

NEGOTIATIONS DERAILED

»comment«

The Gateway has just received a copy of a letter sent by Ross Harvey "for those friendly folks at POUNDMAKER" urging "complete solidarity from all CUP papers in quarantining "Gateway".

Specifically, the letter which was relayed to the Gateway by one of its intended recipients, asks that those CUP papers which still exchange papers with the Gateway stop doing so. The letter was mailed on January 17, in the midst "secret" negotiations between the two papers and some Gateway staffers see it as a breach of faith. The Gateway was officially ousted from CUP in December because of last spring's Student Council interference in the selection of the editor.

Harvey's letter, which according to Poundmaker Staffer, Jim Selby was sent without the knowledge of the rest of the staff, reveals that the Gateway is "using the papers they receive from various CUP members to help set up an "underground press reading room" in their offices to help lure in new staff."

The letter announces that "we (we being the staff of POUNDMAKER) are involved in a policy of what is pretty well all out struggle with "Gateway" over the principles of staff democracy and staff control over all decisions including the choice of editor."

"It does not recognize the democratic ways that Gateway staffers, all strangers in September, have found of making their decisions without alienating and angering one another," Gateway editor Jackson observed.

The letter also fails to mention the establishment of the independent Publication Board to make the final decision on selecting the editor, a set-up which, although it does not meet the requirements of the Poundmaker's ideology, does satisfy CUP regulations.

Selby, who was Poundmaker's ad manager last term, said that "things like the letter aren't brought up at general meetings." He suggested that the letter was sent at the instigation of CUP executive members who visited Edmonton early in January. "Harvey was probably assigned to write the letter then, but the wording would be all his."

Selby, who objects to the Gateway's new Publication Board as "hierarchical" and prefers the "real staff democracy" which the Poundmaker enjoys, admits that Poundmaker's relationship with CUP is "an authority structure. CUP has a certain amount of power over us. But the point is, that they are supporting our cause."

The Friday before Harvey sent the letter, three delegates of the Gateway staff met with the members of the Poundmaker to discuss the possibility of a reconciliation between the two groups. At that meeting, Dorothy Wigmore, CUP president, assured both groups that any settlement acceptable to both papers would be acceptable to CUP. That meeting was followed by a more informal gathering held last Saturday.

When the idea of negotiation was reintroduced, by Howard Harlton, ad manager for the NAIT Nugget, the Poundmaker recommended the Gateway move out of its offices, change its name to the Poundmaker, sign a contract with the Students' Union for the publication of the paper and embrace "staff democracy" as the Poundmaker practises.

Later, the stipulation that the name be changed was dropped.

Selby said yesterday that because Harvey acted independently, the letter "should not be considered a breach of negotiations."



Poundmaker speak with forked tongue

The Gateway has by chance received a copy of a letter sent by Ross Harvey, Poundmaker arts editor, to some 15 Canadian University newspapers. (see story this page). The letter asks the recipients to stop sending copies of their papers to the Gateway. This is requested on the grounds that "solidarity from all CUP members" is required in the Poundmaker's struggle against the Gateway over the hypothetical issue of "staff democracy".

Ironically, this request came in the midst of previously unpublicized negotiations between the Poundmaker and the Gateway, negotiations which were exploring the possibility of an eventual merger of the two papers.

We are confident that, despite Poundmaker's espoused principle of staff democracy, Harvey's letter was a unilateral action for which the other Poundmaker people ought not to be held responsible.

But we demand that at least the paper send a letter to ALL CUP members explaining the CURRENT situation and lifting the "embargo". Otherwise, there won't even be friendly competition, much less reconciliation.

Allyn Cadogan
Loreen Lennon
deena hunter
Terri Jackson

Candace Savage
Arthur Savage
Brian Tucker



the student press:

intimations of failure

"Oh yes, '71-72. That was the year (or the first) when there were two campus papers."

The dramatic and conspicuous split in *The Gateway* staff—of which you are reminded every Wednesday—is certainly one of the distinguishing marks of the current university year.

