

Editorial

JEAN VANIER--FRIEND OR FOE?

The talk recently given by the highly publicized Jean Vanier here at Duffy Amphitheatre was extremely well received by those who were in attendance.

Throughout the course of his remarks he made frequent reference to his extensive troubles and the poverty, oppression, hatred, despair and suffering he witnessed throughout the world.

This is due, Vanier claims, to the lack of love in the world.

"We have a desire for love and to be loved," but "it gets trampled under foot by the world as it is today" because "people hide behind barriers of their possessions."

There is no great feat in identifying the problems of today -- we all can do it. We did not need Vanier to do that. Furthermore, to suggest that we follow Jesus did not require Vanier; any priest or Christian could have done that. Moreover, he was able to pass over the concrete reasons and solutions to our problems by 'cloaking' his message in sentimentality and emotion. He appealed to our emotions for support of his convictions because his words were devoid of any concrete solutions to our problems. His voice was very conducive for this as well as the graceful style of his gestures.

The audience applauded him loudly as though they were 'high' -- and they were; but only for a moment, then they would come down -- without solutions or, even, motivation to resolve the problems of our day.

No Vanier: You did not explain that the problem of crime and mental illness has its roots in the structures of our society generally and our economic structure specifically.

You did not explain that our society is governed by the economic, political and military elite; you did not tell us that the land and the means of production belong to all of us (and the fruits it offers) and not to just the dominant elite; you did not explain that the farmer, the fisherman, the labourer, et. al., are being oppressed by those few who own and dominate the means of production which sustains us; you did not tell us we must take, by whatever means, the total means of production into our own hands and thus eliminate the domination of the elite as well as the elite;

You did not explain that our very way of seeing the world is determined by the dominant elite and that, until we see alternatives we won't be able

to identify the elite as our oppressor which is a necessary condition for throwing him out of power, which is, of course necessary before we can take our world into our own hands and then create the world we must have;

You did not tell us we must not allow foreigners to come here to tell us what to do (because of course they don't know our problems and their solutions as only we can) but that they must come from our own people who articulate our reality and help everyone else to articulate it which is a necessary condition before we can all act together as an organized unity to take Prince Edward Island into our own hands and create the land and life we need.

No Vanier, you only see the symptoms -- not the disease. But your fame and style can be so misleading -- leading us away from the cause; and so long as we are misled, the solution is delayed. You are therefore no friend, rather, you constitute the foe!

Observe the symptoms of course for they are the clue to the problem; but once the problem is identified we must then cast aside all sentimentality and cop-out means



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for dealing with the pain it creates; we must attack the problem at its roots -- root it out -- discard it & substitute what advances & fulfills men. What we need now is control of our lives and all that is part of it (means of production, all commodities, means of distribution, etc.). Until then we will remain slaves to those who control the means for the sustenance of our lives -- the capitalists!!

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

After living with one of the University Administration's policies for almost two years now, I am angered to the point of writing this letter.

The policy I refer to is that which disallows students the use of personal cheques to pay any account with the University.

In a recent short discussion with Business Manager Stevenson, I learned that this policy was instituted because of the great number of returned cheques the Business Office had to deal with. It was such a problem, according to Mr. Stevenson, that one of the office staff spent almost all her time chasing delinquent cheque writers. (Good grief! There have been less than 3500 full time, part time and summer school students attending UPEI during the last couple of years -- do they really write that many cheques during the year, and most of them bad too?)

I am not naïve enough to believe that if the old policy of accepting students' cheques was reintroduced, that there would be no returned cheques. However, the present policy is damnable in several ways.

Firstly, the present policy is set up for the convenience

of a very small number of paid office staff while inconveniencing, (It's a bloody nuisance!) several thousand students a year. In the case of full-time students, this occurs at least twice a year at the beginning of each semester when they must go to their respective banks to obtain either a certified cheque, money order or cash in order to pay fees etc. Along the same lines there is the common situation where a student urgently requires a book or materials, which are readily available in the Bookstore, but cannot be obtained because he does not have the cash, certified cheque or money order in his pocket, nor has he the time to run to the bank if it's open.

Secondly, I would like to compare UPEI's policy in this matter with another local educational institution, namely Holland College. Last summer I had the good fortune to move into one of the married students apartments, then run by UPEI, and since turned over to Holland College. During the period I was renting from UPEI, every rent payment had to be made in cash, certified cheque or

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