



Canada's oldest college newspaper. Member of Canadian University Press. Opinions expressed editorially are not the official opinion of the Council of Students. Official publication of Students of Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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The Case Against Fraternities

In many ways, both male and female fraternities are the campus equivalents of secret societies. They have secrets ranging from secret meetings and secret pledges to secret beverage refreshments and secret handshakes.

But one fact of their existence is not so secret — there is a noted lack of members whose stock is other than the Caucasian race.

To strip this phrase of its pleasantness, this means that these fraternities — operating almost totally in so-called "free" countries — practice a habit coming more and more under attack — racial discrimination.

Ugly words, to be sure. Words that are thought of as belonging to the deep south or big bad American cities. But it seems undeniably true that these ugly words hold true right here on our learned campus as well.

This practice has been defended upon a premise that is especially true when applied to fraternities, namely, that in a free country, men should have freedom of association. We would never deny this right to any person, any group, or any organization. Man should be, and obviously is, free to associate with any person or persons with whom he chooses.

Even with the well-known methods which fraternities use to choose their members — rushing, with a later stage called "blackballing" — we would be loath to take exception at this point. But there seems to be a very basic flaw in applying this premise to the practice of ostracizing a person because his skin is black, brown or any other color.

It is this: does man have any right to choose or reject his friends merely because their skin is the wrong color, or because he comes from a different country, or because his religion is not the same as the norm? He undoubtedly may have a right to reject a man because he may not like him, or may disapprove of any of his peculiarities. But it does seem impossible to believe that there has never in the history of Dalhousie been one member of the Negro race, to take one example, who was not a better man than any one member of every Dalhousie fraternity at any given moment.

Our submission then, is this: that no man should ever reject a fellow man because of the color of his skin, or the variety of his beliefs. He may reject any number of a foreign race because of other reasons, but he should never reject a race outright.

And this seems especially true on a campus of higher learning. There have been countless arguments attempting to determine just what constitutes an "educated man." We will not attempt to say here what does constitute this beast, nor even if any graduate of this college is an educated man. But it does seem quite reasonable to submit that any person or group of persons that operates under the guidance of bigotry has no place in an institution which is, almost by definition, operating for the purpose of developing the intellect.

At a university, students are taught to think for themselves. They are urged to consider both sides of every issue and to decide for themselves what is the right course of action. In the case of fraternities this has not happen-

ed. They have allowed pettiness and bigotry to permeate their ranks until they have lost almost all appearance of being "educated" people.

It is said that Dalhousie fraternities cannot accept members of the Negro race, much as they would like to, because their brother fraternities throughout the southern portion of the United States would be "offended."

If such is the case. If Dalhousie fraternities are being run by their American brothers, it would seem to be time that we showed our true concern for the American Negro by acting instead of talking.

A few years ago when struggles for the freedom of the Negro were taking place in cities like Little Rock, we heard many complaints on this campus about the cruelty of the white man in the American south. Yet at the same time many of those who voiced loud protests against people like Governor Faubus were fraternity members who were, at the same time, paying silent lip-service to this form of prejudice.

It seems to us reasonable that if Dalhousie fraternities cannot accept Negro members solely because of their American chapters then they had better drop all guises of being places for developing wholesome fellowships among student members of this University, and resort to justifying their existence on the basis of some of their better-known "social activities."

Is NFCUS Necessary?

The National Federation of Canadian University Students reputedly represents some 90,000 Canadian students. To date several member universities have expressed concern as to whether NFCUS was serving a useful purpose or whether it was a mere luxury, as Sir George William's University charged when it withdrew from the federation earlier this term.

This year Dalhousie students are paying 60 cents apiece to the federation. This is an increase of 10 cents over last year, in an effort to meet the rising expenses of NFCUS. Approximately \$1000.00 will be sent to the national office, while the local committee receives \$150.00 for working expenses. Is NFCUS worth this amount?

Is there a justifiable reason for Dalhousie remaining in NFCUS? Of what benefit is it to the average student?

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS



"I UNDERSTAND TH' TRI-THYS PLEDGED TH' MOST SOUGHT AFTER 'KUSHEE' ON CAMPUS."

The Critical Eye

HOLLYWOOD: A CULTURAL GRAVEYARD

While reading through an old show business magazine called "Stage" we came across the following remarks of Archibald MacLeish a noted American poet:

"Hollywood is in trouble at the box office and the reason why Hollywood is in trouble at the box office is precisely that its pictures lack the fourth dimension of life. And the reason its pictures lack the fourth dimension of life is precisely that they do not know their own time, do not present their own time, do not belong to their own time, and therefore, quite naturally, have lost the interest of their own time."

These remarks made in 1938 are still true today. Current movies, like those of more than twenty years ago, instead of dealing with reality, are burrowing deeper and deeper into an abyss of trite and nonsensical banality.

There are several reasons why this trend has dominated the movie industry for many years, but the chief ones may be listed in order of their importance as follows:

1. The general public is not intelligent enough to view anything worthwhile.
2. The producers of Hollywood appear to lack sufficient intelligence to produce anything worthwhile.
3. Any decent, self-supporting, conscientious theatre-man who is interested in presenting true drama as a mirroring of life, will avoid Hollywood as much as possible.

The proof of the first reason seems immediately clear when one considers the results of a recent Gallup poll in the United States which showed that next to the Bible most Americans regard "Gone With the Wind" as the most interesting book they have ever read. It seems hard to believe that this "boy meets girl theory" is so firmly entrenched in our way of life that a book based solely on this plot can rank so high in the public's

estimation of good literature. Yet, the figures do not lie.

Much has been written about the ignorance of movie producers and their money-grabbing tactics which lead them to produce trash purely for the sake of making money. It is painful to realize that in the hands of these gold-clutching impresarios rests almost entirely the cultural development of this generation. But it is true. The high school and college student of today knows nothing of drama and the live theatre. He occasionally reads a fictional pocket book but he has never heard of Irish drama or the Abbey Theatre. His only knowledge of art, in any form, consists of being able to rhyme off the five most popular movies in North America at the present time.

And what are some of these leading works of art which show clearly the current level of America's culture: "The Parent Trap", a story of teen-age twins, "Blood and Roses", an eerie tale of a lady vampire, "Come September" a boy chases girl story, and "A Thunder of Drums" a realistic western.

It is indeed unfortunate that since the days of Mr. MacLeish there has been no improvement in the quality of movies produced by Hollywood. There have been advances in viewing with the new wide screen cinemascope, and improvements in sound by the use of stereophonic devices. But, as yet, there has been no attempt made to improve movies themselves.

We can only hope that someday soon Hollywood will realize its position in our society and will begin to live up to its responsibilities.