

Council this year

As we approach the mid-point in the term of the present council executive perhaps a small comment is needed on the efficiency of a body that definitely shows a lot of promise but seems to be invisible to the average student.

The feeling towards council seems to be mixed when there is a feeling at all. One looks at council the way one looks at luke warm tapioca. It's kind of sweet but not that appetizing.

First of all there are some roses to be thrown. The council quick action to speak out against the remarks made in the CTV program W5. It was a strange sight to see a council move so quickly on an issue. The present council has probably done more to promote involvement on SUNS (or nay of its prototypes) than any Dal council has done in a long time.

All members of the executive are approachable. Disagreements take place very often between a council and a student newspaper but it is enjoyable to work with a group who, even if they disagree, with you, will still talk thing over. Many councils in the past have made the mistake of closing their doors to the student press which has only lead to a deterioration of relations that effect the whole campus.

However, as many roses there are, a fair collection of thorns has also been acquired.

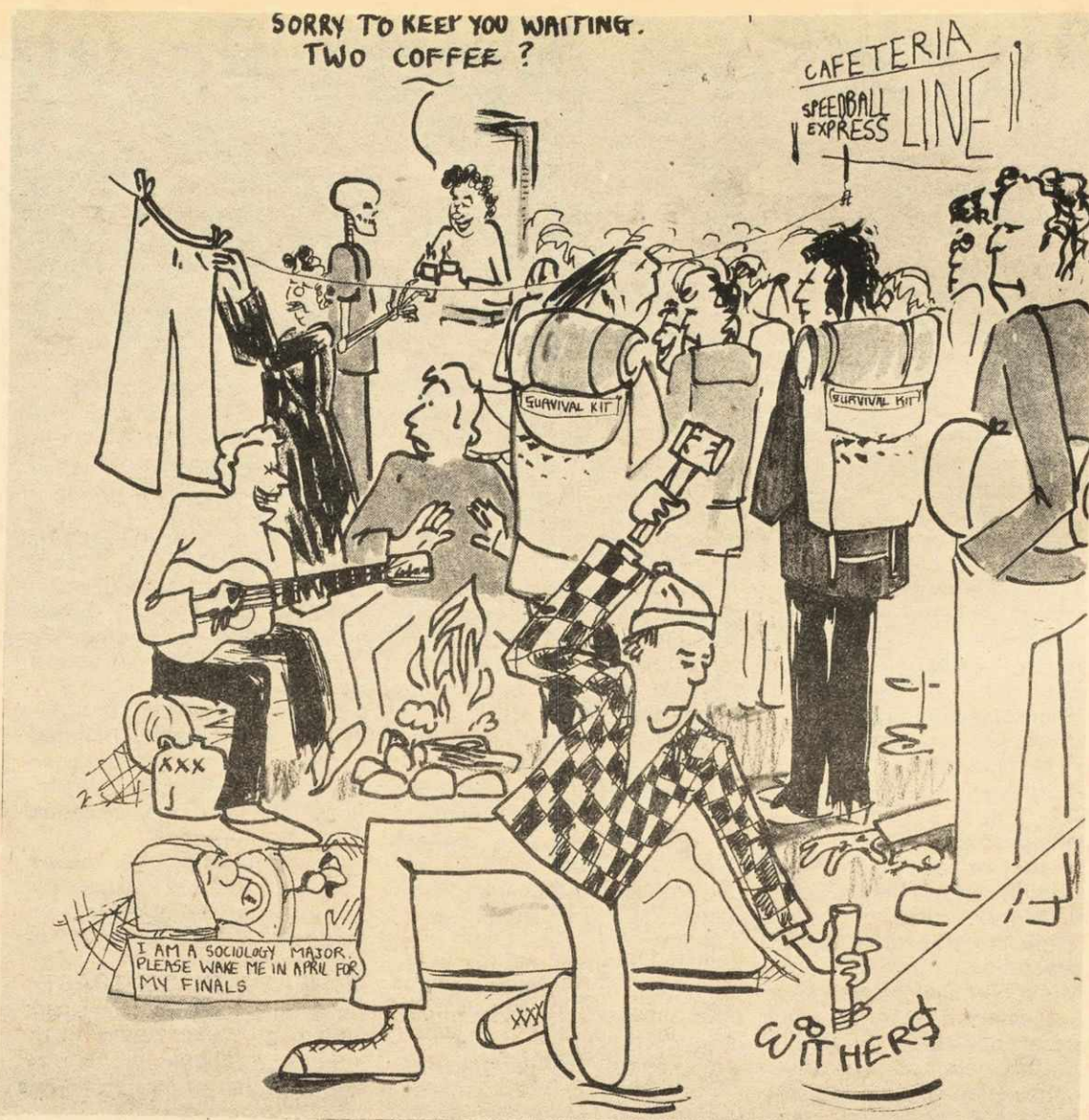
First and foremost is the total lack of identity this council sees to have. Any time you can ask 11 students to identify the name of the student council president, and 9 don't know, you have a big problem. People seem to have a ho-hum attitude towards council. Council members should be among the best known figures on campus. On a campus where apathy is the password of most of the student body, a high profile council is necessary to even let the students know that council exists.

