

more letters to the editor

Editor:

I would like to charge Prof. Norman Strax with irresponsibility, misrepresentation, and infringing upon the basic rights of the student body of UNB. I also think that there should be a complete investigation into his background and the resources used to finance the expedition to Washington on Oct. 19th under his leadership. As the leader of the movement, The Mobilization, Dr. Strax had a responsibility beyond the processes of educating persons in the aims and reasons of the march and of the anti-war movements; beyond his own personal aims of obtaining as many converts or (failing that) merely participants. This responsibility entailed the education of participants as to the conditions which they would face during the entire time spent in Washington. These conditions stretching from the most menial sleeping, eating, and toilet facilities, to the hours which the march itself would demand, to the possibilities (some only too real) of the opposition they could face in the U.S. and upon returning home — including physical injury. As a former participant in demonstrations and marches, Dr. Strax not only knew of the above but had access, as organizer, to detailed particulars about the march itself and the wide range of possibilities which could be injurious to the participants. I charge that Prof. Strax had a duty to the people participating or involved in the march, to emphasize all of these in an objective and clear manner, as a responsible 28-year-old adult of conscience should; and that he failed to do so.

The former I also believe involves a degree of misrepresentation in that he failed to draw a complete picture of what participation would and could entail. Further I feel that misrepresentation was, conscientiously and unconscientiously, practiced by Prof. Strax in his methods of gaining recruits to fill as many buses as possible. Firstly by lowering the true bus fare to Washington, he attracted many persons who, for nine dollars instead of twenty-nine, could and did take the trip not as sincere anti-warists but as persons who decided that for this small sum they could see Washington. I am positive that only a very small minority of participants went to Washington deeply committed and sincerely motivated to demanding that the U.S. withdraw from Vietnam. Yet were not all these people classified as such by the news media automatically? The group as a whole have been the subject of criticism by different persons and groups. Dr. Strax has been credited by supporters and opposers alike as leading a group of 150 anti-war demonstrators to Washington. Dr. Strax has personally received acclaim and criticism (which he dismisses) for a misrepresentation of the march and of the student body. I was repulsed by the stories of how the demonstrators suffered at the hands of the troops at the Pentagon and at the misrepresentation of the march in the U.S. news media. If the demonstrators are distressed by misrepresentation let the ones who did not qualify as sincere and dedicated before the march stand up and be counted. Those who returned dedicated I ask "Are not the valid reasons for pulling of Vietnam not only in the interests of American and South East Asian people, but also in the long-term interests of the American government and the economic powers to be in the U.S.? Communist and popular war movements in underdeveloped countries are hardly in the interests of the U.S. government, for it entails very heavy

expenditures — expenditures which in the last twelve months have been vastly in excess of 30 billion dollars — at the expense of their own acute social problems, their space program etc., etc. The war in this respect is not in the interest of their own people nor is it in the interests of the peoples of other underdeveloped countries who, if aided now with their problems, will not in a decade be faced with conditions grossly more acute, and an atmosphere which internally or under the leadership of an external group would result in more Vietnams. Such a possibility is hardly in the interests of the American government. Certain economic interests may directly profit from the manufacture of war materials. They may support the use of U.S. troops to crush any insurrection in a country to demonstrate that the U.S. will use force to retain economic domination of any region, to prevent the take-over of a government contrary to their interests. However is it really in their interests to pay taxes required to sustain the U.S. troops in these countries, is it in their interests to suffer the damages to their holdings in these countries, to suffer the disruption of trade which could result? Would it not be in their long term interests to suffer heavier taxes now and be guaranteed stability and constant income from their holdings in these countries and the home industries which are dependant upon the raw materials from these countries? To say no defies logic; to say yes is to imply that these people are nearsighted and ignorant by supporting the war in Vietnam (which I do not believe). Dr. Strax can dwell in detail and with truth upon the actual war in Vietnam itself, showing that neither side is abiding by the Geneva Conventions, that staggering atrocities are committed by South Vietnamese Army and U.S. forces; yet hospitals, schools, and thousands of children suffered in the hands of the Allies during W.W. II. That war was in the interests of you and I — some wars are essential. Dr. Strax has used uncommitted members of the student body to further his own ends — gain publicity for the anti-war movement. He and other persons have a right to air their views but not to use members of the student body nor to allow unfounded publicity to further their own ends and to reflect upon the University or the student body.

Finally, due to the nationwide publicity given to the contingent from UNB which participated in the Washington march and more specifically the publicity and reaction generated in our own region I feel that an investigation into the march is warranted. This investigation should involve details of the financing of the trip to show that it was a private sponsorship and had no leftist group or university sponsorship. It should involve enough investigation of Dr. Strax to clear him of any unjust speculation (he had clearance after an F.B.I. investigation to work on secret projects before he came to Canada). This investigation should also correct erroneous publicity and clear the university of unfounded speculation.

