

Just no point

If you've been keeping up with news on a national scale as of late, you might have heard about the fact that a group of Native protesters had been occupying a large section of a Revenue Canada building in Toronto. They were protesting the incoming changes to the Tax Act. For those of you who aren't familiar with the story, I'll fill in the details. Simply put, much to the chagrin of the protesters, after about a month of occupation, the federal government had still not taken it upon themselves to even talk to the protesters, let alone give in to their demands. And this in the light of daily news reports and ongoing public attention.

Now, in light of this attitude, as presented by the present government towards protests, do any of you think for one moment that a one day student strike will accomplish anything as far as Lloyd Axworthy's Student Security Review (SSR) is concerned? The native taxation issue is only dealing with a relatively small amount of money. Social Security Reform deals with billions, and by comparison, I strongly doubt that if the government wouldn't budge over a few million, that they'll even raise an eyebrow when their dealing with billions.

I really don't think the government will care at all if students strike.

As a matter of fact, I would go so far as to suggest that the strike might actually do more harm than good. First of all, it hasn't been very well organised. Have any of you seen any signs about? I regularly take walks around the university to see what's being put on the boards, and I've seen only two, both of which were in the grad house.

Second, it is associated with that dying organization, the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Didn't we vote ourselves out of that collection of crackpots? I would suggest that the strike is a last ditch effort on the part of CFS to make it look like they have some power left, and to make it look like they still have the ability to speak for students, when both of these things are very far from the truth.

Thirdly, I really can't support anything that's been sponsored in cooperation with organizations of the likes of the International Socialists. As you all know, I just hate those left-wing crazies.

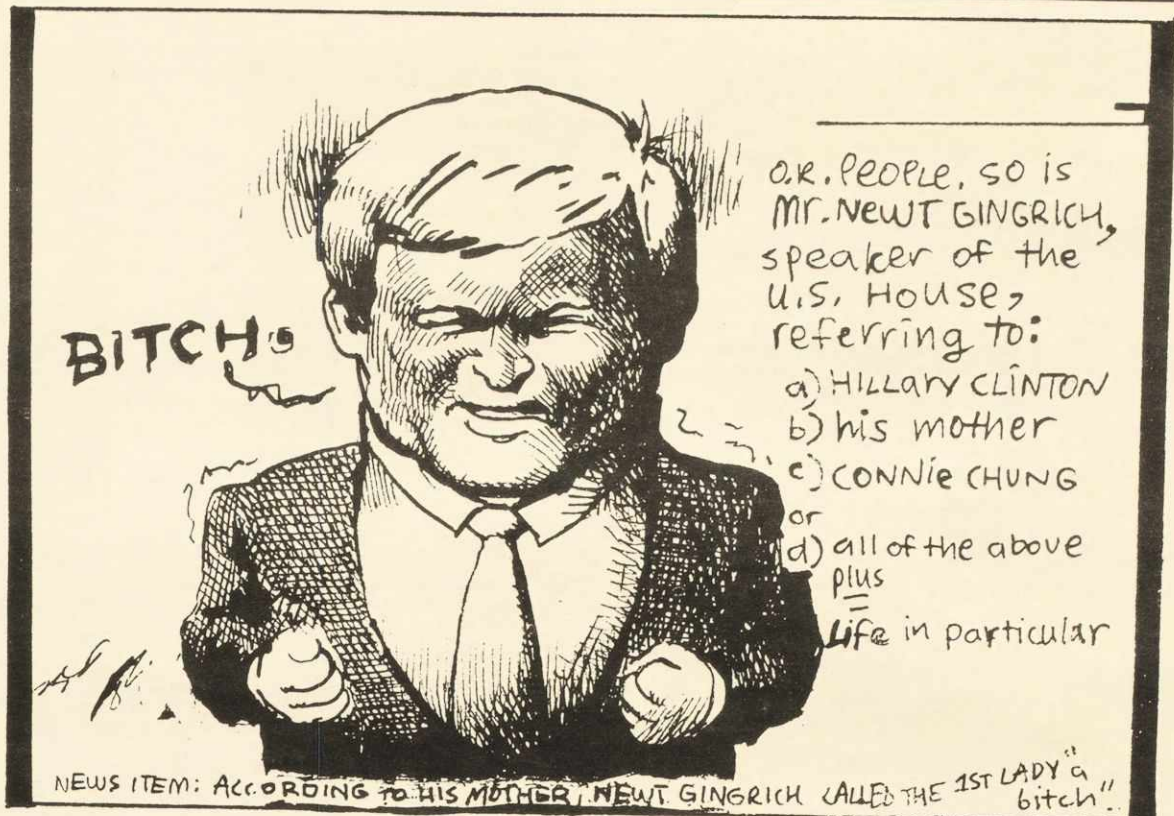
You see, over the past few years, the Dalhousie Student Union has come a long way in establishing itself as a respected student organization, both provincially and nationally. Actions such as the proposed strike could do more to hurt the respectability of the Union, and undermine the other work being done on the SSR front. For these reasons as well as others, some of the members of the Student Union pushed for the DSU as an organization to come out as not endorsing the strike. And I totally agree.

