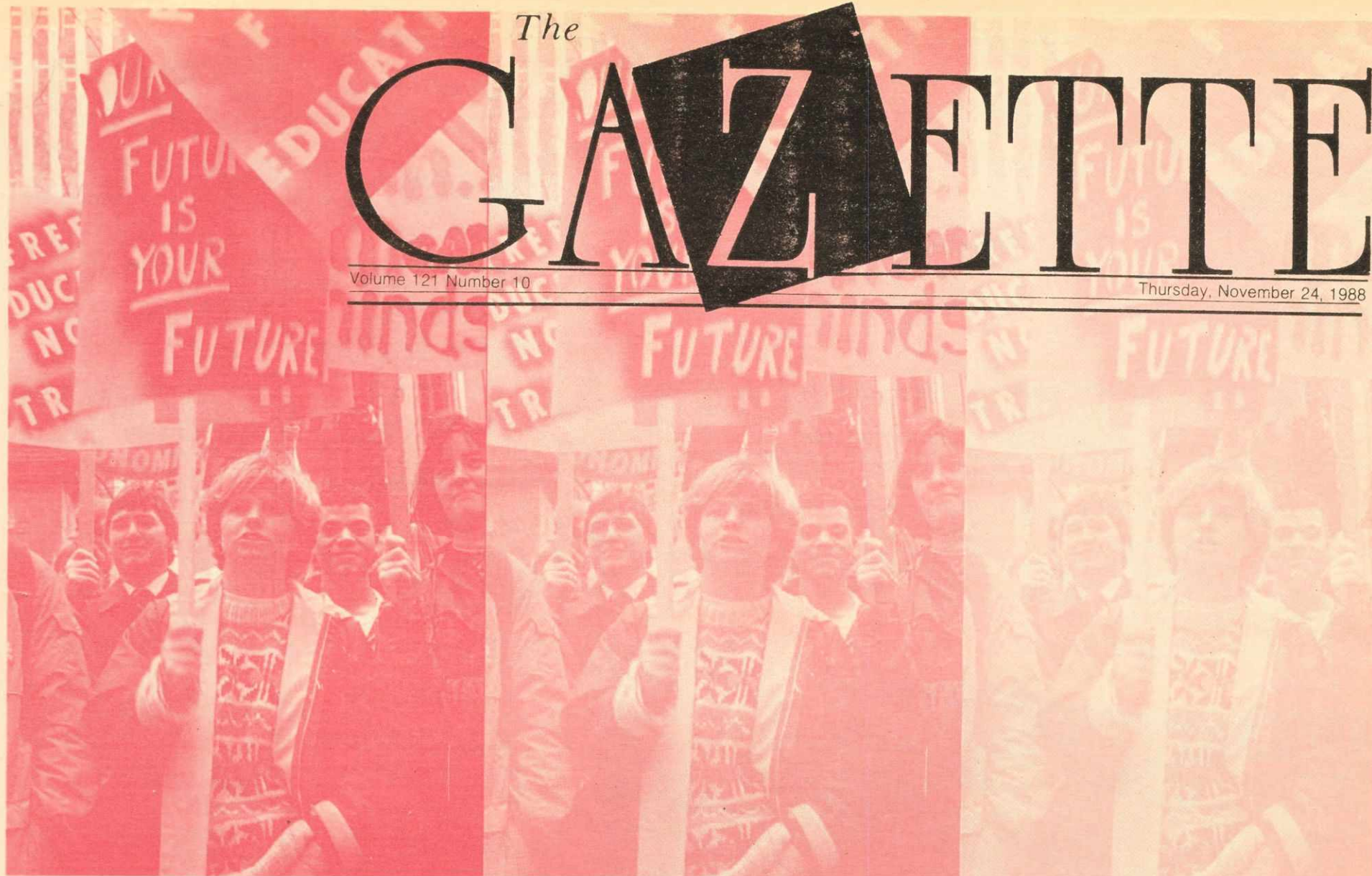


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DFA Strike now a fading memory?

by Lyssa McKee

Although the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and the Administration reached a tentative settlement on Monday night, the atmosphere at Dalhousie is far from settled. Students and faculty alike are confused and concerned about what happens now that the strike appears to be over.

The tentative settlement was reached after marathon meetings held last weekend. Students were surprised by the sudden announcement Tuesday morning that the strike was finally over, and many were unable to attend their classes at such short notice.

The DFA and the Administration agreed, as part of their settlement, that the academic year would not change as a result of the strike. Denis Stairs, Vice-President (Academic and Research) said "we are hoping that we will be able to complete our academic programs in the framework of the academic year." The Christmas break will not be affected, the February reading week will be held as scheduled, and the year will finish in April as planned.

