

# Dalhousie student faces pointed gun

Last Monday, November 7, I and three other people were entering Halifax Harbour on a small boat. We were on our way to pick up ten oceanography students to do field work in Bedford Basin.

As we rounded Point Pleasant, two Sea King helicopters flew overhead, and a navy destroyer was lying idle near McNabs Island. Further inland, closer to George's Island, there was a larger navy warship, which the captain of our boat told me was a Canadian Patrol Frigate. This reminded me about the navy shock trials. The shock trials are three large explosions the navy plans to detonate in the Atlantic Ocean to test a ship. I remembered that the shock trials were supposed to begin on the next day, November 8, so I thought that these navy ships must be on their way out to the explosion site.

At that moment, out of the corner of my eye I noticed something moving very fast. It was a small, grey boat coming at us from behind and slightly to starboard. As I focused on the speedboat, I saw two people in the stern, dressed in black with white masks over their faces, waving their arms at us. Then I saw someone in the bow of the speedboat, crouched down, feet firmly planted, wearing all black, and holding a gun. This figure in black was looking at us, and holding the gun firmly ready in our general direction. My eyes focused on the gun.

You might imagine that this was a somewhat surprising situation. At

that moment I wasn't quite sure who they were or what they intended to do. My first thought as they were coming closer was to wonder if I should duck in case they meant to shoot at us. Everyone else in our boat stayed standing and watched, so I did too. They pulled up beside us and slowed down. Our captain opened the cabin door and stepped out to see what they wanted. One of the people in the stern of the speedboat yelled something about a "ship" and pointed at the navy warship to our starboard. I couldn't hear exactly what they said, but our captain said "Okay" and came back into the cabin, after which the speedboat turned and went away.

After a few still moments, the four of us looked at each and talked about what had just happened. I don't know much about guns, but one of the others told me it was a military standard issue automatic rifle. I can definitely say that I have never before in my life had a machine gun pointed in my general direction and wondered, for a moment, if I would be shot at. We assumed our visitors were navy sailors, though there were no markings or flags visible on the boat, so they technically could have been anyone. Our consensus was that the navy was worried about people who might protest against the tests, so they sent a boat around to check out any nearby vessels.

After passing the first destroyer and frigate, further up the harbour we passed a United States navy frigate, and a Canadian Oberon class

submarine. All of this floating weaponry was preparing to sail out of the harbour in convoy, and the radio was buzzing with traffic control communications.

This experience has made me reflect on the meaning of the words "national defence." Defence against whom? Against our own citizens who might not happen to agree with the idea of throwing up bombs in the ocean?

What would the person with the

gun have done if we were, for example, a Greenpeace vessel heading out to sea alongside the convoy? Or what if I had leaned out of the boat with a camera and started taking pictures of them?

A fundamental question behind all of this is whether or not humans are capable of living together without violence and the threat of violence. I think that "living together" in an armed camp where countries look at each other, and their own

citizens, down the barrels of guns is a poor substitute for cooperation and community. In addition, maintaining the world as an armed camp comes at staggering financial and environmental cost. The direct financial cost, and the cost of cleaning up the environmental disasters of militarization, drain resources from beneficial uses. May we learn to live in peace with each other and the planet we live on.

Wayne Groszko

## BLACKS ON BLACK

### The state of Black business

Black business has always interested me for two main reasons: one, economic progress within the Black community is absolutely necessary; the other, and maybe even more important, is that the state of Black business represents a paradox that reflects a certain mentality among some of our people.

My inspiration for this article occurred a couple of weeks ago when I went into a local convenience store on Gottingen Street in central Halifax. The owner of the store barely acknowledged me as I gave him money for a Jamaica back, though, throwing the two quarters on the counter without the slightest bit of eye contact. Although I was angry, I decided to leave without continuing this confrontation.

I walked down the street, literally fuming because this merchant, who wasn't Black, accorded me no respect at all. Of course, his not being Black made the situation even worse for me. How dare these people come into our community and disrespect us so overtly?

I thought about the situation more. A certain degree of respect must be commanded from those who truly desire it, I pondered. However, too many of our people do not command this. Many mer-

chants do not respect us as a people (and I don't blame them) because we appear as nothing more than mere consumers, rather than producers. We are a community which lets all others come into it and prosper from it. They do not even employ our people. Unfortunately, we still remain the "mammies" of the world.

Everyone should remember "Mammy." Al Jolson loved her years ago, as did most of the white community. She always had a big, black breast that everyone sucked on... everyone but her own children. "Mammy" was so busy taking care of others, she never had time to have children of her own. And that is what we are: "Mammies." Others establish themselves in the community with relative ease and then take our money, because our priorities do not involve creating stores to put our own money into. I don't believe that I could go into a non-Black community and establish a business without the slightest opposition. Do you? To be respected as a people, we must operate as a complete nation, not simply consumers.

Of course, "pros" must be given to our Black businesses hanging strong, including Soul Clippers, Image, Styles by S.D., Soul to Soul Records, Ujamaa Bookstore, and Pizzazz. Live long and prosper.

Unfortunately, Borderline Fash-

ions, independently owned by a Black woman, met its doom last year. This reflects a certain mentality in some of our people. Even though we are not to blame for the store's demise, we must accept some of the responsibility.

You see — we were the ones who said that, some of the clothes were outdated, yet bought similar fashions at other stores. We were the ones who complained that the clothes were too expensive, yet always could afford leather at Danier's, shoes at Aldo's, and Air Jordans at Cleve's. Just like any other business, Black business must be subject to criticism. However, the belief that the "white man's ice is colder" is a mentality that must be broken now and forever.

As is usually the case, the situation involves both mistakes of omission and commission. Omission, because too few of our people are actively involved in the economic development of our community, which involves production and investment, not just consumption. Commission, because we frequent other businesses and openly discredit our own.

Come on, people! 95 is coming. Don't be the "spook" sitting by the door.

Malik Adams

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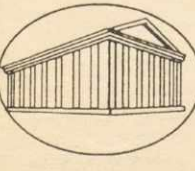
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