

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

AMERICA'S OLDEST COLLEGE PAPER

Member Canadian University Press

Published twice a week by the Students' Council of Dalhousie University. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Students' Council. For subscriptions write Business Manager, Dalhousie Gazette, Halifax, N. S.

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Vol. LXXXII FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1950 No. 20

Wanted: A Belief in Individualism

(Reprinted from "The Manitoban")

"No work is ever done collectively, by a majority decision."
 —Ayn Rand

Once again the editors of the MANITOBAN have been called upon to defend the paper's unorthodox policy of having no policy. This time the Canadian University Press Conference in Montreal was the occasion of a debate which, although in all good spirits, brought out in its long and serious passages basic differences in opinion as to the function of a student newspaper. It may not be too untimely to draw from this discussion conclusions which students may well seriously consider.

Sparking a two-hour open forum, Clyde Kennedy of the MCGILL DAILY contended that our practice of allowing every interested student to have his material published unaltered and unadorned led to a wishy-washy editorial page in which no opinion could be pointed to as that of the abstract entity known as "the paper." Jack Gray of the Toronto VARSITY joined in by claiming that editorials should be written under consultation and that the final product should be a boiled down version of the consensus of opinion. He felt that by such a system, the prestige and tradition of the VARSITY'S sixty years' publishing could be thrown behind whatever is in the lead column.

Red Lampert of the Dalhousie GAZETTE resolved the question whether the paper should lead or follow student opinion, and seemed to feel that under a wide-open policy the leadership was lost in the effort to mirror the campus. Ray Du Plessis of Ottawa's FULCRUM stated that there was a right and wrong to every question and that the editors were in a position to point out the right side. The majority of the delegates joined in the friendly massacre, but the salient points are outlined above. Although the opinions were well considered and extremely interesting, we remain unmoved, save for a slinking fear that all campi are not as democratic as ours.

We do not believe that there exists or should exist an entity designed as the MANITOBAN which will take a position on any current topic and defend it to the death. We do not believe in organizing campus opinion along certain lines, for we do not believe that the editors have the right or the duty, much less the ability to perform this function. We believe that the editors are individuals, who should wield no more thought-molding power than is the right of every student on campus. To deny anyone that right by either assertion or assumption would be a flagrant violation of our responsibility.

We do not believe in collective thought, because there can exist no collective mind. Any opinion possessed of integrity and conviction can be best expressed only by one particular person and only in his particular way. Statements which are the result of a compromise or coalition can be neither respected nor understood. We believe that a student newspaper is not the voice of one man or the collective voice of a group, but the sum of as many individual voices as wish to be heard. The sum is vastly different from the common denominator determined by collaboration, for the sum allows the existence of the parts while cooperation destroys the parts to establish a consensus.

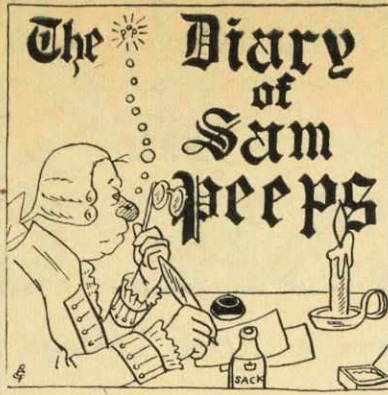
We do not believe in absolute right or wrong, for as a confessed relativist, we contend that there exists no final statement on political or social problems. We believe that the basic questions of human life remain unsolved and that only by free and open discussion will we make progress towards understanding and appreciation. Let it be realized that this attitude does not prevent the holding of convictions, but despite being willing to defend them rather strenuously, we cannot conceive of forcing our convictions upon someone else. We demand for others the same psychological and moral freedom that has been granted us.

We believe that the MANITOBAN provides leadership more adequately than do many other papers because its pages are open to the persuasive powers of any student. We continue to hope that those who are incompetent will bow to public scorn and leave those who say important things to provide the stimulation and leadership.

We believe that this position provides the best assurance that the social and political rights of the students will be safeguarded, for the beliefs upon which it is based are those which help perpetuate democratic powers. It is based upon a faith in the ability of students to read, think and decide for themselves. Other systems are limited by natural boundaries, for the calibre of writing can never exceed the abilities of the journalistic clique. If the MANITOBAN writers fail to satisfy, it is not their fault alone, but that of a society which is failing to provide individual initiative and conviction.

Let us not be ridiculed as idealistic, for progress is based upon idealism and sometimes dreaming can lead to creation. Those who criticize reveal only too little faith in basic democratic processes.

