

## LETTERS

## One hand clapping

To the editor,

Can we begin with a round of applause for Mr. Tratnik, defender of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), the university, the world as a whole!

Thanks to the powers that be that Dal students have you protecting our views, even though you "don't even fully know what's going on." Although, you know better than those other doughhead councillors, that are taking us "for a fucking ride." I congratulate you on your ability to expose the DSU for what they really are — those LYING, sneaky embezzlers!

Now, however, on a more serious note, I must say that your article was quite offensive. Shirreff Hall could not be happier with our DSU representative. We feel that she is doing an excellent job, having attended all of the DSU meetings, and casting her vote in the best interests of her constituents. The Shirreff Rep has always been well-informed, and able to answer all of our questions. And as far as the DSU exec goes, they have yet to show me when they have *not* acted in a fair, responsive, and open manner. They have a huge responsibility to the students of Dalhousie, and I believe, based upon my interaction with the DSU, that they have more than satisfied this task. I have complete trust in the DSU to protect my rights and interests as a student. Yes, the DSU is having difficulty with quorum, and yes, there are some councillors that are in need of re-evaluating their priorities, but you cannot generalize. Especially when this year's DSU has done more for Dalhousie than the past two councils. The opinion of Shirreff Hall is that we are confident in our student government, and that if all the councillors were like our representative, there would be no attendance problems.

Thank you DSU exec and Alix Dostal for acting so well on our behalf.

One last point, attendance at half the meetings does not make one an authority.

**Katherine Hannah**  
President, Shirreff Hall Res Council

To the editor:

In response to "DSU democracy: use it or lose it" by Josef Tratnik.

Josef! I must say I was personally insulted at your recent general attack on the Dalhousie Student Union councillors — DOUGHHEADS?

I certainly do not think I am taking my constituency "for a fucking ride!" Moreover, what you are suggesting is that councillors should be recycled, with no new blood entering the stage of student politics. It seems to me that you are saying if one does not fully know the issues, then stay out! You, Josef, have held a seat on council for two, going on three, years, and even you admit to a marginal probability of ignorance. Some councillors have only been on council for one-and-a-half months. New people are showing and interest — DO NOT KILL IT.

At the October 15 DSU meeting, which you were in non-attendance, there was a two hour debate regarding CASA policy. This was INITIATED by us "DOUGHHEADS."

Joe, let the new blood sink in, we are all asking questions. I cannot speak on behalf of all the councillors, but I am not taking anyone "for a fucking ride."

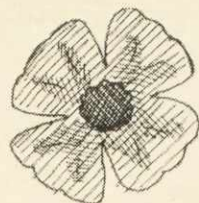
**Nalini Naidoo**  
DSU Councillor, DAS Rep.

## Prejudice

To the editor:

I am writing to tell everyone about the experiences I had growing up. As a young adolescent, I noticed that older women would get a tighter grip on their hand bags as I passed them on the street. Security guards used to follow me through department stores. Patrol cars would drive by my high school frequently.

Perhaps the most upsetting of these observations is that if I found myself walking home at 11:30 at night, police officers would stop and



LEST WE FORGET



# Racism is the Canadian reality

## EDITORIAL

Canadians have latched onto the racist comments of Lucien Bouchard and Jacques Parizeau. Many have rallied around these politically incorrect statements to convince us that the Québec independence movement is racist.

I'm not suggesting that their comments were racist or not; we will each decide that individually. However, the emphasis people have placed on Bouchard and Parizeau's remarks clearly indicate that when politicians or well-known individuals display racist tendencies, racism is unacceptable.

Let's face reality, racism is by no means limited to the Québec independence movement or its leaders. *Le racismisme est une partie intégrale de la société canadienne*. Racism exists here within the confines of Dalhousie University and beyond.

I live with racism everyday of my life.

I know how it feels to walk into a store and not be served because I am black.

I know how it feels to be hated not for who I am, but for how I look.

I know how it feels to be told to go back to where I came from, when in reality my family has been in Canada long before Canada was even a country.

