

EDITORIAL

The price of democracy *Politics and the student newspaper.*

The *Brunswickan* is one of the founding members of the Canadian University Press organization, however we are no longer members of this organization. A few years ago, I understand, the Brunswickan staff with the support of the Student Union decided to pull out of CUP in an attempt to gain a certain degree of editorial autonomy. The story that has been passed on from Editor-in-chief to Editor in Chief is that CUP was becoming far too left wing in its politics for the likes of the *Brunswickan*, and more painfully, it was attempting to dictate editorial policy for this paper. The Bruns couldn't stand for that kind of control and so pulled out. Since then, it has been assumed that the *Brunswickan* will retain its own autonomy as a student paper despite the loss of training opportunities and inter-campus paper dialogue that an organization like CUP has been able to facilitate over the years. To off-set these set backs, the *Brunswickan* has organized its own training programs which have met with varied success. We also get a chance to attend the sporadic conferences held by the non-CUP papers which give us a chance to learn some more about the publishing process.

Recently, however, CUP has made an attempt to bring us back into the fold. Two *Brunswickan* editors were invited to, and attended a conference in Halifax which typically combined sheer fun with some training over a weekend period. Our editors returned with the conviction that CUP's left-wing reputation is not as overt as it has been in the past, while its advertising policy has undergone a kind of perestroika and is now open to non-CUP members. CUP has felt the need to reestablish a strength in the Maritime region and getting UNB back on their roster of campus papers is a priority, it seems. The question that now faces the editorial board of the *Brunswickan* is whether to rejoin the organization or not.

It is clear that we have managed to develop a network of campus paper colleagues who we communicate with, and our present advertising agents have been doing a fairly adequate job thus far. Conferences would be good and the consciousness raising efforts by the CUP organization on larger political and social issues could do us no harm; but it seems to me that there is a fundamental objection to involvement in a larger organization with such a clear political agenda. I must make it quite clear that if the truth be known, I would quite easily be more than a sympathizer with the political inclinations of the CUP organization. But therein lies my objection to joining it.

I am convinced that a student paper should actually reflect the thinking of the students on the campus. This does not mean that if the student body is largely facist, the paper must be that way, however what it means is that if the paper is not facist it should be a position created by the struggle of non-facists to alter the thinking of the facists on the campus rather than an imposed position from outside the campus milieu. I am convinced also that the paper would be an uninteresting place if it gave the impression that it was discouraging the involvement of people who held certain political views. The fact is that any student should have the chance to participate in putting out the paper. It is quite likely that when they enter the *Brunswickan* space, they may have to reexamine their political agenda in light of the apparent direction of the paper. This may result in their departure or the healthy dynamic of debate through involvement.

The dangers inherent in such an openly democratic approach are significant. It is quite conceivable to have a *Brunswickan* editorial staff that holds to abhorrent ideologies and principles. Surely, there must be safeguards against that kind of thing and it is hoped that these will be put in place soon. However, these safe-guards must be in-keeping with the basic Human Rights policies that operate in most Canadian institutions. They must make policy principles about working with women, minorities, homosexuals, people holding different religious beliefs and people holding different political beliefs. But it is important that these principles are upheld in the context of an open office environment.

Finding the balance of openness and good taste is a challenge but one that I think we should never sacrifice as a student paper. It is a challenge that faces CHSR right now and I have no doubt that very soon there will be greater dialogue and debate about the direction that the station is taking. My hope is that the station is ensuring that its new direction is organic and that it is not closing itself to other people in the community who have not yet come to accept the ideological direction of the present members of the station. Here at the *Bruns*, we will continue to encourage debate and dialogue while discouraging intolerance; and the ideological tone of the paper will continue to reflect those of the people who have been chosen to lead the paper. The task is a difficult one, but one that we hope will become a tradition maintained by future editors of the paper.

It doesn't seem likely that we will rejoin CUP although we would really love to reestablish a positive relationship with the organization. There is no doubt that the *Brunswickan* can benefit from the services of the CUP organization and we hope that they will be willing to be involved with open exchanges between the paper and themselves. CUP member organizations face the same problems and challenges that we do here at the *Brunswickan* and I am sure that we will all benefit by knocking heads together now and then.

Kwame Dawes

The Brunswickan

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The University of New Brunswick

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