

Better catch the wave. Now!

Think Globally, Act Locally. That is a maxim used by OXFAM and other groups concerned with social change to advise people how to effect social change on a global scale. It is no secret that one person, ideally you, cannot change the state of affairs in El Salvador or South Africa. So what does one do?

Issues that affect the whole world are part of our local problems. For example, at Dalhousie University, Black and Native students are saying that for the last 20 years, they have been denied fair access to programs that would empower them to take control of their destiny. In Halifax, 25 years ago, a community called Africville was displaced and destroyed. A recent conference at the Mount investigated the community's treatment of those people. Elsewhere in the world, Blacks in South Africa are fighting against a regime that

denies them any basic human rights.

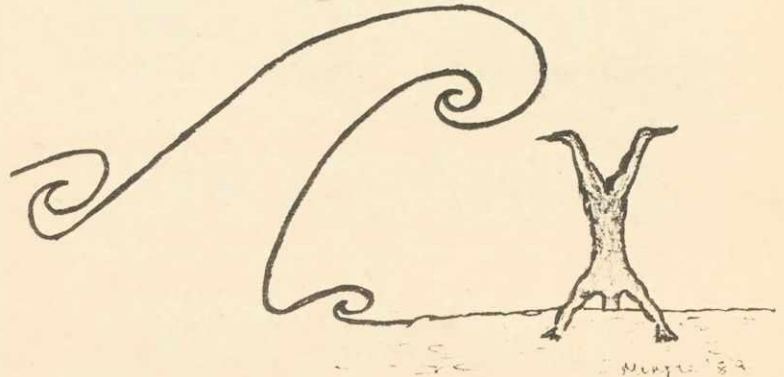
Women and the Law released a pamphlet on campus about inclusive language. It refers to the concept that language, which has been essentially created by and for males, must change to accommodate women. In Halifax as well as the rest of Canada, women have been asserting their rights to have control over their own bodies. The huge support for the pro-choice position is evidence of that. The president of Iceland is a woman, the leader of a Feminist Party. Earlier in the decade, Icelandic women held a one-day strike, crippling the city and showing that their power was not to be ignored. Women around the world are asserting their power.

At Dalhousie, slow steps are being taken by campus groups to lessen the numbers of disposable cups used on campus. Efforts are being made to begin cleanup of

Halifax harbour, the worst-polluted harbour in North America. McDonald's is being chastised for being a garbage creator; people are being encouraged to use reusable containers rather than disposables. World groups are looking at the destruction of the Amazon jungle, the pollution of the oceans, the holes in the ozone.

There is a moral revolution afoot in the world. Not a Moral Majority-type revolution, but one where "common" people are realizing they have a voice and can change the world around them. There is a wave of activism growing. The wave is still small, but all around the world, effects of the wave can be felt. Small people caring about local issues will eventually evict the power-mongers and the planetary parasites.

Can one claim to have any concern about the affairs of Blacks in



South Africa and not realize that there are similar problems right here at Dalhousie?

One can ignore the local problems, but as the wave of activism grows, those who are still standing on the beaches with their

heads in the sand will be smashed against the rocks when the tidal wave of social change finally gets to the shore.

Think Globally, Act Locally. Now.

Sandy MacKay

o p i n i o n

Freedom and the wall

by Alistair Croll

The summer of 1989 will go down in history as a period of political change for many Eastern bloc countries. Most evident in this series of events is the breaching of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of oppression that was erected in 1961 in an effort to lock in the people of East Germany. When it was broken down less than two weeks ago, it heralded a freedom of movement the East Germans had been denied for nearly three decades.

The wall is a huge concrete divider which runs the length of Berlin, separating it into East and West. The rest of Germany is heavily guarded, with hundreds of miles of barbed wire and gun outposts. But it is in Berlin that the wall stands as a division of the world.

Dr. Paul Huber, a professor of economics at Dalhousie, was in Berlin when the wall went up in 1961. He called the time "frightening", and said he knew families who lived in East Berlin and sent their children to school in the western side of the city.