The DFA issued a memo concerning the terms of the agreement on November 22. It stated that "the DFA deplors the Administration's insistence on this 'business as usual' scenario and, in particular, the Administration's contempt for the education of those students who respected the picket lines."

The Administration says that it

is up to the individual faculties and departments to decide how to make up the work that was missed. Each department has different needs, and will adjust in their own way. Stairs points out that "what works for one teaching unit doesn't necessarily work for another."

Some students are concerned about the loss of academic time. Elizabeth Archibald, a fourth-year English student, wants either to be reimbursed for the two weeks, or to make up the extra time over the holidays. "We paid for those two weeks," she said. "It's not fair to cram two weeks of work into the end of term." Some of her professors are skipping material. "That's not fair either," she said. "You can't get a full picture of the material that way."

Juanita Montalvo, Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) President, points out the problem: professors are reluctant to schedule extra classes because the administration will not pay them for it. The DSU is asking the faculty for "flexibility, cooperation and comradeship" and hopes the professors will teach whether they are paid or not. "The Faculty have to realize on an individual level that there is a responsibility to the students," Montalvo said.

Commenting on this problem, DFA President David Williams says that the union "was upset about the nature of the back-to-work agreement. We were unable to achieve a back-to-work agreement that allowed us to teach make-up classes." When questioned as to whether the DFA was

forbidden to teach such classes, Williams said no, but he pointed out that professors would not be paid for that work. "If they teach such classes," he said, "it will be out of the goodness of their own hearts."

Stairs said that professors who taught during the strike will not have to repeat those classes. However, he said "we are strongly encouraging that they make every effort to help students." Professors must allow students to submit assignments and write tests which were missed due to the strike.

The DSU is not content with the Administration's policy. They insist that if the material is to be tested, then it must be made available to all students. The DSU is recommending that faculty be required to provide notes or audio tapes of the lectures that were held during the strike.

The DSU is also pressuring the Administration to provide additional services for students to help them through the next few hectic weeks of catching-up. The Administration is looking at the cost of extending library hours, and it has been suggested that daycare services be provided for extra evening and Saturday classes. The university has convinced the airlines not to charge penalties to Dalhousie students should they have to change their Christmas flights due to exam rescheduling.

The exam schedule is to be posted by the end of the week. It will be up to the individual professor and department to decide if

they wish to cancel or postpone the exam. Some departments may choose to hold the exam as scheduled, by covering less material. Students should check with the individual department or professor.

The agreement itself has received mixed reactions on campus. The memo issued by the DFA stresses the positive aspects of the agreement, and urges the membership to accept the offer. Gains are recognized in many areas, including salaries, and the DFA points out that "They have done very well with all the non-monetary issues."

Both the DFA and the Administration are pleased to announce that the pay equity issue has been resolved. Brian Mason, Vice-President (Finance and Administration) says that this contract will "fully correct the disparity between male and female salaries at Dalhousie."

The Administration was reluctant to discuss the terms of the agreement. Mason did say, however, that he felt that Board had made significant concessions. "I don't know how in heaven's name we're going to pay the bills," he said. "We're going to have to make some pretty major changes in how we operate around here in the next few years in order to meet this commitment."

When asked to define these "changes", Mason says that he doesn't know how Dalhousie can "continue to offer the range and depth of programs and support services that we currently offer. The money is just not available in the budget." He stressed that Dal-

housie will continue to pressure the government for a revision of the funding formula, and for a review of Dalhousie funding.

The tentative agreement was reached after a weekend of intense negotiation under the direction of Industrial Inquiry Commissioner Bruce Outhouse, a Halifax labour lawyer. Mason is quick to credit Outhouse with the speedy success of the talks. "He forced the Board to make concessions that it would not otherwise have willingly made. There is no question in my mind that we would not have come to an agreement so quickly without the pain that that man caused to both parties."

The "pain" that Mason refers to are the long hours that Outhouse demanded from both bargaining teams. The final series of talks clocked over 30 consecutive hours. "It's a technique," Mason says, "that is used often in these situations to keep the pressure on. There are times when you don't think you can carry on any further."

The tentative settlement must still be ratified by the Faculty Association. There is some concern that the Faculty might reject the agreement, as a number of professors have expressed dissatisfaction with the terms of the agreement. Though it is highly unlikely that the professors will go back to the picket lines now that classes have resumed, it is not a complete impossibility. When Williams was asked what should be done with the faculty's picket signs, he answered quickly: "Don't throw them out. We haven't ratified yet."