers about five minutes after the budget had been approved (ie: at 2:00 p.m.). The fact that Council was able to plow their way through three-quarters of the twelve item agenda in just under one hour stands to their ever-lasting credit, given the length of previous



Council's meetings. Ms. Kean believed that by arriving at 2:00 p.m., she would be present in ample time to defend Newman's budget. In retrospect, Council was impressed with the Newman budget as a document and passed it on its own merit.

The Gazette editor failed to mention Council's pleasure with the Newman budget preparation. She apparently did not bother to check either with the Newman Society or with Grants Committee Chair, Karl Nightingale. Had either been done, the truth of the matter would have come to light and the matter laid to rest. Instead, an editorial was written predicated on misunderstanding and misinformation. Sincerity without truth had consequences in this regard.

Of course, anyone can make an error in judgement. What is important is that one learn from one's mistakes to avoid repeating them. Any academic worth his salt recognizes the importance of checking his sources. When this is not done, the consequences are apparent.

Another example of the harmful effects of sincerity without truth in the university environment is Dr. Joe Johnson's Travelling Sex Show (a phrase not coined by the author but appropriate nevertheless). Dr. Johnson's sincerity in wanting to help students is obvious; however, one cannot help students by promoting that which will hurt them. Of course, information on Human Sexuality is the basic right of human beings—this cannot be questioned or compromised. What is questionable are Dr. Johnson's methods. Basically, sex is taken out of the context of human love and equated to a lesson in the reproductive biology of the higher primates. The underlying attitude of Dr. Johnson's lectures on sexuality is that everyone is doing it, so he is there to prevent V.D. and pregnancy. What is wrong with this? First of all, it assumes that everyone in the audience is either already sexually active or intending to be so whenever possible. This is far from necessarily true. Second, it presumes that everyone in the audience agrees with contraception. This, again, is not necessarily the case. Further, Dr. Johnson does not offer the obvious alternative—"Saying NO

is the way to grow." It could be argued that attendance at Dr. Johnson's lectures is not compulsory, but this merely skirts the issue. Dr. Johnson is an official representative of Student Health and, therefore, of the University. When he speaks, Frosh (and others) tend to listen. Therefore, it becomes important that he not presume that his views on sexuality and contraception are *a priori* correct. They are only his views. Unfortunately, many Frosh never

discover this reality.

These are just two examples of people who are really sincere and have good intentions, but who lack something in the area of truth. As academics, we are called to search for truth and to come to a better understanding of ourselves, each other and the world around us. In order to do this, we must always check our sources and constantly reevaluate our own position so that we may be in harmony with the truth.

Call for neutrality

by Charles Spurr

"Halifax is being developed as an advance base for the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance," says Tony Seed.

On September 28 a meeting on issues of war and peace was held. The topic was "NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Instruments of the Two Superpowers against Peace and Freedom."

The meeting was sponsored by the Halifax Committee Against Imperialist War (HCAIW), a local affiliate of the People's Front Against Racist and Fascist Violence.

The HCAIW evolved partly out of the struggle of film makers and other cultural workers against the encroachments of the military on cultural facilities such as the National Film Board and Video Theatre. For example, sixty per cent of the National Film Board budget goes to DND films, and for film makers to get involved they must get military security clearance and approval.

The HCAIW also opposes the visits of foreign warships to Halifax, and war exercises like Operations "Minex," "Marcot," "Fertile Brave," etc. The spokesperson said these exercises have been described by NATO gener-

als as development of war-readiness of the port of Halifax in the event of a war in Europe.

Tony Seed, the Maritime spokesperson for the People's Front began by giving a short talk followed by a long period of discussion. The People's Front is an organization which arose several years ago to fulfill the need for a mass defence organization of the people. It opposes the war preparations of both superpowers, and calls for Canada to get out of NATO and NORAD with a policy of active neutrality.

The speaker described aspects of Canada's involvement in NATO and said Canada is directly participating in the war preparations of U.S. imperialism. This reflects Trudeau's support for the American "two-track" strategy, that is, the deployment of nuclear missiles in Europe and elsewhere, while conducting negotiations with the Soviet Union on arms control. This policy is also known as "peace through strength."

The speaker said NATO imposes U.S. domination on its member countries through the chain of command of the standing NATO fleet in the Atlantic. While the command of the fleet

rotates amongst the countries which participate in it, it is under the command of an American naval officer stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. He added this U.S. naval officer in turn comes under the command of the U.S. Second Fleet, also stationed at Norfolk.

This means, he said, the NATO fleet which is presently in Halifax, which includes Canadian ships, is actually a sub command of the U.S. Second Fleet. Additional examples were given to show this domination of NATO countries, including Canada, by the United States.

On the effect of Canada pulling out of NATO, the speaker said, "There is a necessity for the people of each country to take up the cause of dismantling the aggressive military blocs and averting the danger of war." The position of HCAIW is not for removal of defence forces but the halting of all preparations for launching wars of aggression. The spokesman said getting Canada out of NATO will have a powerful influence internationally, including on the countries of the Warsaw Pact.

Charles Spurr is a member of the People's Front Against Racist and Fascist Violence.

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