

The Dalhousie Gazette

CANADA'S OLDEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER



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Present fees unfeasible

Two years ago, in an attempt to attain some sort of co-operation from the provincial government, students from Nova Scotian universities paraded in the streets of Halifax to demand that someone, somewhere "freeze the fees" and that a better loan and bursary scheme be set up. They succeeded.

It would seem that because of the steps which have been taken, a reduction of tuition fees is no longer an issue. But there are some who think it is.

When you registered in September as an undergraduate you paid the fourth highest tuition fees in the nation. St. Mary's students paid the third highest.

And this situation exists in a province in which more than half of the average family's total income would have to be expended in keeping one child in university for one year.

Even the student from a middle class background, with all the correct social values and educational indoctrination does not normally have an indefatigable desire to attend university. To postulate, therefore, that anyone with any potential and desire to better himself will make use of a student loan to further his education, is simply to ignore the fact that one is not likely to pledge an amount equivalent to half of his parents' income in order to attend an institution which is totally alien to him. It is almost like asking a middleclass student to pay six thousand dollars per year of college.

Nova Scotia is wasting an incredible amount of potential. It is absolutely necessary that her people recognize this.

Because of the fact that we have not yet found it necessary to beat industries and other money producing enterprises away from our shores, it is even more necessary than in other provinces that we educate as many of our people as possible.

To say that Nova Scotia does not have the money to spend on education is to perpetuate the unrolled ferris wheel of our depression.

We must, therefore, embark on a program of reducing tuition fees. It is no accident that the chances are four to one that a student's father makes at least six thousand dollars a year. The huge financial barrier between high school and university is a very real reason.

Hopefully the argument that "look how much you'll make when you graduate" has been buried at long last by the shovels of the recent APEC report. What would be gained in increased production would far outweigh what would be lost in reducing or, preferably eliminating, tuition.

It is time that people became aware of the fact that a student is not a parasite. Through the process of his learning he is contributing to his society in one of the most valuable ways possible.

Education cannot, by its nature, be a purely personalized thing. It is no longer possible to keep collecting knowledge until without having used it, you destroy yourself. In our modern society, survival and existence depend upon in some way applying your trade to that society.

A chairmaker cannot survive if he merely makes chairs and hoards them. He is not remunerated by society, as indeed he should not be.

In the same way, it is impossible for a student to exist without sharing and using his knowledge for society's benefit.

In educating himself, the student is working for his society. Far from being rewarded for this work, he is being taxed six hundred dollars a year. But he is not the one who is being most heavily taxed. Our province, in educating primarily the middle class, usually without particular regard for ability is wasting the great potential of its youth, the potential of its future.

We must prepare ourselves to force action on this issue. It is one of the most important decisions which Nova Scotia is going to have to make. If we are prepared to spend at least sixteen years in educating ourselves, we must recognize the value of education. We must apply ourselves to making our government recognize it also.

