

Cults a continuing problem in Canada

OTTAWA (CUP) — Ian Howarth was approached by a young woman in a Toronto shopping centre to answer a questionnaire. Quickly he breezed through the questions. They got talking afterwards and soon Howarth agreed to attend an introductory seminar and film presented by the PSI Mind Development Institute. During a break in the seminar, he left the room to smoke a cigarette. A member of the institute went up to him and asked him if he had ever thought about quitting smoking. He had tried before, but unsuccessfully. They guaranteed they could break him of the habit in four days.

After paying a fee of \$225, Howarth was isolated in an airport hotel for two evening sessions and a marathon weekend session. By the time he left he had committed \$1,500 to the group and resolved to quit his job.

Luckily a few weeks later an expose on the group in a Toronto newspaper snapped him out of the hypnosis he was under. It was another 11 months before his "withdrawal" or "mental healing" would be complete.

During Howarth's withdrawal period he met up with three other victims of the PSI Mind Development Institute and together they formed the Council on Mind Abuse (COMA). COMA is a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting the menace of "mind abuse" through education.

Invited by the University of Ottawa Intersociety Christian Fellowship, Howarth stood in front of an audience Jan. 13 fighting an uphill battle.

In his distinguished British accent he rifled through statistics and accounts creating a sense of urgency on what COMA calls the "cult crisis."

Howarth said there are 3,000

cults in North America involving as many as three million people. Toronto, Canada's "cult capital," has 40 different groups — most registered as either religious groups or charities and many under pseudonyms or fronts. For example, Reverend Sung Yung Moon's Unification Church operates under 120 different names.

Although cults use 23 different techniques of psychological coercion, the three most common are isolation, hypnosis and group pressure, according to Howarth.

Many of these techniques have been used on prisoners of war in

include Scientology, Transcendental Meditation (TM), Erhard Seminar Training (EST) and the Brotherhood.

Youth cults usually take members out of the community and are usually registered as religious organizations. The average age is 23. These include the Unification Church, Krishna, the Way and the Family of Love.

Howarth said the aims of cults are varied. Some are paramilitary in nature, such as the Way, which up until two years ago followed



Indochina, Korea and Nazi Germany.

Cult indoctrination can take place "in a matter of days," Howarth said. But once victims have freed themselves of the cult, the withdrawal — which includes periods of depression, sexual dysfunction, guilt and humiliation — usually takes at least one year.

Howarth breaks cults into two different categories: therapeutic cults and youth cults.

Therapeutic cults offer to improve various aspects of personality and thinking ability. They usually take the form of courses. The members usually remain in the community and are on average 35 years of age. Therapeutic cults

their Bible sessions with weapons training.

The Moonies have been involved in anti-communist campaigns and have lobbied politicians in the US for support of South Korea. The Moonies have built a large financial empire.

Funds are often obtained by cults by what Howarth calls "heavenly deception." Cult members solicit donations on street corners under pseudonyms and under false pretenses.

"One's best intentions are being exploited," Howarth said. "Stop buying the flowers, the candy, the records which are being sold in the street or doors by groups with obscure names and objectives."

Concern over cults prompted discussion of setting up a public inquiry in Ontario in 1978, although Attorney General Roy McMurtry later backed down amid howls over religious freedom from the cults.

In the inquiry's place a report was commissioned. Twenty months later, the report's author, Daniel Hill, stated there was not enough of a problem to warrant an inquiry.

Howarth said that although the report has been tabled for the last two years, the government has been "whitewashing" the issue. They think it's too much of a "hot potato."

Howarth said there are only three things one can do to rescue a friend or relative from the mind control technique of cults:

- Find out as much as possible about the cult. Try to plant the

seeds of doubt with the person. (For example, where does all its collected money go?)

- Call in a specialist deprogrammer. Howarth said there are only 30 qualified deprogrammers in North America.

- As a last resort the family may want to attempt a kidnapping in order to start deprogramming.

Cults continue to make inroads in Canada. In London, Ontario, the city council is fighting efforts of The Way to establish a Bible college in the city. The Moonies have set up an indoctrination camp near Peterborough.

Last August, the Moonies sponsored a "Canada at the Crossroads" event in Halifax. Students on the Dalhousie campus have been approached since then, and letters to the editor printed in the *Dal Gazette* last term.

BC wants Atlantic to have CFS fieldie

VANCOUVER (CUP) — In yet another show of solidarity with students across the country, BC student politicians have urged the Canadian Federation of Students to hire an additional Atlantic fieldworker.

The federation's Pacific region will soon start paying for its own fieldworker, freeing funds for the national body. Those funds should go towards the Atlantic, delegates at a Pacific region conference decided Jan. 23.

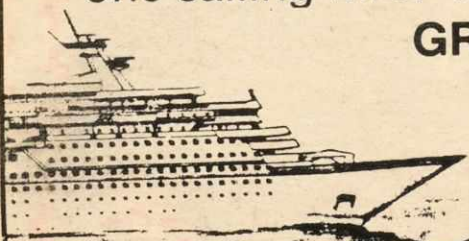
The Atlantic region has been without a fieldworker for about a year.


This is not the first time the

Pacific has offered such support to the Atlantic. The Pacific was the only region in CFS that actively raised funds for the Universite de Moncton students who incurred legal fees when they staged a dramatic occupation last spring.

It was the highlight of a five-day conference where students from across BC gave shape to the fledgling CFS.

BC's campaign is significant to members of the federation across the country because BC is the most active region. It often plays a leadership role in terms of the federation's political direction.

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Thursday—Saturday

KLICK

All Next Week
"A Tribute to the Doors"
The Lizard Kings

Gazette Publishing Board meeting

Observe and participate in the semi-corporate doings of the Dalhousie Gazette this Monday. The meeting's open to all humans interested in the way the Gazette spends its (and your) money. See you at 7:30 in room 424. 316,100, 314220.