

EDITORIAL

*It's amazing how salvation always comes
so late for most, but too soon for some*
Four the Moment

Jane Hurshman-Corkam died last weekend. The activist against domestic violence was found with a bullet hole through her chest. The police say she committed suicide; I say she was murdered.

No matter who pulled the trigger, she was murdered.

Some doubt still exists as to whether Hurshman pulled the trigger herself, because of the positive turn that her life had taken. From the coroner's description of the wound, the gun would have been held in her right hand pointed downward at an awkward angle. It seems unnatural to me that she would hold a gun this way, but holding a gun is an unnatural act from the beginning.

I doubt that Hurshman took her own life because she seemed to have a great sense of responsibility to the women whose plight she was championing. It has been pointed out that she was a chronicler, and she changed so many lives by telling her story. Would she commit suicide without telling anyone why? Wouldn't she see that as running out on all of the people that meant so much to her? Would she want her death to be so ironic as to shoot herself in an automobile, almost exactly ten years after she killed her husband in the same way?

The people who have been to the scene of her death seem convinced she took her own life. I have to acknowledge that possibility. But it leaves me with one burning question: Why?

If this woman survived five years of the most torturous abuse, never knowing from one minute to the next if she were safe, why would she kill herself just to rob somebody else of the opportunity?

The only motivating factor I can see is stark terror. If I were dragged to the depths of Hell by some monstrous experience, and clawed my way to freedom, only to see the cycle promising to repeat itself, I don't know what I'd do.

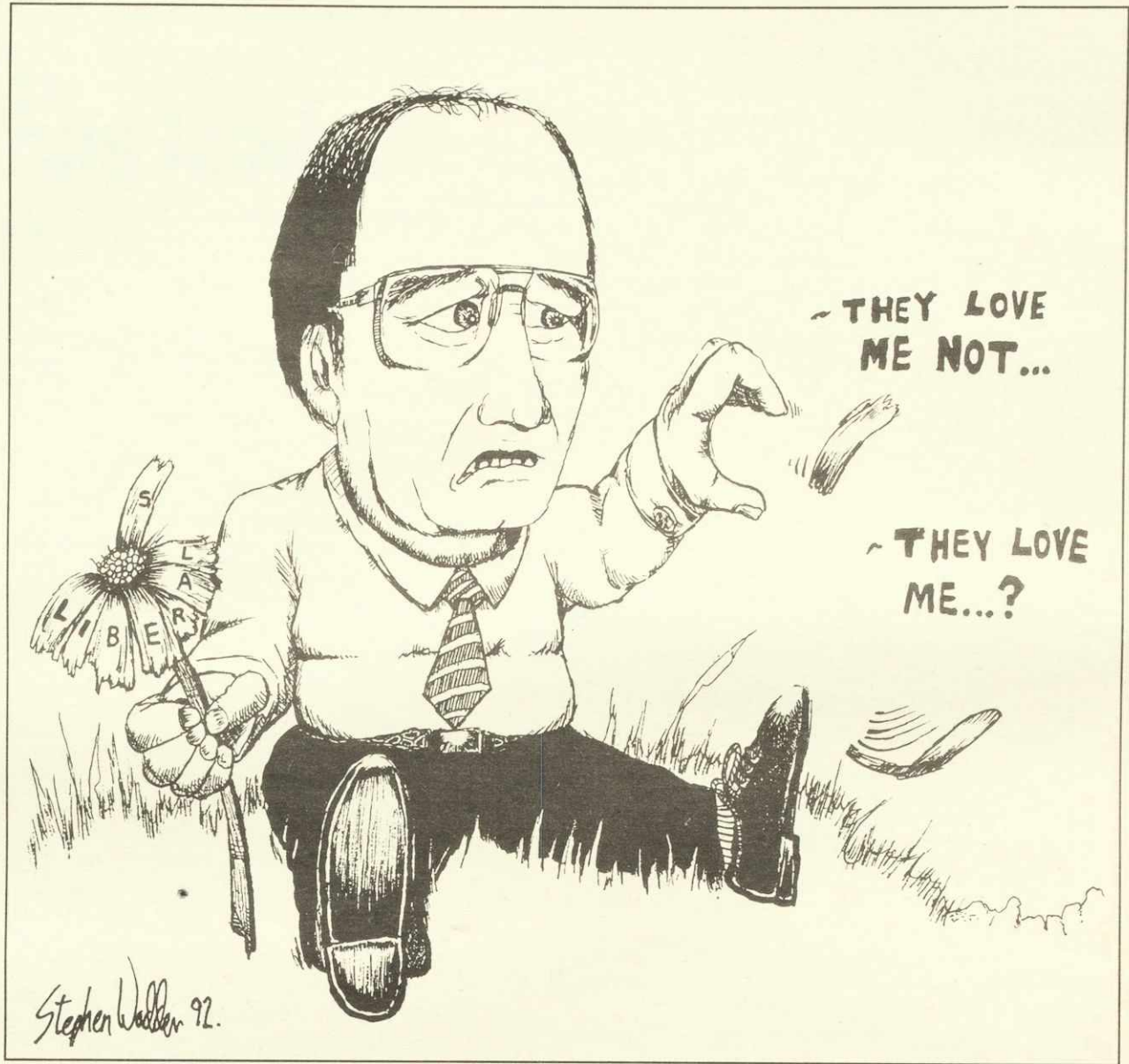
If Jane Hurshman-Corkam was not killed by another person's hand she was killed by a combination of actions and inaction. The absolute cruelty of someone who could utter death threats anonymously, and the callousness of a justice system that exonerate a man — at least initially — for beating his wife because he "mistook her for a sack of potatoes."