I will close by saying that while I disagree with Dr. Strax's views and upon his methods of furthering his aims, I respect his motivation, this letter is not meant as a personal attack. I hope only that he, and others will consider it in a serious air for I believe that the reputations of the university and of the student body, indeed that of Dr. Strax himself, could suffer unjustly.

— W.M. Bancroft

A Cry for Equality

Dear Sir:

I have noticed in our new library — third floor, to the right as you get off the elevator — there are hundreds of book lockers. Wonderful isn't it! Only a few have been taken and the rest remain unused. Noticing this and thinking of the

convenience the possession of one of these would afford, I rushed over to the desk nearby and asked to submit my name for one. But much to my dismay they are reserved for graduate students. At present it seems there is no deadline by which they must be claimed by grad

students before under-grads can apply for one. In fairness to the entire student body some arrangement should be made so that these can be used by those who are willing to make claim to them now.

— Hart North

JELLYBEANS

by Tom Murphy

LEFT, RIGHT, FORWARD MARCH

One chap was carrying a real estate sign. He was protesting against protestors — any protestors. Another was parading with a placard reading: GOD AND I DECLARE WAR AGAINST THE EARTH AND ITS INHABITANTS. He was protesting against people — any people. Most, however, were bearing signs with such platitudes as: END CANADIAN COMPLICITY or U.S. — GET OUT OF VIETNAM or IN THE NAME OF GOD — STOP! The chilly breeze outside was more than countered by the hot atmosphere of the 6000 marchers walking down Yonge Street in Toronto. They wanted to stop the war — and so they marched; hollered; fought

. . . fought? Fighting? Drawing blood? Peace march? Perhaps "piece" march — a piece of flesh — a piece of bone — a bit of blood. I took part in the Toronto peace march, which was relatively more peaceful than the Washington march. Yet with what little violence there was, it still brought into serious question the whole value of peace marches and demonstrations.

Marches have been in use as a pressuring phenomenon for a century or so. The suffragettes in England staged some effective and sometimes violent marches in their quest for equality and a vote for women. Recently, marches have been used as a charity gimmick in such walks labeled as "Feet for Fame" or "Miles for the Millions". Each walker gets a sponsor who will guarantee him so much money per mile he walks. But more than any, the last five or six years have been pot-marked by two major types of demonstration — civil rights, and peace in Vietnam.

But why marches? Why not just mass gatherings? Marches symbolize military authority. Marchers identify with this sense of power. Whereas a mass gathering is a static blob of people — marches mean momentum — a driving force. Marching implies a commitment to the people involved. They must actively march from A to B, not just passively hang around. It displays might. People notice — especially if the march is quite long and through a business section of town. In fact, there is not an effective alternative to marches.

I wonder how seriously marchers take themselves. The majority of the marchers didn't holler or shout the anti-Vietnam platitudes while marching in the Toronto march. They appeared too exposed to do this. (Because a permit couldn't be obtained for marching down Yonge Street, it was necessary to march two abreast on the sidewalk). But the people were from a wide background. There were students, professors, ministers, Americans, (431 carried signs saying: I REFUSED TO GO), engineers, foresters, nurses, doctors, scientists, housewives, secretaries, hippies, dropouts, capitalists, communists, people — mostly people.

In fact, at one stage, I was getting quite annoyed at four pseudo-hippies directly behind me. All had shoulder length hair; two were wearing silver bands around their head; another was wearing leotards, and cultivating a dandelion, which appeared to be growing out of the dirt he had accumulated on his hands. The one chap I could have bashed, though, continually talked about marijuana and drugs, as if he had a whole lot of experience backing him up. The fact was, he displayed his knowledge of both marijuana and L.S.D. everytime he mentioned the name. The other three in his tribe laughed and kidded around every time he would all but assault a harmless old lady and ask her if she would contribute to the resources concerned with the development of marijuana production and distribution in Canada. I doubt that any of them could even spell marijuana. I have a certain respect for genuine hippies, but for super clods like these — they can go right straight to hell.

Another little item bothers me somewhat. How much do people actually know about the cause for which they are demonstrating? Obviously, the Vietnam war is shadowed in veils of mystery. The Viet Cong reports differ considerably from the American reports. Its impossible to get an accurate report from most American news media — who all but lie when talking Vietnam. Canadian reports (and the marchers from UNB concur) that there were between 120,000 — 200,000 at the Washington demonstration. Keep your eye on TIME magazine or NEWSWEEK. How many will they say — 30,000 — perhaps 40,000.

With such distortion, how can most marchers know what the issues are. In fact, I expect about half have at least some knowledge of Vietnam. I expect the other half is protesting, because of the appeal of the protest itself, its like an all-day sucker. A few people know the ingredients but most people feast on it because it is appealing.

Marches do have effects — there is no question of that. One noticeable effect of the Washington march is the fact the CBC news said outright that the American news media was playing it down. Of course there were probably plenty of individual repercussions. People got hurt. Professors lost jobs. (democratic society you know!) L.B.J.'s image is sinking lower and lower. The most recent Gallup poll indicates that 46 percent of Americans disfavoured American involvement in Vietnam. And that ain't hay.