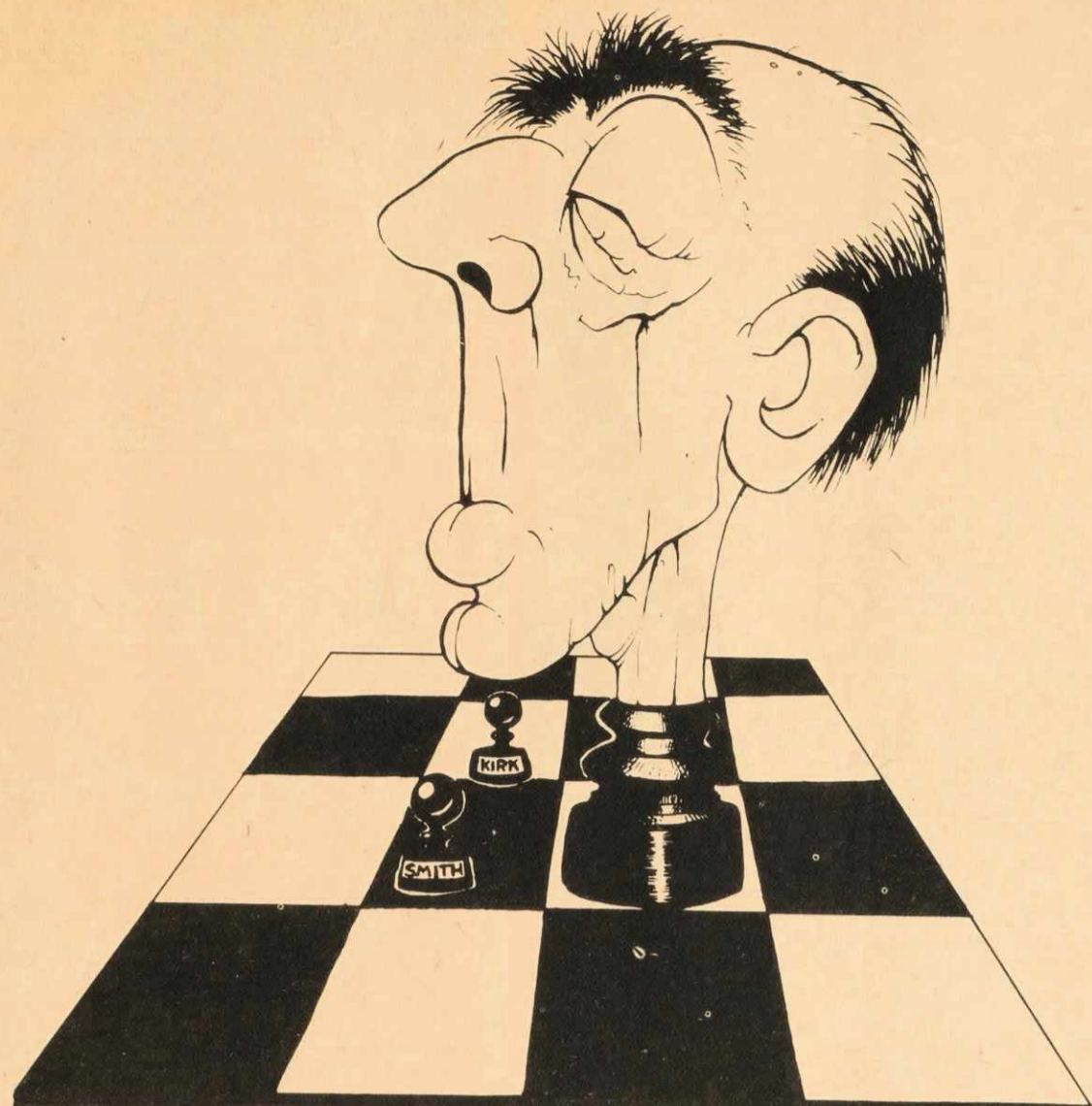
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Your move Bob.

Does Dalhousie need changes?

The 66,000 students at the Sorbonne are not required to attend classes or hand in papers—but they face rigorous examinations at the end of the year. Student Jean Rey writes of experiences at the Sorbonne in the heart of Paris.

You're on your own at the Sorbonne

By JEAN REY
Reprinted from The Christian Science Monitor

Paris

Empty halls, long corridors, you really wonder where things are going on. There are people passing you by, wandering about. But why are they here? What are they doing?

This is the feeling of the student on first entering the vast halls and endless corridors of the Sorbonne.

The vastness, the endlessness, turn out to be something more than physical. It is soon felt to be the essence of the system in which the student will spend his next five, six, or seven years.

For all this vastness, and the feeling of an inner void which it creates in the individual, he has to discover that there is hardly room for the 66,000 students who seek an education here.

He will become used to seeing many of these students, crowded off the hard benches in the large amphitheaters and sitting on the professor's desk during lectures. But he will never become quite accustomed to the difficult conditions of study which students face.