I know how it feels to see someone you call a friend ignore your presence when they are in the company of another individual; they're your *friend* when it is convenient for them.

I know how it feels to be told that racism is perceived, a figment of my imagination.

I know how it feels to be silenced by slurs that hold no truth.

This is my Canadian reality. So many people cannot see past the colour of my skin — that is their problem, not mine.

Everyday that I live with racism is a day that I fight for its elimination. For me, fighting racism is about more than simply wearing the pin that sports the slogan, "STOP RACISM." It is about action; fighting back against demeaning and degrading expressions.

Racism is real and it hurts.

In Halifax, Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver — *partout au Canada* — it is time to stamp out racism.

*Ensemble on ira loin*. Together we're better. Racism should not be a national issue on the days when politicians make a political blunder while speaking. Racism should be a national issue everyday.

MARCUS LOPES

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question me as to where I was going.

Yes, this is upsetting to me, as I have tried my whole life to be respectable and honourable. I have gotten 80s in high school, I have gone to church for years, and I have put in many hours of volunteer work. Coming into university this year, I have noticed that people treat me with more respect. While growing up, I learned a sad fact: people judge others, at least initially, by certain factors (such as age). In questioning myself as to whether I could be guilty of such an offence, I unfortunately come to the realization that these prejudgements could be made subconsciously.

Respectfully written,  
Dennis Van Ember

### Class Consciousness

To the editor,

I want to respond to last week's opinion piece by Milton Howe because as it stands, it's dangerously one-sided. Howe's contribution is, in sum, that "The separatist leaders in Québec are racists." We must indeed condemn the anti-native, anti-ethnic, and sexist remarks and policies of Parizeau and Bouchard, yet we must also put them in a larger context.

Racism is the flipside of nationalism: nation becomes race and race becomes nation. Québec and native peoples alike are oppressed nations within Canada. In this regard, their struggles for self-determination should be unconditionally supported as a basic democratic right, and each are dead wrong when they do not support the other.

Canada as an oppressor nation is a different story and overwhelmingly the more menacing one. It was not the PQ or BQ, after all, that introduced the apartheid reserve system and the Indian Act which stole native land, destroyed native communities, outlawed native culture, and ripped native children from their families. It was not the PQ/BQ who recently introduced the \$975 head tax for aspiring immigrants and refugees to Canada (and this on top of the already existing \$500 "processing fee"). Nor was it the PQ/BQ who, in the name of peacekeeping, tortured and killed Somali teenagers.

Movements of oppressed nations challenge the dominance of oppressor nations and in so doing may weaken the latter's power. For those of us across Canada who face the most anti-poor, anti-worker federal budget yet next February, a weakened Canadian state would be something to applaud. In short, what is desperately needed is not national unity of any stripe, but the unity of workers and students of every tongue and across all borders.

Paula Cornwall,  
International Socialists

### Two-ply Criticism

To the editor,

Upon opening the Nov. 2 issue of the Gazette while indulging in a long anticipated visit to the bathroom, I found the article that would accompany my mission... "Green Day Comes Around," by Jen Harvey. Snappy title. This review lacked insight, to say the least, and fit somewhere between laughable and insulting. Jen informs us if you're a fan and weren't at the show, "you are a LOSER." Maybe the money Jen "braved" on the ticket price would have been better spent on some punk rock classics for this aspiring punk reviewer (it was Johnny Rotten who sported the spiked blond hair, Jen).

Green Day was amazingly tight, however, this is inevitable since their live set is their job (and this showed in their seemingly staged enthusiasm). In addition to their worn out antics, their no-different-from-the-album sound made them the weak point of the evening (although I doubt the kids begging to be spit on by Billy Joe, "you know, the cute one," would agree).

It offends me that the Riverdales, who had an amazing, short-and-sweet set and super-cool stage presence (sorry they didn't sing with a fake English accent), would be subjected to such a silly review.

Needless to say, this review served better than my economy, one-ply toilet paper.

Hugh Davidson