But are the rift and the resulting twin stacks of papers merely a novelty? Or have they had a significant effect on the political or intellectual climate at the university?

Knowing as I do the amount of effort which has gone into both papers—you would likely be surprised if you knew how much—I find it discouraging to admit that neither has been influential.

The intent of *The Gateway* news pages (for which I must bear much of the responsibility) has not been to bore you to death or to assuage you into acceptance of the status quo, as detractors like to intimate. Instead, the dutiful coverage of meetings and campus events was ideally to give you the information you needed to make decisions on important issues; opinions which hopefully you would choose to express and to act on.

In order to give you information you could trust, we adopted a conventional journalistic voice, free of obvious or extreme biases. No one could seriously claim that a writer or an editor is without opinions and prejudices, some of them unconscious. But one can—as a minimum goal—aim to excise blatant signs of bias which would alienate readers from what is fundamentally a conscientious and reasonably accurate report.

So our style has been bland and unornamented and our tone descriptive rather than argumentative.

What has been the result of our self-restraint? Have students in fact taken a more active part in decision-making? Obviously not. We have been as immured in our own private problems and apolitical goals as ever.

The Gateway, correctly, I think, judging the mood of the campus to be relatively conservative and apolitical, has tried to involve students by informing them—by giving them the sense of being eye-witnesses and participants.

And it has failed—because its conservative tone has alienated people? because we're all too busy "getting through" courses? because we're not here long enough to really feel in command of the situation? because there are no real leaders on campus? because, individually, the issues seem trivial? because we're concertedly or thoughtlessly conservative?

Assuming that there are things wrong with the university (and with society), perhaps even fundamental things, and assuming that as the CUP constitution has it, a newspaper should be an agent of social change, what is the responsibility of a paper's editor and staff?

The people at *The Poundmaker*, I suspect (and I hope that I don't wrong them in what I have to say) have chosen to adopt a more ideological tone. Just as *The Gateway's* tone is derived from conventional journalism, *Poundmaker's* is loyal to the tradition of student and underground papers'. It's a language native only to those who are the young, with-it, pot-smoking innovators, and few amongst us would deliberately exclude ourselves from the group: it's more enjoyable to respond with the "right on" of an initiate.

The paper's tactic then, is to argue in a straight-forward and opinionated way, more or less "radical" political stands on important issues. Has it worked? Has it won converts to the need for protest and change?

Well, few students have been storming University Hall with demands that the university boycott Kraft or decrying the inequities of this year's operating budget as a result of *The Poundmaker's* efforts. Just as few are examining the Mackenzie Valley pipeline scheme or studying the faults of GFC and the university's bureaucratic structure and government because of what they've read in *The Gateway*.

Has *Poundmaker* failed because we no longer seriously believe in the hippy persona? because we discredit their articles as unwarrantably biased? or just because we're too busy or too lazy to care?

Maybe the problem is simply that both papers are far from fulfilling their ideals, that they are both very bad papers. Certainly, neither paper has provided enough carefully reasoned arguments which might help formulate opinion. *The Gateway* often stops too soon; *The Poundmaker*, on the other hand, often begins with conclusions which the reader must accept as *a priori* truths. And certainly both groups have repeatedly been handicapped by the lack of manpower.

If one is more pessimistic, he might conclude that the student press is simply bankrupt—neither of the journalistic conventions available to it will work now. Or worse yet, that students are slipping into a new trough of conservatism, insecurity and lack of a group identity.

What then is the future of the student press? After the heady excitement and the growing frustration of trying to encourage change, will the student paper gradually abandon that most conservative of institutions, the university? Is this *Poundmaker's* course? Or will it, in an effort to stay abreast of its readers, gradually sink into a new complacency and political naivety?

If you believe—as I do—that the university must be substantially changed and that a virile student press is essentially for reform/revolution/what you will, both papers need your help. (Especially *The Gateway*).

Candace Savage