Activities up to students

Tremendous self-discipline is required of every student. He or she must work without supervision of any kind; attending the lectures or not; taking notes, or not; staying in Paris or not, as may suit him, and coming up to examination time, prepared or unprepared according to his own character.

For me, with university experience both at the Sorbonne and at Amherst College in the United States this impersonality of French higher education remains one of the most vivid impressions of my Sorbonne years up to the present.

In sharp contrast to this impersonality however, is the cafe life in the university quarter. It is in the cafes that students find room and comfort to study, and where they make many of the personal acquaintances that they would never make within the university precincts.

In the cafes they discuss literature, art, politics and the many other subjects being studied. So cafe life is an extension of university life.

The sidewalk terraces, with their hundreds of little tables, make for the Sorbonne student a kind of campus as this term is known in American colleges. Obviously this Paris "campus" does not include tennis courts, playing fields, and the outdoor amenities so familiar to the American college student.

One of the voids here also is in the sense of community which one feels in an American college. There is no fraternity life, for example. Students don't think of themselves as belonging to a class, like the class of '68, or some other year.

Another thing I miss after attending Amherst College in Massachusetts as a Fulbright student, is the absence here in Paris of dormitory life. Students in Paris live either with their parents or, if the students are from the provinces or abroad, they live in rented rooms.

Little school spirit

There are not enough rooms, and many are small and sparsely furnished. Some students live in very difficult and even sordid conditions. The housing problem is one of the biggest which faces students in Paris.

I am also stuck by the lack of personal interest which the student shows toward his school. School spirit, as I have learned about this in America, seems almost unknown here. You feel that people are completely uninterested in their own school. They attend the lectures without making many friends or identifying themselves with the school.

Some approach to community interest is offered by the student corporations. These provide help for students, from aid in seeking lodgings to supplying written texts of courses so that the students need not attend classes during the year. The texts are also used for reviewing courses.

The corporations however tend to come under the influence of the two big national federations of students, the conservative-minded Federation Nationale des Etudiants de France (FNEF) and the Union Nationale des Etudiants de France (UNEF) which is a left-wing group.

This means that the student corporations too often are involved in political competition rather than in the special problems which face students trying to get an all-round education.

I think that for this reason mainly, very few students are interested in these corporations. They can be good training for a prospective political or union leader as they give opportunities for developing personality in this particular way. But out of 5,000 students in English, only 200 are members of the Corporation des Etudiants d'Anglais.

Organization varies

Perhaps the most serious difference between American college life and that at the Sorbonne is in the degree of specialization required of the student. This comes from a difference between the

whole university setup in the two countries.

In the United States one's university training may be divided between the usual four-year courses in liberal arts or sciences in which the student reads in a wide range of subjects, and the graduate school where he specializes. At the Sorbonne these two types of training are covered as one unit.

This aspect of French university life is one with which I personally feel some dissatisfaction. I should rather in the earlier years have an opportunity to follow a diversity of interests, within reason, and then specialize later.

But the examination system at the Sorbonne almost forces one toward heavy specialization. The very fact that the student is free to spend his university time where and how he pleases raises this question: Will he complete a minimum of preparation for the examination and take a risk? Or will he make a maximum effort?

Some start cramming

The serious student invariably finds himself not only specializing but cramming. He is working for a "licence" in some field like languages, literature, history, sociology.

But alongside him are others who have been going to the university year after year without any success, using the facilities but failing examinations and simply signing up again. (Public education in France is free.) This keeps the number of students at a very high level.

More and more, in order to select the few who are really worthy of the "licence" -- which is the equivalent of a higher American degree -- the Sorbonne examination standards are being raised.

Under a new law, a student who does not pass his first-year examinations will be required to take them again after another year of study and if he fails the second time he will be eliminated.

Fifteen hundred students took the same examination as I did in English literature and only 250 passed. To pass required only 10 marks out of 20 possible.

