

Letters

Surveillance spooks student

To the Editor:

There are, undoubtedly, better ways to spend a Tuesday afternoon than to attend a conference on "The Economic and Political Consequences of Imperialist War", especially when such a conference is sponsored by that august body, The Dalhousie Student Movement (student wing of the Communist Party of Canada, Marxist-Leninist).

Yet whatever the flaws the CPC-ML might have, they might also have an interesting conference, and one might, I mused, drop by and listen to these men of no illusions and even less personality string Marxist homily after Marxist homily in an unintelligible but humorous way.

I desired not to brave the conference alone, but I was able to enlist the support of a companion. Most people I asked were, of course, totally uninterested. But even those who were intrigued declined, and their reasons for doing so are instructive. They were not fearful of the group organizing the Conference. Rather they were concerned that some undercover policeman would be there secretly taking pictures of those attending. Their fears were probably well founded. My friends were wanting to enter top-level government occupations and understandably did not want something as absurd as this conference to stand in their way. What worries me is not that my friends will never experience the comic hilarity of a CPC-ML mass. Neither am I concerned - though perhaps I should be - that in our 'free' society radicals are watched very closely; surveillance keeps both the radicals and policemen out of trouble. What does worry me is the repercussions such awareness of the ubiquity of the police has on all of us and how such fears inhibit and maybe stifle constructive political activities. Let us take an example: would a person about to take the Foreign Service examination, who was opposed, say, to nuclear weapons being deployed in Canada, be willing to march in a demonstration if he thought a police file might be started on him, thus jeopardizing his chances of becoming a minor diplomat? And what effect does the knowledge that the police would bother to send a man to scout such an organization (the CPC-ML) in a conservative bastion such as Halifax have on his decision to march? I myself am unsure as to the effect. But I am certain that during this present time of retrenchment capitalism there is more concern among liberals about political prisoners in Iraq or Albania than there is in making our society more open than it is today. Maybe the charter of rights is enough. But if they are not - and of course they are not - then maybe we should be thinking about ways in which we can organize to alleviate such restricting fears as those held by my friends and myself. Maybe some Thursday afternoon we should hold a conference, but if we do, please, no cameras.

Thomas Stearns

Human dignity and....

To the Editor:

I would like to offer my congratulations to Andrew Ager, on two counts. First, for producing an excellent commentary, "Power-tripping and degradation of Frosh Week" (Gazette, September 30/82, P6). Secondly, for having the courage to ask, in public, the questions raised by his and others' experiences during Frosh Week in Howe Hall.

Andrew's commentary does raise some questions and as such presents a wonderful opportunity to the Howe Hall leaders. It is first an opportunity for them to re-examine their vision of the Hall's function with respect to its residents and to the campus at large. This in turn could provide an opportunity to develop a new form of leadership in the Hall and on the campus.

It could be a type of leadership which will develop a level of community life, which respects the dignity of each of its members. This is certainly difficult, but it alone is worthy of man. It could be a type of leadership which will dispel the myths that authenticity equals breaking rules, destroying property, degrading others, and mediocrity.

It could be a type of leadership which would challenge the generosity of the young men in residence. A leadership which would not make concessions to human weakness - because of confidence in the capacity these young men have for the kind of generosity needed to respect human dignity.

It seems that Andrew's experiences and reflection ask a very basic question, "Do we at Howe Hall want to earn a solid reputation as a community which respects the dignity of each individual, both in word and deed?". If so then it would seem that the best place to start is at home, with an Orientation in the Hall which would show the new residents, by example, that it is a privilege to live in community with fellow human beings. That the first responsibility of such a privilege is to respect the human dignity of each member in word and deed.

With such leadership Andrew and others would be encouraged to wax eloquent in praise of such a community. And the whole campus would benefit.

Sincerely,

Fr. Joe Hattie, O.M.I.

R.C. Chaplain.

DFA sets things straight

To the Editor:

There were some inaccuracies in the lead article "Faculty Strike Talk Increasing" by Gary LeBlanc in the Gazette on 7 October 1982 and I wish to correct some of those.

The petition from the DFA to the Board of Governors on 23 September did not mention arbitration: there has been no discussion of such a procedure.

The DFA is not in a legal position to strike at present. The Trade Union Act requires various steps to be taken before such action is legal, and these steps have not yet been undertaken.

Whereas the DFA has about 850 bargaining and non-bargaining unit members, it is negotiating a collective agreement only for its 720 bargaining unit members and it was 442 of these who signed the petition.

Dalhousie's budget for 1982/83 is not about \$64 million. That is what it has in endowment funds. Its budget is about \$96 million, including about \$6 million as income from its endowment fund investments.

The \$17 million quoted by the DFA refers only to assessed value of houses and not to "all the property belonging to Dalhousie". Thus the figure does not include the A&A Building, Tupper, Dalplex, Arts Centre, Life Sciences, Killam, Weldon, Dunn and so on.

The DFA has not claimed that its proposals to improve the chances of women being appointed to the bargaining unit have been rejected outright by the Board of Governors. The Board's negotiators have so far refused to incorporate such proposals in a new collective agreement, which is not quite the same thing. Surely we all agree about fair treatment of women; the issue is how this can best be achieved.

