

Students should fight the education cuts

The fundamental issue in the student movement today is the government cuts to spending on education and the expected skyrocketing of university tuition that will result from this. Most people no longer buy the argument that the cuts are nec-

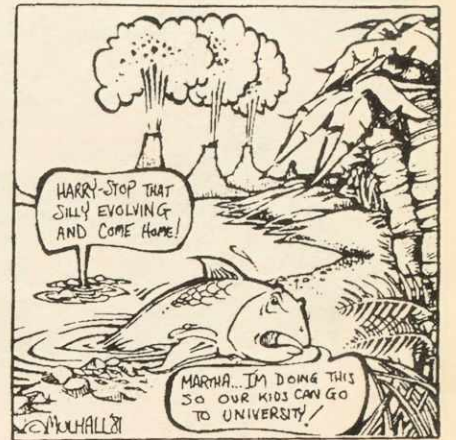
OPINION

essary to battle the deficit. After the Liberal government cut \$2.5 billion in social spending in the last budget, they turned around and spent \$2.27 billion to buy new armoured personnel carriers for the military. Apparently the urgent need to

fight the deficit takes a back seat to our rulers desire to purchase new toys for the war machine. The question is no longer whether or not the cuts must be fought, but how this fight must be carried out. Two clear trends have emerged. On the one hand is the trend of mass action. Grass roots organization, education and mobi-

lization of students, solidarity with other groups who are under attack, and taking to the streets has been the approach of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) — by far the largest and most widely respected national organization of students in the country. On the other hand is the trend of lobbying. Drawing up policy documents, making presentations to committees, and trying to convince politicians to reverse their stand through force of moral persuasion has been the approach of the conservative student leaders who are associated with the new (and still memberless) Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).

strated whenever their provincial government threatened to deregulate tuition. University students, CEGEP students, and high school students mobilized en masse. The freeze was only lost in 1989 under the Québec Liberal Government of Robert Bourassa. This



It's all Trudeau's fault

It's too late now to bridge the gap

Early next week, we will all feel the impact of Quebec's decision on its' sovereignty referendum. And perhaps, Atlantic Canada will feel the greatest impact, as a separate Quebec would cement a separate Atlantic region, physically cut off from its ties with the rest of Confederation.

Some would likely assume that as a Maritimer, I unequivocally oppose all that Lucien Bouchard and Jacques Parizeau represent. Certainly, there are many reasons why I, as a federalist, oppose a separate Quebec, — mostly because it threatens the very existence of Atlantic Canada. Yet, I argue that Canada's greatest nationalists have historically been French Canadians. Furthermore, I contend that the same man who is at once charged with the fragmentation of Canada is also Canada's greatest nationalist.

Here I speak solely of Lucien Bouchard.

Nova Scotia's legitimate attempt at secession in 1867 notwithstanding, Confederation's greatest triumph lies within the fact that it forged a union between two solitudes that were both enjoying representation in the newly proclaimed national Parliament. But, in many ways Canada was still a colony in 1867, as it did not exercise control over its foreign affairs. By 1867, French Canada's political, economic, and military ties to France had been effectively severed while many English Canadians still considered themselves subjects of the British Crown.

The first call in demonstrating Canadian autonomy came in 1899 with the Boer War in South Africa. At once, Britain assumed participation from its colonies — and most especially from Canada. Meanwhile, Canadian Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier reserved doubts. He understood that English Canadians demanded full support for Britain, including economic and military assistance. Yet, interestingly, French Canadians opposed Canada's involvement in the war — specifically because it jeopardized Canadian autonomy. Their cries that "this is not our war" illustrate the point clearly.

The next major call came in 1914. Here, English Canada maintained truly imperialist claims and fully supported mother Britain. Again, French Canada reserved its judgement, suggesting again that this was not Canada's war.

The Conscription Crisis in 1917 also illustrates the point as French Canada opposed automatic participation from Canada only because Britain expected its colony to participate.

Finally, the Statute of Westminster of 1931 effectively ensured Canadian autonomy. Thereafter, Canada maintained its autonomy, as illustrated by its involvement in the Second World War in 1945, effectively waiting a week after Britain to declare war against Germany.

Clearly, one sees that French Canada maintained a nationalist approach to Canadian foreign policy while English Canada maintained an imperialist approach.