As I have said, I feel some dissatisfaction with the system here. But from the very serious point of view of producing high-grade specialists, the Sorbonne does seem to me to be highly effective. While hard on the average run of students, it is advantageous for those who wish to become the best in their field and have the ability to do so.

This ability must be considerable because relations between students and professors are almost nonexistent. There are the lectures which are at-

From the Ancient Commoner

Rhodesia is right

THE MILITARIST

By J. M. MacFARLANE

Soon after Rhodesia declared independence, British Harold Wilson promised the world that Ian Smith's government would be crushed within the year. That was more than three years ago and indications are that her strength is increasing daily.

Ian Smith is no more a rebel leader than is Lester Pearson. Rhodesia was ready for independence and merely took the step which Britain would not. Prime Minister Smith has repeatedly shown his loyalty to the Crown by his extreme reluctance to turn Rhodesia into a republic in spite of pressures to do so from within his own party.

No interference should be made or can be made in this situation, since the problem is of an internal, domestic nature, and Rhodesia has not asked for any country to do so. Economic sanctions must be lifted immediately because they are illegal, as Rhodesia is not at war with any nation.

Let us see Canada recognize the Rhodesian government immediately and support her entry into the United Nations as an independent dominion within the Commonwealth, instead of carrying on a hawkish insipid subversion against her.

The big argument seems to be the "one man one vote" slogan, which is so glibly quoted by liberal democrats the world over. They say, and so does the British government, that there must be a vote for every qualified person in Rhodesia.

What then is the problem? Anyone can vote in Rhodesia if he is of age and fulfills the literacy requirement. But because many of the natives are unable to pass the literacy test, the "do-gooders" advocate giving them the vote anyway.

Let us just imagine then, what would happen if they did get such a franchise. First, they would be handed de facto control of the government, since the Asian-European population is much in the minority. They would then subsequently take over the government.

All "foreigners" would be thrown out of the country, as is happening in Kenya, and all their business concerns expropriated by the government. From there the system would degenerate into tribal warfare as in the Congo, Brundi, and Nigeria, once considered the most stable country in Africa.

You could hardly expect some native who uses cow dung as hair cream to be politically stable. Some of the more educated natives have not shown any desire to help their brothers, but are more interested in joining underground movements employing terror, arson, and murder to gain their ends.

Let's see some fair play and common sense with regard to public opinion on Rhodesia.



tended by hundreds of students, none of whom have an opportunity to speak to the professor or ask questions at that time.

Constant expression

The students express themselves through mass demonstrations, strikes, and constant protests. The Algerian war ten years ago was the cause of many street fights. Today it is the war in Vietnam. Even professors sometimes join the students either by approving publicly of a strike or by leading a march or mass meeting.

Because of the central situation of the Sorbonne in Paris, social activities do not need to be provided by the university. In fact there aren't any within the school. The whole city provides this social life and is a great source of culture for the students. This is not true generally for the students in America who mostly live on campuses, sometimes very far from any big city.

Since I am a student of English I try to read American and English newspapers. But I do not have much time left for books which are not part of the syllabus. One of the favorite pastimes of the Sorbonne students is to go to the little cinemas of the Latin Quarter to see for very low prices good, old movies.

While the main specialty of the Sorbonne is to train people for professional careers, it is also a school for the French intellectual elite.

Difficulties ignored

President de Gaulle has been ignoring student problems since he has been at the head of the country. The government now has to cope with an impressive number of new students.

Despite the complaints and warnings of professors, necessary measures have not been taken in time by the government. For example, take the new building of the Sorbonne. The students used to go here even before it was finished. But by the time it was finished the building already was too small.

There is no real government pressure on professors or administration. Because of the carelessness of the government toward education the administration of the Sorbonne is all powerful and self-ruled.

Students have entire academic freedom apart from strict dates for registration in the fall. The student is completely free to do whatever he wants; no attendance, no papers, but only the fearful exams at the end of the year.