

you were saying

More reactions to "Reactions"

To the Editor:

I refer to your article of September 22, 1983, "Reactions to Riot are Registered".

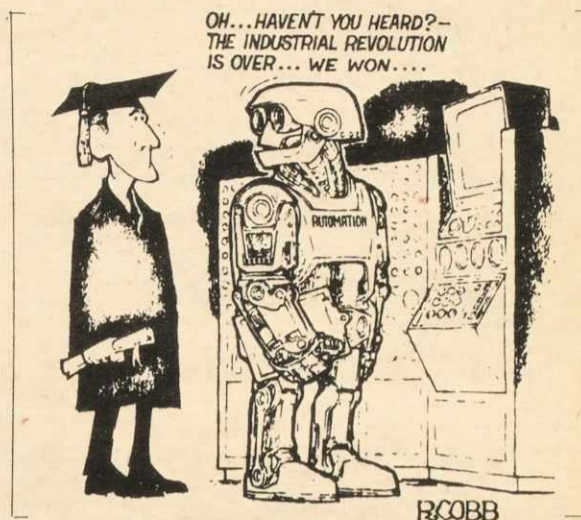
It is unfortunate that your interviewer did not attempt to check some of the many allegations made by Dr. Persau in his attack upon Saint Mary's and on our Academic Vice-President, Dr. Jabbra. Since I understand that Dr. Jabbra has written you at length in order to point out the article's many inaccuracies, I will not detail them here.

What is more unfortunate, however, is that the Gazette would print the racist statements about Dr. Jabbra which you report as having been made by Dr. Persau and other "sources". In my four years of close association with Dr. Jabbra, I have never known him to be

other than fair and even handed. His ethnic background and religion have never prevented him from dealing with anyone other than in an equitable, honest and just fashion. It would have been very easy for your reporter to have discovered this had he made an effort, for there are many persons, both on the campus of Saint Mary's and in the community who share my view.

Yours sincerely,
Kenneth L. Ozmon
President

Editor's note: The reporter did attempt to reach Dr. Jabbra at his office. A person, unidentified, told the reporter the university was not making any statement. Dr. Jabbra was informed of this on Oct. 4.



commentary

On university life and building community

by David G. C. McCann

Although we often don't appreciate it, we in university are a very fortunate lot. We have been given the privilege (and the corresponding responsibility) of living in an academic community predicated on the common search for truth and enlightenment. Such a community affords its members an opportunity to enter into relationships with others based on a spirit of dialogue and intellectual tolerance. Few environments still exist in the modern world that can boast as much potential for personal growth and sharing. For this reason, we must guard against attitudes and conditions within this university that might compromise the community aspects. More than this, though, each of us must make a personal commitment to the continued building of community here at Dalhousie.

What, then, does it mean to be committed to community-

building? Basically, it requires that every person in the community always strive to do what is needed for the good of the whole, each in accord with his God-given talents. Of course, before anyone can do what is good for the community, his perception of "the good" must be in harmony with objective reality. In other words, his prime responsibility is to inform his conscience with the truth. This task, though formidable, is absolutely essential in a community.

The concept of community is perhaps best understood in terms of simple analogy. Consider a community like a human body, its members are cells. As long as all the cells work in harmony and perform the functions ordained for them, the body remains healthy and strong. On the other hand, if a few cells begin to work against the harmonious whole, they tend to multiply and eventually undermine the integral health of the

body. We know this phenomenon as cancer—its effects are devastating. So it is with a community. As long as the members work in harmony for the good of all, the community is healthy and all the members benefit. When some of the members refuse to do "the good" for the community, like a cancer it affects the whole community. The results may be equally devastating. What is important to remember, then, is that none of us in this university exists in a vacuum. We are all a part of the integrated whole and should be working to preserve it.

Recently, in a preliminary report issued by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Curriculum Review, the suggestion was made that the university consider adopting a trimester system of operations. On the surface, this might appear to be a reasonable idea. A trimester system would allow students to work at various times of the year instead of everyone looking for work in the

summer months as under the present system. But, there is an underlying factor to be considered here: the effect on the university community. A trimester system, were it adopted, would probably spell the end of the academic environment as it presently exists. It would mean that a significantly different student body would be present on campus in each succeeding semester. Therefore, one's chances of meaningful interactions and relationships developing are reduced. Essentially, the university environment would degenerate into a self-serve gas station with students coming in to "fill up" whenever it was convenient. It is difficult to envision developing and nurturing a community atmosphere in such an environment.

Fortunately, however, the suggestion to adopt the trimester system has been deleted from the final report of the *Ad Hoc*

Committee on Curriculum Review. For whatever reason, the idea was thought not to be in the best interests of the university. Such insight is indeed laudable. At least for the present, we have been spared changes which would adversely affect us all.

The job of building community never ceases, though. Each day, we should be striving not to be dependent on one another, nor to be completely independent, but to be inter-dependent. The latter is the most mature and desirable of human relationships. When inter-dependence is present, community necessarily exists. Therefore, may each of us move toward inter-dependence with our fellow members of the university. Faculty and staff, administration and students, we should all be working for the harmonious good of the whole. If we can do this, then Dalhousie will really become something of which to be proud.

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