M. S.



Wednesday, January 11, 1950.
 Breakfasted on some toast soaked in sack, a delightful food for morning meals and resolved to continue this practice. I then proceeded to Studlee where all is talk of the Students' Doomsday Book, Faroff. It doth seem that the Parliament has taken steps to speed up the publication of the volume, as some of the students, especially the Lawyers, have become noisesome of late in their demand for the book, so vain are some to see their own portraits.

Shoutland, who was the Editor of the Doomsdaybook, is willing to explain his point of view to anybody who will listen, and he does has a lot of convincing arguments. While at the Wood Building did see him expounding to a student who agreed with everything he had to say. I believe that it was the noted parliamentarian, Gorgon Cinders.

Did hear that All-fired Hairless who is to present a case before the bench of the court. He is to be opposed by his bosom friend Snarl Gooseburg. I did hear that both believe that the justices are prejudiced against them and each expects to lose his case.

Thursday, January 12, 1950.
 Passing by the college on the hill I did meet Miss Doggo, who is on the staff of the Spectator, Morning Edition. I did remark that she was wearing a very heavy coat and did ask her why she did so, for she had just come from the offices of the Spectator and this is often a very warm place indeed. She did reply that of late when certain persons, who were not speaking to each other came into the office of the Spectator to contribute their work the air became very chill indeed and she was afeared of contacting a rhume.

Did go to the Gentlemen's Assembly Room where I did slide on the floor and nearly take a tumble, for the floor was coated with some slippery substance. Did discover that this was due to Airwick Bicker, who did coat the floor heavily with wax for the Asses and Seance Society weekly Ball.

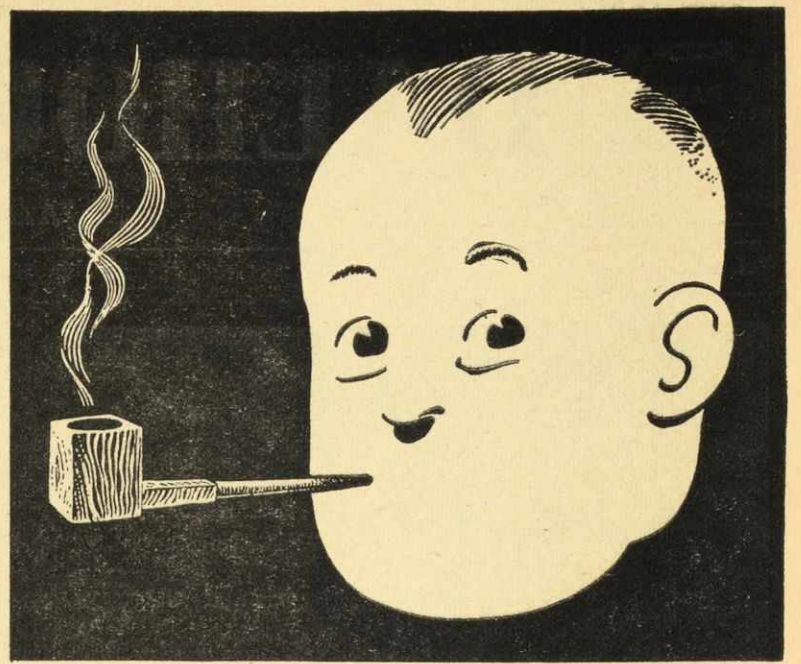
January, Friday 13, 1950. Up today on the wrong side of the bed. Did go downstairs to eat and did have the misfortune to spill the salt as I ate. Feeling adventure-some I did decide to tempt fate and go out and walk about the streets. I was quickly convinced of the truth of the old superstitions for the first one I should meet was Lightdaughter. I pretended not to notice him but did not deceive him. He told me that he was now devoting himself to his studies and would not waste his time in association with scurvy companions and then wished me good day.

Did meet Airwick Bicker, of the Publicity and Propaganda Society of the College on the Hill and did suggest to him that as a spectacle to attract persons he should announce that at a certain date he will climb to the top of the new building being built at Studlee and thence jump down to the ground without a net below. He did not seem to approve of this scheme and did leave me in a huff.

Next I saw Shoutland approaching and did quickly dash into a side street. Here I did meet Weeda McKickin. We did discuss the situation in her home, Cape Breton, and talk of the parties held over the festive season. I did remark that I assumed that she did not know of these first hand, for none would invite her to a party.

Home early, where I applied a large steak to my sore eye. I do not think it will turn black at all.

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