

Do you feel harassed?

by Jock MacKay

As an observer and sometime participant in Student Union affairs at UPEI, I would like to offer a few comments on present trends within the Union.

This may appear as a personal attack against Jim Ross and "his executive". It is. Insofar as his experience and world-view are reflected in his "execution" of the duties of President, there is no alternative.

John Keaveny is an activist—a bit weak on critical thought, perhaps, but active, and sincere in his attempts at democratization of a traditionally-minded Student Union. He imaginatively attempted to lead people into involvement—always a new project, always ready to see a question through valuable debate, to make room for another.

Let's call Keaveny a sprinter—short-term projects, lots of them, fast off the starting block. We need some long distance-runners, people who develop their priorities in a long-range perspective, and work determinedly toward them, formulating projects in terms of them. I can't decide if Jim Ross is running on the spot or back-treading.

Perhaps the best way to work into the problem is the notion of politics, and what it means to different people. To some, politics means the art of achieving the possible, but to some it means skullduggery toward insuring the apparently inevitable.

There is a phenomenon around student unions known as common denominator politics. This is the approach which takes the path of least resistance, i.e. a few of everybody's pet problems are conglomerated into an inoffensive non-position. For example, during the question period following the address

RADIO UPEI

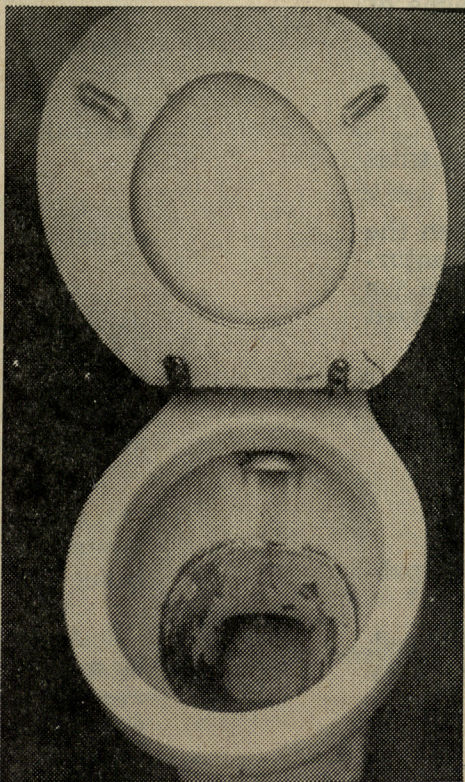
By Allan Rankin

Radio UPEI is ready for immediate operation and has been broadcasting for test purposes on several occasions the past two weeks.

No organizational meeting has of yet been held, the obvious reason being papers and exams. This fall will see Radio UPEI go into full operation on a regular program schedule studio facilities are complete and distributions is expanding. Presently Dalton Hall is equipped with a paging system and the station will involve itself in the next few months, within the building. This type of transmission will be expanded during the summer to include the remaining residences.

The management is confident that Radio UPEI will play an important part in communication within the confines of the university community. Registration and orientation week are two areas where he station will involve itself in the next few months. It is hoped that registration can be completed with less waiting and standing around.

Other activities Radio UPEI will engage itself in next year will be varsity sports broadcasts of "away games", student affairs programming, and variety music shows.



For those who requested candid campus photos.

by Presidential candidates for the student union, Jim Ross stated that he thought the work that the Education Committee did with the Farmer's Union and the Tenant's Union was valuable. When asked if he would go on record as supporting those unions, he stumbled and hesitated his way to a No! By extracting the superficial niceties of a particular action, position, or group, but leaving the guts behind, one is able to appear as the arbiter of all just causes, even contradictory ones.

This is not an accidental train of thought. It derives from a misconception of the nature of political office. The common denominator approach assumes that the first objective is the attainment of an office, and that action follows in a directed but pragmatic fashion from there. It isolates the office of the President from: firstly, the mass of students—it sees the office as carrying, by itself, the potential for doing things, and (probably unconsciously) dupes the students so as to attain control over the direction of the Student Council; secondly, it isolates the office of the President from the process of its attainment—The president is implicitly seen as someone distinct from the remainder of the student body, so one must convince the student body that he is most capable of "filling" the office, i.e. of administering and doing things for the students, treading on as few toes as possible. This concept of leadership has an inherent tendency toward elitism.