In 1982, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau patriated the last five articles of the Canadian Constitution and included in the Constitution Act of 1982 the famous Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But before one celebrates the triumph of Trudeau, it must be remembered that he failed to include Quebec. How Quebec has remained part of Canada without having signed the Constitution Act of 1982 is in question. Rather, one could spend his/her time better by vilifying Trudeau, for it is precisely his error that has presented Canada with its' current problems.

While many seek to criticize Brian Mulroney, as Prime Minis-

ter he made two valiant attempts at re-uniting the two solitudes. First, with the Meech Lake Accord, and second, with the Charlottetown Accord. But Canada's rejection of Quebec, twice in recent history, has furthered the aims of Quebec nationalists. It is no wonder that Quebec currently seeks separation.

Lucien Bouchard is Canada's greatest nationalist. Indeed, he first tried to resolve the differences between Quebec and Canada from within Confederation. When his attempts failed, he severed his friendship with Brian Mulroney and most of Canada. Since becoming the leader of the Bloc Québécois, he has maintained his position on sovereignty and only as a last resort is seeking separation. His recent claim is that a Yes vote will mean negotiations with Canada on renewing the Constitutional debate, which Prime Minister Jean Chretien currently wishes to avoid. What is more, a Yes vote will force the reunification of a united two solitudes.

Before one opposes all that Quebec claims, we all must reconsider existing positions in light of Canadian history. It is my sincere hope that Quebec does not separate, but they must not fall victim to loose and fiery criticisms. Especially in university, we must all understand our past and in some measure, credit Bouchard and French Canada, and thank them for their previous efforts at reunifying Confederation.

ADAM BLOCK

OPINION

Being moderately involved in a conversation about academics isn't easy when you're slugging back a couple of beers and trying to enjoy an okay football game. This is a situation that any football fan can sympathize with.

It was Homecoming this weekend at Acadia University and a friend and I decided to head down to Wolfville to visit some other friends and to check out the scene. On Saturday afternoon, we watched Mount Allison play the Axemen, and being the shit disturber that I am, I decided to entertain myself for a while by intentionally getting a couple of the guys into a predictable argument, just to see their re-

actions. The question I asked them was: "What is the greatest or most influential achievement of the 20th century?"

Once the first guy (Dave) spoke (he happens to major in math), all hell broke loose. He claimed that spaceflight and the landing on the moon was the most influential on society and that flight in general is our greatest achievement. He also claimed that the mathematics that were involved in those events helped advance technology so much so, that it was the major factor that made society progress so fast.

Another friend of mine, Steve, an economics major, protested and said that math alone can't do anything, unless it has some-

one to push the ideas. He also said that the means of communication on a global level is our greatest achievement — whether it's short wave radio, television, or a personal computer — its presence has changed the way societies relate or perceive one another.

Somewhere in the slurred yelling and reddening of my friends' faces, the football game became less interesting. After ten minutes of the greatest achievement question, the conversation switched to the notion of facts versus theory, and what we think of as fact. Steve, the arts student, asked Dave, "the math boy," if he would ever question whether a fact might be wrong.

Dave firmly stated that, "[O]ne plus one equals two. That is a fact and you cannot deny this! The average person doesn't un-

derstand math and the possibilities that math gives to society."

Steve basically blew his top off and for a moment, I thought I saw fire come out of his nose. This seemed better than the football game because it was the world's two biggest heavyweights going toe to toe; it was bigger than Tyson or Riddick Bowe. Yes sir, it was Science vs. Arts, but both schools of thought had too much to drink.

The outcome was a split decision and a missed football game. Even though I wished I hadn't asked that useless question, they probably would have argued about something else.

Remember folks, sometimes the combination of school, beer and football are not always the greatest mix.

JAMES SULLIVAN

coincided with the decline of the Association nationale des Etudiants et Etudiantes du Québec (ANEQ).

However, inspired by the struggle of Québec students, students in British Columbia launched a concerted effort to win a tuition freeze.

Students organized demonstrations and occupations. They mobilized and built links with college and university faculty. While tuition increased in the rest of Canada by an average of about 10% in 1992-93, there was a zero increase in tuition for students in B.C.

Contrary to popular belief, nothing has ever been won without mobilising and organizing.

Last January 25, over 80,000 students demonstrated against the Liberals' plans for social reform and swept the reforms off the agenda. This year, the Liberals are trying to introduce the same cuts under a different name: the Canada Health and Social Transfer."

These are just a few examples that prove in practice that mass action works, and is thus a more effective strategy for fighting the cuts than useless lobbying. Those student leaders who say that mass action doesn't work should learn their history.

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