No matter what the particular circumstances, Jane Hurshman-Corkam's death is a sign of something gone terribly wrong. Her troubles may be over but, although it sickens me to say it, there are many more women still in that situation.

If we don't soon create a climate in which physical and emotional abuse are not tolerated many innocent women will pay the price. This has to stop.

There will be a memorial service for Jane Hurshman-Corkam next week. For details contact the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women at 424-8662.

Jerry West



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 Friday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Death, please

To the editors:

In his article "Socialism or Death" (*Gazette*, Jan. 30) Alex Boston presented his impressions from a "study tour" in Cuba. The article's message was:

1. Cuba has some problems.
2. Most of the problems result from external intervention.
3. Despite all these problems the situation is much better than in other Latin American countries and in Washington, D.C.
4. Cubans created a harmonious, just society and should be supported as "a bastion of hope" by "anyone concerned about international justice."

My perspective is slightly different:

1. Cuba has some achievements.
2. Most of the achievements resulted from external intervention — specifically the support from the Eastern Bloc maintaining Cuba as an exhibition window of communism and rewarding Cubans for spreading revolutionary ideas in Latin America and Africa.
3. Once the support ceases, the situation will soon be much

more similar to those in other Latin American countries (and perhaps even to that in Washington, D.C.)

4. One has to decide: justice or wealth — you can't have them both (although you can have none); a society could be equal only in equal poverty (and still some people would be "more equal" than others).

Our perspectives differ because Alex visited a communist country, while I only lived in one.

When a communist state "co-organizes" a visit of a group of idealistic intellectuals, it makes an investment. It has to supply some goods that it fails to provide to its own citizens, such as non-rationed food or decent housing. It also provides services in the only sphere in which no shortages have been yet reported — the secret police. Members of the secret service impersonate regular folk (Ernesto, "the taxi driver") and enforce the freedom of speech among the non-members that accidentally may contact the guests. If possible, meetings with some "aparatchiks" should also be

arranged. Guests would feel more important and a lie from the Minister is easier to swallow than a lie from a low-rank clerk. The rest is taken care of, by the guests — they like what they see even before they actually come.

In return, the young idealists are expected to promote a humanistic image of socialism. Their voices may soften the line of non-communist governments, help to get some credits, encourage hard-currency tourists and weaken the protests against human rights violations (inevitable cost of progress...). They may also be used by the internal propaganda machine as proof of support of the communist system by the prevailing world opinion.

It seems that Alex fulfilled these expectations, perhaps even too well. The structure and language of his article so resembled the communist propaganda pieces targeting Western intellectuals that, for a moment, I suspected a parody.

I only hope that it was worth it — that there was enough "posh hotels, ritzy restaurants," as well as "the

world's finest rum" and "articulate men and women doing salsa" to justify his trip. From the hotel one could probably not see that Fidel's recent inspirational slogan: *Socialism Or Death*, earned a graffiti comment: *Don't Be Redundant*.

Piotr Trela

Support TAs

To the editors:

I am writing to support graduate Teaching Assistants (T.A.s) in their struggle for major improvements to their working conditions at Dalhousie. This week, the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students are undertaking a major campaign to address these very issues.

Undergrads know how valuable T.A.s can be. With increasing class sizes, T.A.s can give us the real attention we need, and vastly improve the quality of our education — and the value we're getting for our tuition dollars.

What many undergrads don't know is just how poorly T.A.s are treated. The point of graduate work, which more and more students are undertaking, is to

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announcements is noon on Friday before publication (Thursday of each week). Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o *The Gazette*. Commentary should not exceed 500 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. Advertising copy deadline is noon Monday

before publication. • *The Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on. • The views expressed in *The Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Students' Union, the editors or the collective staff. •