

Letters

continued from page 5

Is it cults or COMA?

To the Editor:

In relationship to Chaplain Dyck's article in *the Gazette* last year allow me to clarify some points on the University of Ottawa speech of Ian Hayworth the COMA member. In particular because much of Chaplain Dyck's source material was the same as used by COMA. Such material usually has few real facts to support itself and therefore must depend on an emotional response from the listener and play on people's fears. This certainly seems to be the case with Mr. Hayworth.

Are we really to believe there are 3,000 "cults" in North America and they are all dangerous as he implied? Such statements strain the imagination. What would COMA have made of Francis of Assisi and his followers who rejected the corruption of medaeval society for a more simple way of life, would this also be a dangerous group if founded today?

Reading his story his bad experience certainly deserves sympathy. But does that mean all new groups are the same? The facts show they are all very different.

So called "front" groups of the Unification Church is also a misleading statement. The many organizations inspired by Rev. Moon are a natural extension of the concerns of the church the membership of which is far beyond that of the Church itself. Such membership does not imply endorsement of Church tenets.

The issue of the new groups is not being whitewashed as the Hill Inquiry shows, Dr. Hill found no evidence that would support COMA's wild claims (P581 586).

Dr. Hill did warn of the dangers of professional deprogramming which Mr. Hayworth advocates.

Tom Sinclair-Faulker, Chairman of the Department of Religion at Dalhousie, who has been active in the study of new religions also made similar comment:

Of all the self-proclaimed "deprogrammers" he knows of none who is a certified psychotherapist, he said.

"The deprogramming process, successful in only 40 per cent of the cases involves violence and low level torture. This results in confused and uncertain people who are easily convinced their previous way of life was evil."

Dr. Hill reaching similar conclusions when confronted with such evidence suggested other ways to deal with communication problems.

" — The Berkley Interfaith Council in California, an organization involving traditional and new religious groups. The Berkley Council operates a referral service devoted to bringing members of groups and their families together." (P 586).

Other such committees exist in Canada. In conclusion groups such as COMA are far more dangerous than any of the groups they claim to expose. They are in fact part of an international network of dubious groups themselves seeking credibility for criminal deprogrammers who rip people off for \$1,500-\$7,500 per kidnapping while trampling their victims freedoms at the same time. COMA poses a far more serious threat to society.

Trevor Brown
Unification Church

Make culture, not war

To the Editor:

Passed unanimously by approximately 45 students, artists, cultural workers and members of the community at a meeting held at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Nov. 4, 1982 with four abstentions.

WHEREAS the increasing war preparations which are being carried out by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their military alliances of NATO and the Warsaw Pact pose a grave danger to the lives and liberties of the people of the world; and

WHEREAS the Canadian government is taking part in

these war preparations on the side of the US dominated NATO bloc; and

WHEREAS the increased propaganda for recruitment of the Canadian youth into the arms forces and other branches of the military apparatus is one of the features of the preparations for war; and

WEHEREAS the "National Film Board" is directly contributing to the war preparations by:

(1) sponsoring the recruiting film "A Young Man's Challenge" for showing to high school seniors and armed forces audiences and which is entered in the "educational" category of the 1982 Atlantic Film and Video Festival; and

(2) has spent over \$350,000 from 1979-81, amounting to over one-third the Atlantic regional budget, for other internal military training and propaganda films, such as "Nuclear Chemical Warfare;" and

(3) has established a national propaganda outlet in scores of communities across Canada for free NATO films; and

(4) has spent over \$350,000 glorifying the New Brunswick magnate, K.C. Irving, who among other things is part of a multinational consortia bidding for the \$2.6 billion contract for six new naval destroyers; and

(5) has suppressed and blacklisted film, video and other cultural workers opposed to the militarization of culture; and

WHEREAS these heavy expenditures for military purposes necessarily entails a reduction in cultural services and the production of authentic cultural concern;

THEREFORE be it resolved that this meeting of art students and cultural workers demand:

(1) an immediate halt to all military-corporate films;

(2) not a single penny for military propaganda and an end to social and cultural cutbacks; and

(3) the development of a people's culture on the basis of our own forces.

It is very important that this statement be widely distributed throughout the Maritimes as a concrete action taken by students, artists and cultural workers against the war preparations of the Canadian government.

Yours sincerely,
Bill McKiggan

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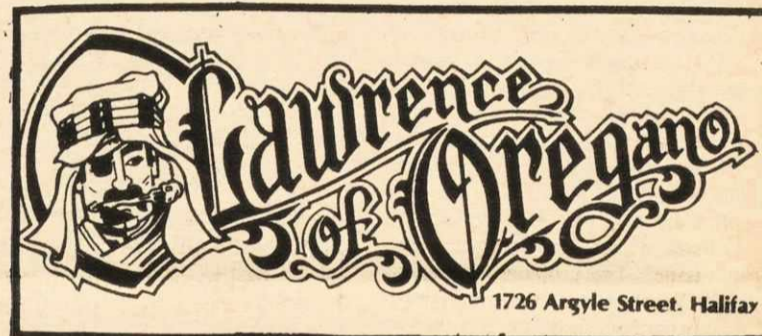
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