Elitism does not occur simply when a few people are doing things or have control. Elitism is the practice of dividing the few from the many because they are seen as qualitatively different types of people. The amassing of a few votes, often through the dishonest process described above, is seen as giving one the right and ability to join others of the same ilk, and make all decisions affecting the union, including the selection of committee heads (thus making it structurally possible to have very comprehensive control over the daily activities of the union.). Mr. Ross is making a fetish of this notion of representivity, and justifying centralization of power in terms of it.

Katharsis this month

The third edition of Katharsis, UPEI's own literary magazine will be out around April 21. This collection of poems, short stories, photographs and graphical drawings has been edited by Frank Ledwell with assistance from Henry Purdy.

This year's Katharsis consists of some 40 contributions. The bulk of the contributions come from the Creative Writing class at UPEI, but there are contributions from well known Canadian writers. Milton Acorn, nationally acclaimed poet Frank Davey, poet in residence at Sir George Williams University and Dorothy Livesay, another noted Canadian poet are all contributors to Katharsis this year.

Katharsis, which has been well received at campuses across Canada hopes to be a success again this year. Ledwell feels that some of the contributions are superior to anything that they have published before, and says he is quite happy with the latest Katharsis.

Castro comes tonight

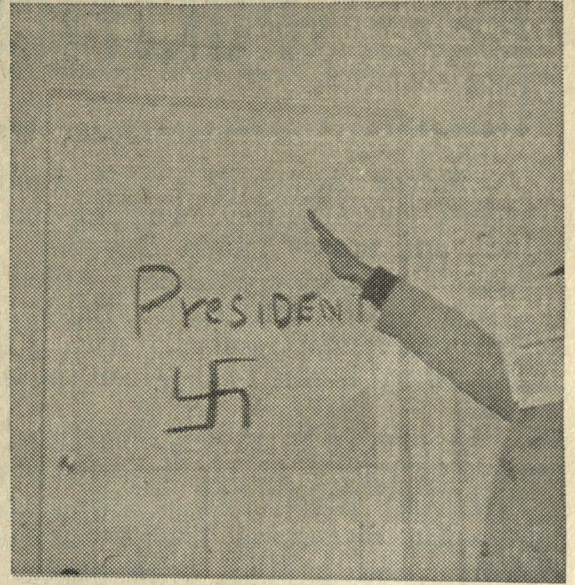
CHARLOTTETOWN (CPS) - That's right, folks. Tonight "FIDEL" will be appearing at Duffy amphitheatre at 8:00 p.m.

This slinky piece of first-run celluloid is being brought in by Phil Koch and the Philosophy Department, (no, that's not a new rock group), and (neater upon neater), its F R E E. No hype. No hidden charges. A Free movie. And you thought the Philosophy Department was made up of vague intellectuals. Shame.

Anyhoo, Rolling Stone calls it "a completely funzie full-length flick that will get you freaky as a french-fried fungus," (and that's not a quote).

For those who feel chatty after, or who just want to listen, there will be a discussion with Koch, Bob DeMatteo, Terry Ross, and Ken Butler.

Don't miss.



Giving you-know-who the old "sick hail"

He apparently sees the job of the Executive, and the Student Council, as one primarily of administration, of getting things done. This is most efficiently achieved by short student council meetings, limited debate, and having "his" executive well-primed. If the goal of the student union were simply to get things done, assuming a frame of reference, we could lure a professional bureaucrat to administer very efficiently.

If he is to put any stock in his rhetoric about involvement, he must pay more attention to the process of doing things, and the tone of Council's activities. Other members of Council should become more conscious of what is happening to them. But most of all, the student body should start asking itself why it isn't going to Student Council meetings. Do they agree that Jim Ross and Student Council are more capable of running their affairs? I certainly hope not. Or do they see the Student Council as becoming an irrelevant, unhearing arena? That is possible. If active students could go about their activities without reference to the games I have described, more power to them. But the fact is that they cannot. They are constantly being "represented", impinged upon, and sold. And now council is going to perpetuate its breed by having committee heads chosen through an indirect 4/5 council preference. Again, that concept of leader abstracted from his place of work, abstracted from the people to whom he is most responsible — those doing the work in each committee.

And the way to change this is not to seek out your Council "representative" and try to convince him to carry your opinions to the next meeting. How could anyone honestly represent another opinion? We must develop the freedom to act for ourselves, work out principles for that action, and demand that the student union structure respond.

A common denominator is a method of reconciling a number of fractions. Either resolve the fractions into a union or allow their independence.

