

EDITORIAL

Morally Guilty ?

Recently a group of historians passed judgment on Austrian President, Kurt Waldheim. The commission formally concluded that he did not commit any war crimes. Informally, as some groups have suggested, they exceeded their mandate and pronounced him morally guilty of "crimes against humanity".

Far removed from the circumstance of the second world war in their sheltered ivory tower, the historians made their decision. Hindsight is supposed to be 20/20, but after forty years that vision fades.

The commission was wrong for finding Kurt Waldheim morally guilty from their vantage point. What would the commissionaires have done had they been in Waldheim's place? Would they have refused orders and risked charges of insubordination or a transfer to the Eastern front and certain death.

Apparently, committee members felt "awkward" about making moral judgments given the documentary evidence at their disposal. Yet they nevertheless had no qualms about pronouncing Waldheim "guilty" of complacency. What were his alternatives?

History also loses one more relevant quality over time too. Objectivity suffers, especially in the case of a World War, since it is the victors who write the history.

The commission did, however, define "moral guilt" for our benefit: "A certain guilt could arise just from knowing about violations of human rights in the place where a person was stationed, if the person concerned - out of lack of strength or courage - violated his human duty to take steps against injustice." Given this, under similar conditions, most of humanity would be found guilty.

It is ironic, though, that groups similar to the ones who are Mr. Waldheim's most persistent accusers seem to overlook atrocities committed by Joseph Stalin, the Khmer Rouge and even the Israeli defence forces.



Mugwump

By Bill Traer Journal

More on Andrew McKenna. The "Baron" editor resigned several weeks ago. We received their latest issue several days ago. It seems they're so hard up for staff that McKenna wrote the story on his own resignation.

What does Jane do? Well, our intrepid band of reporters followed Jane around last week. See page 3.

If you happen to be in the cafeteria at 1:00 pm today, look up. CP's will be falling from the sky. Since they couldn't do it for Wintercourse, they've re-scheduled the event for today. Watch out for falling Lyles.

Now, on to this week's special guest Mugwump writer.

Once again, we have witnessed our ever intrepid and fearless Student Union executive faced with a rather serious internal problem and move sideways. Perhaps my years as a student at this University have tarnished my opinion of the general capacity of our Student Union executive officers. I have witnessed the Bosnitch beatitudes, the Fox fumbles, the Hansen (whom I diligently worked for) hedging, and now, finally, the Arnold (Hansen and Small) Axiom: When in doubt, avoid; when in serious doubt, put it off until everyone forgets about it.

Let me refresh our readers' memories. Some time ago, we held a general election. During this election, the position of valedictorian was hotly contested. At this time, one Heather McNaught was elected, by a margin of four votes, over one Erik Gingles. Now we are informed that this result, subsequent to a recount, was incorrect, and that Miss McNaught has received seventy fewer votes than she actually had. This recount was undertaken three months after the actual election and then only after the recommendation of a third party (Mr. MacKay). Now the executive of the Student Union is quite satisfied that justice has been served. I am not, nor should any of the candidates in this particular election.

Justice in this case has not been served on several counts. The first and most important is the cavalier manner in which the count, recount and acceptance of council of the results of the recount. The initial ballot count show a difference of four votes between the top two candidates. In some jurisdictions, any result between the top two candidates of less than 150 votes calls for an immediate recount of the results, and then an official recount of the ballots within twelve days. This efficient body did not recount these two hundred plus ballots (and then only after they had been lost) until three months had elapsed. Then after these irregularities, six voting councillors, in a vote of four in favour, one opposed and one abstention, passed these new results only two days after they had become known. Only six councillors, a bare quorum, of the entire body of twelve or more passed these "results" and then after objections having been raised by the chair.

The major problem with the above matter is, simply put, fraud. We see no proof of a reconciliation between the number of eligible voters and the number of votes cast, nor do we have any proof that subsequent ballot tampering did not take place. In no other democratic institution (with the possible exception of Haiti) would this festering electoral sore have been allowed to have gone untouched for so long.

The Student Union is setting a dangerous precedent. This body is so afraid of doing something wrong that they are unwilling to do something right. This, in their logic, would be tantamount to admitting failure. The Student Union must not only do justice; they must be seen to do justice. The Student Union has only one recourse, and that is to call for another election for the position of valedictorian. Until this is done, justice will not have been served. If we, as students, and members of the electorate, do not demand a new election, then the Student Union has, by precedent, given itself the authority to hold final election results in abeyance for any period of time of their choosing, possibly allowing for either growth of some results or the shrinking of others.

Seventy votes is a large change for the vote results. It is seven sets of ten fingers. University students do not normally make mistakes with simple addition, but three months could (and did) make a vast difference in results. Call another election. Have some guts. Admit that you are fallible. DO JUSTICE.

Tim McLaughlin