Huber has been watching the changes in Germany carefully, and said he saw this coming. "When we got news from Hungary in August about Germans going to Hungary (80,000 came over) — I believe East Germans had been very careful in handing out visas."

The political and economic pressures which brought about the breaching of the wall have been building up since April, he said. First of all, "Gorbachev clearly passed the word that

Soviet troops weren't going to come out of their barracks and help them (if there was trouble in East Germany)," said Huber. In the past, the East German government has maintained itself with the help of troops from other East Bloc nations.

Finally, when Hungary decided to open its borders to the west, East Germany saw its citizens leaving in a slow trickle. The opening of the wall was an effort to stop this by letting all those who wanted to leave do so. "The hemorrhage stops," said Huber, "but the trickle continues. It was a short-term stopgap."

The proverbial last straw came when thousands of East Germans rallied in the streets in a peaceful protest. Their goal was to make East German politicians see that they wanted their freedom. "The East German government is trying to maintain itself in power in any way it can," said Huber, who feels the breaking of the wall was a last resort.

Huber said that besides the freedom of the western world, "the economic advantages of going to the west are so large" that East Germany will lose many of its professionals, including doctors and management executives.

Huber, who would like to organize a symposium on the tumultuous events of this summer, has returned to Germany — East and West — many times since the building of the wall 28 years ago. "If you ride the autobahn into East Berlin and see the extent of the guard," he said, "you begin to realize what freedom is."

l e t t e r s

Male-inspired plot

To the Editor:

Erin Goodman's editorial in the November 9 Gazette on the abortion issue pointed out that those who administer our justice system, as well as most of the media people who recorded the activities at the McCully Street clinic, were men, while most of Morgentaler's supporters were women, implying that restriction on access to abortion is a male-inspired plot against women. "Justice for women" was equated with ready access to abortion.

This was a misrepresentation. Ignored was the fact that most of the anti-abortion demonstrators, like anti-abortionists in general, were also mainly women. Most women are responsible enough to believe that once you have created life you do all you can to sustain it.

Charmaine Wood

Extent of war?

To the Gazette:

I find it interesting how little compassion anyone has at this

paper for the men and women who served and died for this country in the past wars. In the November 9, 1989, edition of the Gazette, I noticed that there was only one small pathetic article on Remembrance Day. The cover was not of the honour roll of the university, but of movie reviews.

It may come as a surprise to the people who work at the Gazette that there are many people at this university who currently serve proudly in either the reserves or regular forces of this country. When called up for the next war, if there indeed is one, these are the people who will go, fight, and die. Many more will answer the call, and they, too, like their predecessors, won't all come home. We should remember the ones who didn't come home and honour those who answered the call.

The editors of this paper may have an opinion that is against the military and war. I would like to remind you that we too are against war, and by remembering that each year, maybe we are less likely to go. We cannot ignore the past, nor can we pretend that the plaques in the A&A Building do not exist. Yes, we should all be against war, but not to the extent that this paper is.

When the sun goes down and the bugle plays, we should remember them, and thank those who came home, for what they have done for us.

Peter Patterson

Freedom to choose

To the Gazette:

Last week you ran a letter from Charmaine Wood in which she stated that "some of the most ardent environmentalists are at the same time pro-abortion."

Pro-abortion? Is anyone pro-abortion? It may be true that some environmentalists support the freedom of a woman to choose to have an abortion, but that hardly shows that they support abortion itself.

Human irresponsibility has led to the decay of the earth to the point where it is becoming unsuitable for human life. Environmentalists are struggling against this irresponsibility in an attempt to show consideration for the earth. Should we simultaneously deny consideration for our companions on this planet? Should we ignore the demands of a pregnant woman for an abortion? Should we show our lack of respect for human life and well-being by limiting her ability to speak for herself? Or by restricting her freedom to choose? We must take responsibility both for our planet and for our fellow human beings and we must not allow a debate over the lives of foetus' and women interfere with our struggle to preserve the inhabitable status of this planet. Sincerely,

Munju Ravindra