

Radicals running rampant?

Mini-course showdown

David Pence became a household word around politically active circles in the Twin Cities area and now had become a familiar face to many at Ramsey

David Pence, who presented a radical mini-course last Friday, may not be permitted to speak at Ramsey today.

But he plans to come anyway. "The big question is what type of language we will allow in the school building," according to Dale Schneiderhan, administrative intern.

He explained that Principal Curtis Johnson had met with the other administrators after the presentation to "come up with a good answer" to complaints by parents and some teachers and students about the Pence mini-course.

Johnson said Wednesday that a final decision had not been reached.

Last Friday, Pence presented the first in a series of five sessions on "the radical movement." He discussed socialism as an alternative to the present economic system.

Following the presentation, Activity Director Robert Emaheiser held the audience that Pence's language was "his own" and "not the type you may be used to hearing." He also asked the group to indicate by a show of hands whether Pence was wanted back.

The student reaction was "overwhelming" in favor of Pence's return, Emaheiser commented in an interview. He termed the decision not to allow Pence "an administrative decision."

Bob Meek, who wrote the petition, said the cancellation of Pence could represent "a rally serious question." He had spoken with the principal for over an hour about the future of the Pence mini-course.

Bob said that cancellation of Pence would mean "that a few members of the community can threaten and intimidate the administration so much that they are willing to go back on a previous commitment that we had.

The faculty council considered Pence Tuesday night, and associate Principal Richard St. Germain said the faculty opinion was divided on matter.

David Pence feels that the reasons for administrative concern go beyond his language.

"A person with a socialist position is systematically kept out of school," said Pence in an interview. "That's the reason I'm not allowed. That position threatens the principal of the school."

Pence emphasized that the class was not mandatory, and that he would not teach a mandatory class.

"Anybody who doesn't like this language can go out in the halls and hear it four times worse," said Pence.

Pence said his purpose in giving the course was "to present a different point of view, one that is not often expressed in high schools."

"The decision not to allow me back not only violates the rights of those who agree, but of those who came to disagree?" he said.

The administration was not informed Pence that his course has been cancelled, and Pence plans to hold his regular session 5th hour in room 239.



'Radical' David Pence photo Ired Wolf

Pence:

After a confrontation with school and district administration, Pence made some comments

David Pence denies that he disrupted Ramsey High School last 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 the 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 not 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:

Principal Curtis Johnson commented about Pence.

"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 him 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 the 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.

Soc. class hears Shore

Long before David Pence entered the Ramsey scene another 'radical' spoke to a class with out incident.

Senior Social Studies students in Ted Johnson's and Joe Odanovich's classes recently had a chance to hear Fran Shore, a member of the Students for a Democratic Society, lecture on his point of view toward government, economy, and society.

SDS had divided into two primary groups: 1. The faction that thinks along the revolutionary lines of Lenin; and 2. The faction that wants only a drastic revision of the institutions. They both eye the common goal of radical social change in favor

of the working class and a true democracy.

The SDS had no definite organization. Members are loosely connected with the national movement, but individual chapters of SDS may take different points of view.

SDS has initiated many campus protests, and believes them to be a necessary way to challenge the "power-structure."



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