Another major problem is the number of councillors that have missed council meetings. Council executive should take action to stop this immediately. Any council member that continues to have poor attendance should immediately be suspended or thrown off council.

The closing of the council offices at lunch time is another particularly irritating problem. Council should be the busiest place on this whole campus. All too often it is the one place on campus where you can go and get away from everyone and everything. The mere thought that the office is closed during the time when most students are free to come up to the council offices makes one's blood boil. If everyone is out of the office when the council secretaries go to lunch, the executive should work out a schedule with other council representatives to make sure there is always some one available to the student body.

A sore point with the Gazette staff is council's continuing indecision with regards to the typesetting issue. Council has played with the idea like a yo-yo all year long. First yes, then no, then maybe. Although council has promised a definite answer this year (Boy have we heard that tune before), there seems to be a good chance the decision to buy typesetting equipment will be passed like a hot, or heavy potato onto the next council.

Council has made a decent start to the year. However, many more challenges remain. One can only hope they will do even better in the second half of the year.



Letters to Gazette

Students Unite

To the Gazette,

Last March, 3,000 Nova Scotian students marched to Province House to protest the government's programmes in the educational sector, which have caused a decline in educational facilities, forced more and more students from poor or working class backgrounds out of education, and markedly increased the economic burden borne by the students. "The Gazette" (112(3)) has correctly pointed out that Premier Buchanan's cynical promises to the students, concerning employment and financing, were not kept. However, there are other important points to be made here. The first is that there were, and still are, two lines within the student movement. There is one programme promoted by SUNS, the local student council, and various other opportunists who inhabit those circles. Nationally this trend is represented by the National Union of Students. It is the line of these student misleaders to promote collaboration between student representatives, and, sometimes the Administration or MPHEC and, at other times, the government, as the means to solve the problems that we face as students. It was these students who gave Buchanan the centre stage at our demonstration in order to present his utterly bankrupt views—as if you can expect a cure from the gods of plague.

These characters popularize the view that the government is acting "irrationally" by cutting back on educational spending and allowing the heavy debt burden and unemployment to spread amongst the students, and it should be encouraged to become "sensible" and "fair." For them, demonstrations and protest marches are organized to put pressure on the government to "come to its senses," so that it will "see the light" during discussions and negotiations with these opportunists of SUNS or NUS. The effect of this line within the student movement has been to stifle effective organization by students to solve their problems, to promote harmful illusions amongst the students that they should rely on the government, the administration, or the MPHEC to defend their interests, and to prevent an understanding of the nature of the crisis in education and what must be done to remedy the situation.

The second trend is represented by the Marxist-Leninist students led by the Dalhousie Student Movement. Our programme is to fight to make the rich pay for our educational problems. It is the interests of the rich, primarily the directors of the U.S. monopoly capitalist corporations and the wealthy financiers and coupon clippers, that determine the educational policies in Canada. Since 1974, we have been suffering a deepening world economic crisis. The Canada-wide policies of the government cutbacks in education and social services are a

reflection of this general crisis. No amount of promises from a provincial premier to the students can alleviate this situation. The governments of the rich will only continue to impose their programme of making the people pay for the crisis, to increasingly shift the economic burden onto the backs of the students and ordinary taxpayers. The opportunists of SUNS and NUS obscure this fact, that the educational system is set up to serve the interests of the rich and that it is the rich who must be made to pay for it. In the present situation in Canada, it is the rich who benefit and make maximum profits from educating students to become 1) skilled labourers, such as scientists, engineers, mathematicians, administrators, psychologists, etc., who are needed by the big multinational monopolies and financial operations, 2) bureaucratic mandarins, petty officials, social service workers, and police for the state apparatus, and 3) ideologues and propagandists, who, as writers, teachers, and cultural workers, prop up the rule of the rich.

The Marxist-Leninist students place the blame for our educational crisis squarely onto the rich and their capitalist system which is in crisis. The rich must be made to pay for educating the masses of people. The only way that this can be accomplished is through revolutionary struggle, through rebellion against the rich, their state, and their agents within the student movement. Ross Ainsworth.

The Dalhousie Gazette

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