

## TWO VIEWS OF LAST FRIDAY

## Pence

## 'Blatant censorship'

David Pence denies that he disrupted Ramsey High School Friday.

"The person who has disrupted the functioning of the school has been the principal, and not me," said Pence in an interview Tuesday night.

Pence pointed out that over 50 students had voted to have him return to Ramsey. He believes that principal Curtis Johnson was guilty of "blatant censorship" in cancelling the course.

"I came because I don't believe a principal ever has the right to stop students from learning, even though he is personally opposed to what is being taught," Pence explained.

Pence said he thought it was important for the many students and teachers who wanted the class to continue, that the principal not be allowed to make an "arbitrary decision."

"I thought it was important to meet with those students directly affected by the decision," said Pence. "I wanted to meet with those students who were in the hallway, many of whom disagreed with me."

Pence denies charges that he came to propagandize and coerce students of Ramsey. He believes that most teachers and textbooks teach a particular point of view, which he defines as "liberal capitalism." Pence says he came to teach a socialist point of view.

"I did not come to impose my understanding of the world on Ramsey students," said Pence, pointing out that mini-course attendance was voluntary.

"I want them to understand socialism. I don't think the way to that is to coerce people."

What was "blatant censorship" last Friday has now become "bureaucratic censorship," commented Pence. He believes the administration is employing "delay tactics" designed to prevent him from speaking.

To resolve the question of his speaking at Ramsey, Pence recommends an open meeting with students, faculty, administration, and parents "to decide what they want Ramsey to be."

If his course was approved, he would encourage parents to attend all sessions.

"Schools should be places where parents and students can learn," Pence said.

## Johnson

## 'He wanted attention'

"I suppose he was after attention," said Principal Curtis Johnson, referring to Pence's visit last Friday.

"He'd been called. We told him there was no room for him, but he came anyway. Then when I heard he was coming anyway, I had a committee here of students and faculty ready to talk and discuss with him, but he refused. He said it was his prerogative to speak if he wanted to."

Johnson does not feel that Pence's views are necessarily inappropriate to the school, but he feels such presentations must be structured within the school's educational format. "The school is for educating. If something has a different purpose we have no opening for it. "Evaluating time would be like evaluating a teacher in Edina. I don't know him. I've never heard him speak, I couldn't say whether it would be educational or not."

Johnson said that the presentation would be much more educational if Pence were balanced by a speaker of a different viewpoint.

Johnson feels that guidelines should be set up for future mini-courses. Meetings were held Monday and Tuesday after school between Johnson and representatives from the faculty and students to determine if controversial mini-courses should have certain rules applied to them.

Johnson believes that such courses should submit a general outline of their purpose and content. They would have to be held in an educational setting. If they had no educational function, and no benefit for the students, they would not be held.

He also suggested that course outlines for controversial courses should be mimeographed and sent home to parents. The parents would have to give permission for their children to attend the course.

"This is no different from the permission students have to get to ride busses to games. Today we talk about a generation gap. This system would give students an opportunity to open communications with their parents."

Johnson is not sure how Pence's future courses will be held, or whether they will be held at all.

He said that the course will not be held until after this Friday, however, Johnson hopes to postpone it until a definite decision is made on how his future speeches will be handled.

He has had no contact with Pence and does not know what the radical intends to do.



David Pence questions the authority of the Ramsey administration.

## RETURN OF THE RADICAL

## David Pence back for open meeting

by Karen Jarvis

David Pence said that he would come back last Friday to teach the second session of his radicalism mini-course. And he did come back.

At about 12:35 Pence walked into the high school office, Principal Curtis Johnson, who had cancelled Friday's session, had scheduled a closed meeting with Pence and three students to discuss the future of the Pence course. Johnson met Pence at the door.

"I'm David Pence," said the radical. They shook hands. "Come into my office and talk," Johnson ordered.

"The meeting has to be open," Pence replied. He said that he wanted to talk to all factions of the school, especially the "greasers."

Johnson became more adamant. At one point he grabbed Pence's hand and pointed down at him.

"Would you please take your hand off me," Pence asked.

Curtis Johnson, social studies teacher, asked Pence to join the closed meeting also.

Beyond the window of the high school office, David Erlar told a group of about 50 students and teachers to go to room 244. Some of them wore "Pence" name tags.

The principal threatened Pence with the trespassing law.

"If you won't come in and talk reasonably with us, I'll have to call the police. You know you're trespassing on public property, don't you?"

"Go ahead," Pence countered, his hands shaking. "I'm not afraid of your trespassing laws. I've had to deal with them before."

"Please, Mr. Pence, why don't you sit down and talk to us? We're not accomplishing anything here by arguing. Please sit down and we will talk," requested Dennis Christenson, co-ordinator of Secondary School Services.

Johnson yelled at Pence, "Come into my office and talk."

Pence gave a defiant "No."

Pence asked where students were and was told that they were waiting in room 244.

"I'm going to Room 244 for an open meeting. If you want to talk you can come up there, Mr. Johnson."

for an open meeting, and told the students

In room 244, Pence explained he was there for an open meeting, and told the students they were "brave" for being there.

The principal came in a few minutes after Pence.

"Schools detach you from reality," Pence went on. "You don't learn anything anything in school that helps you meet the needs outside of school. When you are young you learn how to do certain things. You learn how to put on your boots. You learn how to..."

"Please, please," Johnson cried, putting his arms in front of Pence to protect the students. "Please be careful."

"Okay, defecate," laughed Pence. "Anyway,

real language brings learning into real life."

"You do this for attention, don't you? I've seen it done before," said Johnson.

"No, I don't, sir. It's for me to say you are wrong. You are wrong about education. You are wrong about schooling. You are wrong about children, and you are wrong about teachers."

Johnson stormed out of the room. "Why don't you stay and talk like a man?" Pence called.

"I'm sorry the remarks I made were personal. The problem with schools is not with Curtis Johnson or people like him. It is with the relationship that is built up in schools. The reason I talked that way was because I wanted to show him how he makes students shake," said Pence.

Pence snickered, "O.K., I won't use obscene words like kill, war, and hate anymore."

Christenson and Johnson said that there had been many phone calls from parents complaining about Pence's language. David Erlar suggested that a group of students and Pence talk at a PTA meeting. "We should invite the parents to one of Pence's courses," Erlar added.

When the bell rang at the end of 5th hour, students dispersed. Pence had had his open meeting with students, and now he was willing to meet in the quiet of Johnson's office with Christenson, Johnson, and four students.

"It is profitable to work within a structure. The Mini-Course is a possible format through which you can work," reiterated Christenson.

Johnson, his voice cracking and his eyes watering, told Pence, "I resent very much some of the accusations you made. For the past 35 years I have sincerely tried to help students. You can check my record. Excuse me, but I have to leave to answer a personal phone call."

"I feel sorry for Mr. Johnson," remarked Pence.

Christenson replied, "That's irrelevant." "No... I mean genuinely sorry," Pence continued.

"Those students who don't like the language can leave," retorted Pence.

Pence finally declared that his language was not important, and that he was willing to change it.

Johnson walked in and sat down behind his desk. "We have to present the other point of view," he said. "You should be objective in these sessions."

Pence said he did not believe in objectivity, but thought it would be fine if anybody else wanted to come and speak on a Thursday or Monday.

They conferred for a few more minutes and Pence gave Johnson his telephone number. Johnson promised he would phone Pence Wednesday to let him know about scheduling the course. He took a look at his calendar.

The principal got up from his desk smiling. "Thank you for coming," he said.

Pence stood and said "Thank you very much," and then they shook hands.