

never, ever support the wrong agents.

That the student press must use its influence as an agent of social change responsibly, as outlined in the Canadian University Press Code of Ethics, presenting campus, local, national, and international news fairly and accurately and interpreting ideas and events to the best of its ability.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record: shouldn't all this screamingly obvious motherhood stuff go without saying?

That the student press must as its main priority assist students in acting against any system where it is found to be preserving a hierarchy based on power and privilege, or to be oppressive to women, lesbians and gay men, indigenous people, or ethnic, religious or other minorities.

As every intelligent person from right-wing Nietzsche to left-wing Saul Alinsky realizes, power, despite all its negative connotations, simply means ability. In this clause CUP is presumably talking about the nasty, stereotyped forms of power like money and military might, which have been endlessly drubbed in Hollywood movies and the screeds of sanctimonious moralists.

But such things as writing talents, a knowledge of modern literature, personability, self-restraint and education are also forms of power. And while they won't buy you a politician the way money will, they will enable you to become an influential writer. Furthermore, they are the sort of powers/abilities that hierarchies *should* be based on, and on rare, miraculous occasions actually are based on.

(Here I think of the remarkable parliamentary powers of Rose Oliver, who chaired many of the anarchic CUP 46 conference plenaries, and whose skill kept them directed and purposeful, even when agitated speakers and hot issues threatened to reduce everything to verbal chaos. Even so, she could have probably benefitted from a bit of military power as well — say a bouncer or two).

In fact, if this clause is taken at face value, CUP is against any sort of hierarchy, since all hierarchies are based on some form of power, praiseworthy or deplorable. Is CUP really in favor of giving the plenary chair, an important newspaper job, or a responsible political position to just anyone? Or should their relevant personal powers also be considered?

Also, "a hierarchy based on privilege" is a somewhat redundant and meaningless phrase since in any hierarchy the top positions are by definition privileged. The pertinent question is, who, if anyone, qualifies for a privileged position?

That the student press must use its relative freedom from commercial and other controls to ensure that it acts in accordance with its major role, and to examine the issues that the other media avoid.

If taken at face value, the statement of principles is against all human hierarchies.

We affirm that the following rights and responsibilities are necessary for the effective implementation of the above principles:

That Canadian University Press members have the right to determine and uphold their editorial policy, including advertising policy, regardless of pressure from student governments, administrations or any others;

That members have the right to be free from implicit editorial control resulting from financial control of the newspaper by student governments, administrations or any others;

That, to the fullest possible extent, members should be financially autonomous from any group other than the students who fund them;

It should be noted here that some student papers are finding it more difficult to raise money directly from students than through student governments.

That members should have a written constitution including the following: That the staff democratically determines the newspaper's editorial policy and internal structure;

That the newspaper guarantees regular publicized staff meetings with democratic procedures;

That the staff has the right to elect, impeach or censure its editors, co-ordinators or other staff positions (sic);

That the newspaper defines qualifications for voting staff members;

That the staff alone evaluates, through due process, charges that any of its members have acted irresponsibly;

That the newspaper must be open to, but not limited to, all students;

That the newspaper must provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas and opinions among, but not limited to, students;

That the newspaper has the right to prohibit publication of material that it deems to be sexist, racist or homophobic, or that contravenes Canadian laws on libel or hate literature;

Some of the above articles on newspaper organization are absolutely necessary to any statement of principles, like the clause stating that a paper should be open to participation by anyone, and the one requiring a definition of voting staff. Some of the others regarding editorial control are weird or downright dangerous. Take the last clause, for instance.

The part about libellous or hate literature is common journalistic knowledge, but could be better phrased as: "The newspaper has a duty to prevent publication of any material which seems to be clearly libellous or hate literature." As to the vague charges of sexism, racism, and homophobia, I think that there is enough evidence of their unclear meaning and the promiscuous use of the words to smear innocent people, to strike the words from the Statement. A much clearer and

applicable standard would be material which "presents a clear and present danger" to some person or persons. At present, the probable damage caused by an offending article is rarely considered; the criteria is merely whether it offends someone and they can stick a derogatory label on it.

The clause about staffers who act "irresponsible" is open to similar criticism. What is an irresponsible act? Giving staff complete leeway in defining the term is no reassurance. I have seen nominally sane newspaper people in a fit of groupthink, condemning a person for irresponsibly expressing an opinion contrary to their own. Ditto for impeachment and censure; common sense demands that grounds for impeachment be specified, if not in the Statement, then in a newspaper constitution.

Basically, there must be some sort of clause in the Statement, specifying the limits on a newspaper staff's right to restrict individual expression. At present, the staff has a dangerously free rein, and the individual is discouraged from honest expression by the possibility of group disapproval.

That members have the responsibility to participate in Canadian University Press, as outlined in its constitutional bylaws;

That members have the responsibility to provide a forum for, and respect the free exchange of ideas and opinions within Canadian University Press.

We affirm that these principles define us as a co-operative, and that collectively we have the right to set membership criteria and to evaluate, with full consideration for due process, members' adherence to these principles.

Big Brother is watching you, but don't worry, he would never judge any newspaper unfairly.

And that only continual criticism, refinement and re-evaluation can ensure that this remains a living document.

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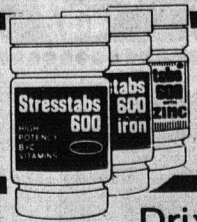


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