The Board's negotiators have not said they do not want to recognize Instructors as actual members of the DFA - the Board has no choice in this matter. The question is how provisions for this group of staff will be incorporated in the new collective agreement - through an isolated sub-set of clauses or (as far as possible) by the same clauses as the other members of the bargaining unit.

I hope that the above comments help to clarify matters in which I know your readers are interested.

Om P. Kamra
President, DFA

Nuclear freeze a futile ploy?

To the editor:

How can we achieve a real and lasting peace? Some people are saying this can be accomplished by a "nuclear freeze" only or by the establishment of "nuclear free zones", or by a "no first strike pledge" by the superpowers, or by a "world disarmament referendum". But, these proposals all have one thing in common - they are based on the premise the two superpowers even have an interest in "disarmament" and "peace" and are part of the solution.

In your three-page (*sic*) spread on the peace movement you say that "the Democratic Party grabbed the freeze as an issue to get votes in fall elections". In fact, the US Senators Edward Kennedy and Mark Hatfield are the sponsors of the "nuclear freeze", and they call on the U.S. and the USSR "to achieve a mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems", "followed by reductions in nuclear warheads".

These sponsors of the "nuclear freeze" are not for peace but war. In their book entitled *Freeze -- What Can We Do to Prevent Nuclear War?* Kennedy and Hatfield make the case that a freeze in the production of nuclear weapons would allow the U.S. to strengthen its conventional forces. They write that "The freeze will also help to strengthen our economy and other areas of our national defence, both of which have heavily suffered from neglect due to the cost of this nuclear build-up. The \$90 billion that a freeze alone could save in the next five years could be spent on conventional defence and domestic priorities."

You also refer to "respected strategic thinkers" endorsing the "freeze" and the single name given is that of "a former Central Intelligence Agency official", H. Scoville.

It is fantasy to believe that the simple declaration of Halifax, *et al.*, as a "nuclear free zone" will stop the imperialists from dropping either conventional or nuclear bombs. It is also a fantasy to believe that Brezhnev or Reagan are for peace because of "no first strike" pledges. The superpowers

always engage in "negotiations" regarding their mutual spheres of influence.

Thousands of students have participated in demonstrations against all forms of imperialist war and for genuine peace. It is the activity of the people, not negotiations and deals, which is the key to the establishing of real and lasting peace.

Charles Spurr

(Ed's note: In the article by Cathy McDonald, reference was made to a move to make Canada a "nuclear free zone", not Halifax only.)

Liberal arts defended

To the Editor:

I am an economics student writing in response to last week's commentary by Kim Rilda van Feggelen (Student Economic Concerns High and Dry). While the suggestions offered were admittedly a fresh approach to a very real and pressing problem, I feel they must be dismissed as being both dangerous and ludicrous. I will not even bother addressing the notion that education is no longer a right but a privilege (paragraph 13). The very notion of access to quality education for all Canadians is so entrenched in this nation that the sputterings of a financial elitist can be readily dismissed.

One of the most troubling aspects of the author's work was the belittling of liberal arts education. While there might not be a demand for English Lit majors to work as English teachers there is a definite demand for educated, thinking adults. Not everyone attends university with the sole aim of getting a "marketable" degree. A fair number of students recognize that expanding one's mind and stretching their horizons can be of far greater value than a skill, trade or degree that is not rounded out with exposure to other disciplines. If this were not the case then why would engineering and commerce programs require their students to take electives in the arts and sciences? Why will law schools only consider for admission students who either have a prior university background or mature students who have been out in the workforce or elsewhere experiencing life? Should I remind Ms. Rilda van Feggelen that the great schools in the United States, such as Yale, Harvard, Columbia, all granting very well respected degrees, were set up to teach liberal arts?

The concept of a pay-as-you-study determination of tuition is another idea I find quite distressing. It appears that the author has overlooked the fact that a scholarship program already exists to aid and reward academically worthy students. As well recognition of the threat of increased competition for marks should not be overlooked. If we all spend our school years with noses buried in texts this will not help make tuition more equitable. No matter what the mark a student receives the bell curve still applies. If we all began earning marks of 75 per cent or better then 85 per cent could become the failure line.

A final note about those C and B students who, "...idle through university as if it were one big frat party". Those students are much more desirable recruits for firms doing hirings than bookworms. Marks are a sign of how well you write tests and exams, which, while important, is of no value if you have not learned to share your knowledge with others and work in a cooperative environment. That latter asset comes out of extra-curricular activities, be they on campus or off. Perhaps if Kim Rilda van Feggelen would only climb down off her high intellectual and financial hobby horse and mingle with the peasants she might see this. At least she might get more out of this University.

Michael Redmond

....individual respect

To the Editor:

I would like to commend Andrew Agar for his courage in writing a critical article regarding Frosh Week '82 at Howe Hall. Courageous, because he is being punished for expressing a negative view of this week.

I too have seen younger students entering university feel obligated to participate in the activities of Frosh Week, compromising themselves to "fit in". People wanting fun do not have to be coerced. Perhaps members of Howe Hall could reflect on this point. Those who would rather not participate should be able to freely express this wish without being labelled a 'social outcast'.

Surely letters criticizing Andrew's commentary validate his point that there is pressure to conform. He has not and so the Henderson House Council know for certain that of course "he has shut himself off from society".

Perhaps this council could be more objective and view Ager's article as a suggestion that they show more respect for individuals and their views. A good start would be to begin with him.

Sincerely yours,
Nancy Ross