

Council has condemned before

As University of Alberta students, we oppose the Robinson/Wolfman fourth in the argument/Gulfman letter (Sept. 28) re: the Ammar/Chomny motion which asks the SU to publicly condemn the massacre of innocent Palestinian civilians living in the Chatilla and Sabra refugee camps in West Bank...

Allow us to present examples of precedent-setting actions undertaken by the U of A SU: Item 1: To oppose the Apartheid Regime in South Africa, the SU removed Rothman tobacco products from all SU outlets, (June 27, 1978); Re-renounced January 5, 1982; Item 2: In recognition of the repressive and violent nature of the junta that controls El Salvador, the SU called upon the Canadian Government to oppose all foreign military intervention in El Salvador...

release of the jailed unionists and their supporters..." (February 2, 1982). Considering the three items stated above, the SU bar taken a stand vis-a-vis international affairs, and thereby has set a precedent for taking action and issuing statements, the Ammar/Chomny motion, therefore, is not beyond SU jurisdiction. The motion can and should be carried.

Does rep speak for Arts?

While we can appreciate the Palestinian cause, we feel that Mr. Oscar Ammar's recent actions in council do not represent the best interests of the U of A. Mr. Ammar's claims to the effect that he has the support of Arts students and that he is not involved in a conflict of interest situation are valid only in his own imagination.

Firstly, the Arab Students' Association, with which Mr. Ammar (supposedly) is in concert, has not taken an official stand on this matter. Furthermore, Mr. Ammar's claim that he has the support of some 137 Arts students in no way implies the support of the majority of the faculty.

Secondly, with regards to potential conflict of interest, Oscar has demonstrated a definitely anti-semitic attitude and has confessed to condoning the destruction of Israel. He refuses to recognize any Israeli, man, woman, or child, as anything but 'an instigator or the massacre of Palestinians'.

Let us not wash our hands of killings

There is a lamentable tendency within the student body that might be described as 'insular thinking'. It was illustrated well by two of the letters to the Sept. 30 Gateway by Gord Stamp and Robinson/Wolfman. Both letters suggest that it would be a mistake for Student Council to discuss a motion condemning a massacre, one because the student body can do little to change the situation in the Middle East and the other because (incredibly) the Students' Union 'must not imply...that its members have a specific international viewpoint'.

Supposing the massacre had taken place in between CAB and SU/B? No doubt Stamp would still maintain that since it had already taken place, debate would be futile, while Robinson and Wolfman would busily peruse the SU constitution to see whether they were permitted to comment, or alternatively, they might point out that other massacres must be taking place elsewhere and it is hardly psychic to condemn the one and not the others. The Students' Union should

Was Oscar Ammar really aggrieved?

I found it interesting to read in the Gateway of Oct. 5, 1982 that Mr. Oscar Ammar feels 'aggrieved over being forced to resign as President of the Arab Students' Association' in order to sponsor a motion in Students' Council to condemn Israel and the Christian Phalangists.

I find it especially interesting Mr. Ammar, that you appear to blame Mr. Greenhill, S.U. President, for your 'forced resignation'. Having been present in the executive offices purely by chance when you spoke with Mr. Greenhill on the afternoon of September 28, I feel I am in a position to assess your statements made to the press.

Firstly, while Mr. Greenhill did say he would oppose the motion, he also indicated that his reason for doing so was primarily because he felt that councilors should have more time to digest the contents of the motion and the international circumstances surrounding the subject of the motion. Mr. Greenhill in fact stated that he would speak in favour of the motion if it was delayed until the council meeting of 12 October 1982, preferably if it was introduced by someone with fewer Arab ties in order to dispel possible charges of conflict of interest.

Secondly, your statement that you are 'aggrieved' because of your forced resignation is curious, since you indicated to Mr. Greenhill, in my presence, that your Presidency of the Arab Students' Association was primarily a temporary position at this time, and that you were remaining as President only until the Association could select a new executive in the near future.

MOVED THAT Political grandstanding and resume-building at the Students Council level be condemned by Council. In this regard, I feel you would be doing the Arts students, you represent a greater service than the one you performed at council on Sept. 28, 1982.

