

# Africa, where are we going?

BY TAMARA BOND

Last Friday night was a special occasion for many Dalhousie University staff and students. It was Africa Night. An annual event presented by the African Association of Dalhousie and St. Mary's University, it was amazing.

Before the show had even begun you could observe an extremely dynamic fashion show all around. The traditional clothing from many African countries displayed deeply saturated colors of every shade on embroidered, handwoven and sequined material that was paraded around the room. The fashions worn by the spectators were without a doubt even more colorful than the fashion show on stage.

During the display of traditional clothing, the reasons for the bright colors was explained. In Africa, colors stand for important aspects of the African peoples' world. Green is for the beauty of the land, purple for the grace and love found among the people, brown for hos-

pitality, blue for the rivers of clean water, yellow for the hot sun and black for the peoples' identity.

Two very charismatic hosts introduced each performance, the first of which was a comedy about sexism in Africa. The play explored the oppression of woman in Africa, both past and present. Issues such as growing work load of women, due to entering the workforce without leaving behind their full time jobs at home, were explored. Men, it seems, have been very reluctant to take up the dishcloth and towel. The crowd's response to the performance was tremendous. They roared in agreement and disagreement with each plot staged.

Traditional dances were performed by both strong, well-toned women sporting six packs for abs and voluptuous woman with soft rounded curves. The dances contained fast rhythmic beats created by the use of various African drums. The movements were often fast, filled with footwork and much hip shaking. That is how the

dances were — except for one group.

Many do not realize that Egypt is actually a part of Africa. Often it is lumped in with the many Middle Eastern cultures with whom it shares its culture. The Egyptian dance was energetic and fluent. Men and woman whirled around the stage twirling long sticks in synchrony with each other. It seemed that a lot of skill and care would be required in this dance so as to keep the poles in time, and anyone on stage from getting hit!

Stomp, a Nova Scotian modern dance group, also performed on

Friday. The closest comparison to their footwork might quite possibly be tap dancing. However, these ladies stomp much harder than any tap dancer. Their style involves getting their hands involved with their foot work. They slap their hands on their feet behind their back and between their legs at incredibly fast speeds.

Away from the dance and into the poetic lines. Poems were read about the oppression of native Africans by foreign countries and why it had been tolerated for so long. These poems were truly touching and reflective of the

night's theme: "Africa, where are we going?" To see where one is going, one must look at the past and the present of both the politics and the people. The three poems read definitely did this.

During one speech I learned that Africa has over 1000 languages. It may have been that the organizers were trying to serve an equal number of food types. Several long buffet tables held over fifteen different dishes. Servings were generous and seconds most certainly allowed. A few of the memorable dishes were goat meat and peanut butter stew. Many of the dishes were extremely spicy, but all of them were delightful. At Africa Night, not only was a taste of the food offered, but also a taste of the "Motherland".

## Parizeau up close

BY DANIEL CLARK

Last Friday, 200 students, faculty, alumni, administration, and press jammed themselves into University Hall. Like lambs to the slaughter they shuffled into the centre of Dalhousie bureaucracy. Each one was coming to see the former leader of Québec sovereignty, Dr. Jacques Parizeau.

Parizeau became the heir apparent of the sovereignty movement in 1988 when he took office as the President of the Parti Québécois after the death of René Lévesque. Lévesque founded the party, and Parizeau joined in 1969.

In October 1992, Parizeau was President of the Québec NO committee during the national referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. In 1994 he was elected to his fourth term in the Québec National Assembly for the riding of l'Assomption and became the Premier of Québec.

After the defeat of the OUI side in the 1995 Québec referendum, Parizeau resigned from the National Assembly. He may have left as a result of indignation over the defeat, or due to the controversy surrounding his speech after the referendum results were finalized. It was during this speech that Parizeau said, "It's true we have been defeated, but basically by

what? By money and the ethnic vote."

Since his retirement from politics, Parizeau has become an elder statesman for Québec. He travels around the country and the world to speak on sovereignty. This is what brought him to Dalhousie.

When asked in University Hall about his controversial statement on Referendum Night, Parizeau said, "With the people who came to Canada as refugees and immigrants, they come to Montreal, Canada and not Montreal, Québec. Why should they be expected to vote on an issue of Canadian sovereignty? Their loyalty is to Canada and not Québec. Facts are facts."

In person Parizeau is relaxed and articulate — contrary to his television image as a crazy madman. His speech focused on the economics of Québec sovereignty, and although he wants independence, he knows that total separation is not possible.

"Independence for me has always been a tool to improve the lot of Quebecers. But Quebecers own \$111 billion Canadian dollars — there are certain things, like the Canadian dollar, in which we will always be partners.

"We have the same interest on the same side of the dollar. There are not two sides to a dollar argument. We are on the same

side."

Parizeau also spoke on the controversial issue of the sharing of Canada's federal debt.

"We have to shoulder the federal debt. We will be owners of the property of the federal government, then we should shoulder part of the debt. The issue of the debt must be decided fairly quickly [after a sovereignty vote]. Not only for our country but our equal partnership in the Canadian dollar."

One commerce student, Dean Stares, was not entirely satisfied with Parizeau's answer.

"He ducked the question," said Stares. "The issue is not whether or not Québec will shoulder part of the debt, but how much of it."

Stares feels that the issue is centred on how the debt will be divided — based on the fact that Quebec has about one fourth of the country's population or on the basis that Quebec has 15% of the land mass.

For Parizeau, the main issue is about what has happened to his province in the last forty years. He said, "In Québec secondary schools we have less students now than were in technical or vocational schools in 1959. Québec is missing the technical boat."

Parizeau spent most of his time discussing the history of Québec's sovereignty movement, and how independence would be sought following a "Yes" vote. Eventually he tried to address the main concern of the audience: how Québec sovereignty would affect the Maritime provinces.

"In many ways the Maritime provinces will do better," said Parizeau. "The equalization formula has hampered the Maritime provinces for a long time. If Québec is no longer a part of Canada, then the Maritime provinces will do much better.

"There will be changes in the roles of competition between the ports of Halifax and Montreal, of course. Halifax and Montreal are harbours of the eastern seaboard and will be in competition just like every other harbour on the eastern seaboard, New York, Baltimore, etc."

Parizeau never spoke about any of the economic consequences of separation on the Maritimes. In the press scrum after the speech, he was asked how long he would be willing to wait for sovereignty.

"I'm patient. I'm very very patient," replied Parizeau.

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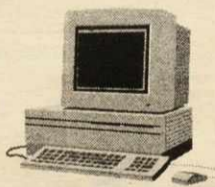
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