And besides, there's something paradoxical about boycotting the very thing we want to keep cheap. As an alternative, how about a national full-attendance day? The powers that be just might take us seriously for a change.

So kids, in closing I only have a couple things to say: Don't buy into it. Don't bother striking. It's bad for business.

And let's face it. It's 1995, not 1969.

Joe Tratnik



LETTERS

The Dalhousie Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday 4 pm before publication. Letters may be e-mailed or submitted on Macintosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Joe & Jo do make "scents"

To the editor,

This is regarding Nora Bednarski's letter [Joe & Jo have "no scents," Dec. 1/94]. I think Nora Bednarski missed the point of Joe & Jo's comment. They are making an indictment against the way social issues are being handled; i.e., legislating behaviour when things aren't right, as opposed to taking issue directly against environmental illness.

Nora Bednarski's letter mentions "compromises on the part of some..." Well who gets to define "compromise"? If Nora Bednarski is so "confident that it is with more education and awareness about environmental illness that most people will make a conscious effort not to wear scented products," why is she so adamantly defending policies that will ensure this behaviour regardless of education and awareness?

Freedom is based on the individuals' ability to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. If responsibility is taken away from people to make their own educated and informed decisions then their autonomy and liberty is restricted. Demanding what course of action people have to take regarding scented products does not foster respect for people with environmental illness, it manifests complacency or resentment toward a bureaucracy that is poking its fingers up everybody's nose. Policies on behaviour are dangerous because it adopts the attitude of: why bother to have people use their imaginations and intellects to construct their own opinions and solutions, when we can just tell them what to do. Creating a policy as an answer to a social problem inoculates people against the burden of thinking for themselves and making their own informed decisions.

What the public needs is advocates of facts — facts which the individual can interact freely and come to their own conclusions — not practitioners of behaviour and censorship... no matter how noble the cause.

I hope that in the future people will start to look at the broader social ramifications of the wonderful good they try to perpetrate. But I have little confidence as I assume there will always be blind crusaders carrying the dim torch of abject ignorance to the far frontiers of the human intellect, dulling the sharp point of consciousness down to an eroded nub by trying to think for everyone else.

Morley Devine

BAC article offends

To the editor,

The report on the Budget Advisory Committee [BAC] appearing in your issue of Jan. 12/95 under the byline of Lisa Lachance is in error on at least two points, one of which I find personally offensive.

First, the BAC 3 Report did not recommend the closure of specific departments, despite Ms. Lachance's claim. Second, it is not the case that the BAC 6 Report recommended that one-quarter of the \$3.3 million "go to faculties to conduct negotiations for early retirement packages." The money was allocated in relation to early retirement packages that had already been agreed upon, and which are to be paid for in part by the Faculties.

I find it offensive that mention is made of my early retirement in terms that suggest that I negotiated a package after taking part in discussions leading to recommendations that Faculties be given the means to conduct such negotiations. The early retirement proposals did not originate in BAC and have been available for some time and negotiations are conducted through the Vice-President (Academic and Research) and the Director of Personnel, not the Faculties directly. My own retirement arrangements were completed well before the BAC 6 Report was prepared, and there is absolutely no link of the sort implied by your reporter.

Alasdair Sinclair
Former chair of Budget
Advisory Committee

Les-bi-gay response

To the editor,

Re: Letter from Kirsten Schmidt regarding the youth project's policy to restrict attendance at meetings to lesbian, gay and bisexual young adults [the Gazette, Jan. 12/95].

As members of the youth project, we are concerned with this letter.

We had not realized that our policy had such a negative impact on anyone. It is important to us that the groups be welcoming, safe and supportive for all youth who are bisexual, as well as lesbian and gay.

In fact, making our meetings safe and supportive was a major factor in our decision to limit attendance to people 25 and under who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Our two social/educational/support groups also provide an environment where we can share common experiences and discuss issues that are important to us.

In addition, we offer special meetings, social and recreational activities which are open to friends, family, and partners of group members. As well, our heterosexual supporters are welcome to drop in with a group member during the social time before our regular meetings.

Youth group policy, such as the one in question, are decided on by the whole group, which includes a number of bisexual youth. Our policies and procedures are not set in stone, but are discussed regularly.

In the past, policy-related problems have led to group discussions and in some circumstances, policy changes. Had the author of the letter brought her concerns to the group, the policy could have been further explained, discussed and possibly modified.

We understand the author's need for support and validation for her relationship, as this is something that we have each felt at some point. We real-

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