Tim Myers Commerce II

attitude and has confessed to condoning the destruction of Israel. He refuses to recognize any Israeli, man, woman, or child, as anything but 'an instigator or the massacre of Palestinians'.

Mr. Ammar's stand and his involvement with the Arab Students' Association is, at best, unclear. During initial questioning Oscar stated that while he had resigned from the presidency of the association, he was still a member. Later he reversed his stand and denied that he was officially associated with the group.

Mr. Ammar defends his involvement with the Arab Students' Association by saying that all of his supporters are aware of his involvement with them. As well, he doesn't believe that such association really constitutes conflict of interest. Let us, then, accept his defense. Assume that any real or imagined association does not, in this case, make Oscar

take the lead in condemning publicly any injustice it chooses, if it is to be anything other than a self-serving chink in the university bureaucracy. Inevitably, atrocities in the Middle East will receive more publicity than others that occur in Central Africa. Perhaps Oscar Ammar has vested interests in the motion. And why not?

Perhaps we too should ask ourselves how we would react if we had friends and relatives among the dead? The fact that the massacre occurred in the Middle East, rather than in Canada illustrates only that in the past some Canadians have considered it an obligation to speak out against such gross injustices. But evidently not at the U of A. In 1982.

David Marples Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies

Note: In September, the University of Ottawa SU passed a similar motion condemning the State of Israel, (Ottawa Citizen, September 25, 1982). This does not, however, validate the fact that the time taken for this ineffective, though not insignificant, motion deprived councilors of the opportunity to consider a more practical motion. This motion by a GFC subcommittee proposed the creation of a Housing and Food Services Advisory Board which would report directly to the

Board of Governors (without 'going through the Housing and Food Services bureaucracy'). The proposed board would 'apparently be made up mostly of students, say SU v P Ray Group, adding, "That is something that I think has a direct impact on students' lives...' It is evident that Mr. Ammar has, through his inflexible and one-sided stand

Creating an atmosphere to make atrocities obsolete

course), who themselves undoubtedly have many personal ties to perhaps the most publicized carnage in recent history, themselves oppose expression of condemnation of slaughter - inarguably the suppression of which helped pave the way for their own personal holocaust itself.

The Students' Council, besides being charged with ensuring that the internal machinations of the university services runs smoothly, also has the further (and may I offer much more important) duty of representing student thought regarding local, national, and international events to

chopping block cartoon showing a person chopping a block. Text: The future over the proposed SU condemnation of Israel and the Phalangists (coming in a mere two you Oct. 12) is not without its humorous side... Yes, but on the other hand, if, say, some goons from the Liberal Party killed my family because I defiantly chucked my nose at Trudeau, I would still think it mighty right for the students at the University of Toronto to 'resolutely condemn the State of Canada'...

re: recent letters concerning the Ammar-Chomny motion. In this position, recently expressed, which neatly saturated the letters column, attempted to espouse the view that the Students' Council should not be involved in international affairs.

on a motion that has little effect on... A.E.T. note: sorry but... Letters to the Editor should be no more than 250 words long. They must be dated and include faculty, year of program, and phone number. No anonymous letters will be published. All letters should be typed, or very, very neatly written. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length.

re: recent letters concerning the Ammar-Chomny motion. In this position, recently expressed, which neatly saturated the letters column, attempted to espouse the view that the Students' Council should not be involved in international affairs. Indeed, it further stated that unless the declaration of a particular position regarding an international issue had the tangible result of 'doing something to fix the problem, or ensuring that it will not happen again' (sic), then one (or in this case, the Students' Council) was wasting one's/its time.

Besides being incredibly ironic coming from university students who operate within a framework of open discussion and higher academic thinking in order to create a heightened sense of awareness which may thus influence events, it is also representative of the exact type of reactionary don't-rock-the-boat pacifism which has made the propagation of great crimes against humanity so ridiculously and intolerably easy in the recent and non-so-recent past.

the rest of the world. It is my feeling that through rational examination, careful criticism and public statement of representative opinion (ie. what our Council decides) concerning all transgressions of moral conduct alike, perhaps we can create and maintain an atmosphere which makes these same violations obsolete. Atrocities occurring anywhere should be atrocities felt everywhere, and any efforts to retard these same atrocities cannot be logically nor morally opposed.

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